

Puzzle Page

♠ J 6
 ♥ 8 7 5 4
 ♦ A K Q 2
 ♣ A K Q

 ♠ A 7
 ♥ K Q 3 2
 ♦ J 10 8 6
 ♣ 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♠K, and you (South) win with the ace. What next?

Answer

You need to tackle the trump suit. At first glance, it looks tempting to cross to the dummy in a minor suit and lead a trump toward the ♥KQ. On this deal, however, that's a bad plan. Why? Remember the bidding: West opened 1♠, so he must have almost all the missing high-card points. Therefore, he must have the ♥A and there is no point in leading toward the ♥KQ.

The best approach is simply to play a low trump from your hand at trick two. If the enemy trumps are 3-2, it doesn't cost anything to play this way because you'll lose two trump tricks maximum.

Notice, however, what happens if the ♥A is singleton in the West hand. By playing a low trump the first time, you'll still make your contract:

♠ J 6		
♥ 8 7 5 4		
♦ A K Q 2		
♣ A K Q		
♠ K Q 10 9 8	♠ 5 4 3 2	
♥ A	♥ J 10 9 6	
♦ 9 7	♦ 5 4 3	
♣ J 10 9 5 4	♣ 6 3	
♠ A 7		
♥ K Q 3 2		
♦ J 10 8 6		
♣ 8 7 2		

OUT OF HAND

BY BILL BUTLER



"SO!! Did you try my suggestion of a few hands on the Internet before bed, to get to sleep faster?"

In My Humble Opinion



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1. There will always be auctions where you are not exactly sure what is going on. Some hands may not be easy for partner to describe, hence, a laborious auction may occur. My word of advice, therefore, is this: When in doubt whether partner's bid is forcing, *bid*. It may not work out, but I've seen too many times when passing was a disaster.

2. If you open the bidding with one of a suit but actually have a balanced hand, let partner know that as quickly as possible by rebidding some number of notrump. On the other hand, if you open with one of a suit on an unbalanced hand (one with a singleton or void), try to avoid rebidding notrump. Make your rebid the same suit or a different suit, and let partner determine if a notrump contract is an option. In other words, don't bid unbalanced hands and balanced hands the same way. □