

DELAYING YOUR TRUMP PULL

East is the dealer and opens 1♦. What is your bid?

S	South
♠	7
♥	AK865
♦	7
♣	AKJ842

If you overcall in hearts or clubs, you are liable to hit your partner's short suit, when he has support for the suit you didn't bid. Why not get both suits into the picture? The bid that does this would be 2NT. This is the Unusual Notrump. It is an impossible jump and therefore, carries a conventional meaning. It is asking partner to pick one of the two lowest ranking unbid suits; in this case either clubs or hearts. Over your 2NT bid, West passes and North responds 2♣. You should be happy with this selection since your clubs are far better than your hearts.

You have a 4 Losing Trick hand: the two aces and the two queens in the rounded suits. Partner can easily have the ♣Q and if he has just 1 ace, you are close to making a slam. You can check on aces by bidding 4NT. This is safe if you are playing regular Blackwood or the "0314" version of Roman Key Card Blackwood. That is because in those two applications, a response showing no aces is 5♣ and you can stop there. If you are playing "1430" Roman Key Card Blackwood, zero aces is shown by a response of 5♦. Now you cannot get back to clubs without ending on the 6-level. Luckily, you are playing regular Blackwood, and partner does respond 5♣ to your 4NT inquiry. You now stop safely in 5♣ but not before East doubles for penalty.

East leads the ♠A and put down your hand as dummy. Take over for North and plan your play.

S	South
♠	7
♥	AK865
♦	7
♣	AKJ842

East leads ♠A

N North
♠ 5432
♥ 7
♦ KJ10954
♣ Q10

You are disappointed to find you North has only 2 clubs. He had to take preference to clubs over his hearts, which were even worse. So be it. You must find 11 tricks.

Even though you usually count losers in your hand, since the dummy has the long trump suit, it is easier to count from the North hand. North has the two ace losers in the pointed suits. Although there are no club losers, you do have 3 heart losers that you cannot afford.

If you start by pulling the outstanding 5 trump, there is no hope but to go down 3 tricks. You need the ♣Q10 to ruff two of the hearts. Where are you going to put the 3rd heart?

The diamonds offer a possibility. East doubled for penalty. This indicates that he holds both aces. He has already shown up with the ♠A. You must hope he doesn't also hold the ♦Q to go along with his ♦A. You plan to lead your ♦7 up to the ♦J. If East holds the ♦A and West holds the ♦Q, you will have the good ♦K on which to later pitch the 3rd losing heart.

The order of play is to win the second spade by ruffing in the dummy, and lead a diamond to your ♦J. East wins the ♦A and leads another spade. You ruff that and lead the ♥A and a small heart, ruffing in your hand. Now you can lead the ♦K and discard another heart. Get back to the dummy by ruffing a small diamond and lead the last small heart to ruff with your ♣Q. Ruff another diamond and pull the outstanding trump. Your ♥K takes the 11th trick.

This is the entire deal:

14	N North	W West	N	E	S
	♠ 5432 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ10954 ♣ Q10	♠ 10986 ♥ QJ1093 ♦ Q8 ♣ 63	♠ AKQJ ♥ 42 ♦ A632 ♣ 975	1♦ 2NT P 3♣ P 4NT P 5♣ X P P P	
	W West	E East	S South		
	♠ 10986 ♥ QJ1093 ♦ Q8 ♣ 63	♠ AKQJ ♥ 42 ♦ A632 ♣ 975	♠ 7 ♥ AK865 ♦ 7 ♣ AKJ842	5♣ N NS: 0 EW: 0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/ybndxwaz>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.

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