

Defending trumps contracts with a trump lead

A trump lead is often a good idea when the bidding suggests that dummy's trumps may be used for ruffing. It can be particularly effective when holding declarer's side suit

	North	
	KQ76	
	QJ5	
	K3	
	9854	
West		East
92		J10853
A63		72
AJ107		92
Q1063		KJ72
	South	
	A4	
	K10984	
	Q8654	
	A	

Dealer South E/W vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1H
Pass	1S	Pass	2D
Pass	3H	Pass	4H
All pass			

An aggressive North may bid 4H at their second bid counting only 7 losers opposite an opening hand. However with no Aces or singletons a more cautious approach of an invitational bid is more appropriate. South, with a known heart fit and just 5 losers bids game despite having just a 13 point count.

As West your diamonds appear well placed and could be worth three tricks. North is likely to be short in diamonds and some of your winners may be ruffed. You should plan to remove those trumps starting with the lead of 3H. When you regain the lead with a diamond then play A and another heart removing dummy's remaining trumps.

Any other lead gives declarer the tempo to ruff just one diamond which is all that necessary to make the contract

Other situations that suggest a trump lead include:

When the opponents bid three suits and settle in the fourth

When declarer having rebid no trumps is put back into their suit

When your side has general strength in 3 suits and the opponents sacrifice at a high level

When your take out double is passed for penalties