

Mishandling Trumps

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

Game all
Dealer South

South	North
1 ♠	2 ♣
4 ♠	—

West attacked in hearts and South ruffed the second round. On a casual analysis it seemed impossible to lose more than one heart and one club, and at trick three South started on the trumps. When East discarded a heart on the second round South realized that he had miscalculated, but it was too late to change course. He drew all the trumps and then played on diamonds, hoping for an even break in the suit. But as the cards lay the contract had to go one down.

It was unlucky to find the trumps 5-1, but South ought to have guarded against the possibility. The way to retain control is to delay the drawing of trumps until the ace of clubs has been knocked out. Dummy's nine of spades will take care of a further heart lead and eleven tricks will be made without trouble. Playing on clubs first virtually guarantees ten tricks even if the enemy can negotiate a ruff.

Trump control can be precarious when you land in a 4-3 fit.

Mishandling Trumps

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

Match-point pairs
Game all
Dealer East

West	North	East	South
—	Double	1 ♥	—
—	3 ♦	—	2 ♠
—	3 ♠	—	3 ♥
All pass			4 ♠

Five diamonds would have been easier, but South opted for the higher-scoring major suit game. He won the opening heart lead, ruffed a heart in dummy, led a club to his king and ruffed his third heart. East played the ace of spades on the queen and returned yet another heart, and this time South had to ruff in his own hand. When the trumps failed to break evenly he was held to nine tricks.

South would have made eleven tricks if the trumps had broken 3-3 but, since 620 would have been a good enough score, he should have tried to safeguard his contract against the more probable 4-2 break. The way to do that is to duck the first trick.

By refusing to part with the ace of hearts South retains control. If hearts are continued he ruffs in dummy and forces out the ace of trumps in comfort, while if East switches to the ace and another trump South simply draws the remaining trumps and establishes a club as his tenth trick.

There are several ways of making four spades on the hand shown