

Handling a delicate trump suit

Zachary Yan (South) was declarer in the normal 4♠ contract. The lead was a club to the Ace and a heart return. With two outside losers the problem is how to play the trump suit for one loser.

Round: 9

Board: 25

Dealer: N

Vul: E-W

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	4	3	4	4
S	1	4	3	4	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

	♠A 6 5		
	♥A 8 3 2		
	♦K T 9 8 2		
	♣T		
♠K 8		♠Q 9 3	
♥Q J 7		♥9 6 5 4	
♦Q 4 3		♦J 6	
♣9 7 6 5 4		♣A 8 3 2	
11	♠J T 7 4 2		
8 HCP	♥K T		
	♦A 7 5		
14	♣K Q J		

Looking at the combined holding ♠A65 opposite ♠JT742 clearly there is no play if spades are 5-0. Only one chance if 4-1 and that is a singleton honour on your left, that involves cashing A♠ this loses to all 3-2 breaks (except KQ doubleton). So the question rests with what chances you have on various 3-2 breaks.

If West has ♠KO9 or ♠KO8 you can't avoid 2 losers. If East Has ♠KQx you can't win either.

If either player has ♠KQ doubleton you win so long as you play A♠ either on the first round or the second.

So can you win if West has ♠Hxx and East as ♠Hx? **Option 1**

Yes you can by starting with a low card from ♠Axx towards your J♠. If East plays low on the second round you drop the now bare honour with your Ace.

Can you win if West has Hx and East as Hxx? **Option 2**

Yes you can by starting by running J♠ or T♠ towards ♠Axx. If West plays low you play low. You drop the now bare honour with your Ace.

Both lines win when either player has ♠KQ doubleton.

Is it just a question of guessing one way or the other?

Not quite. There is one other case where Option 2 works but Option 1 fails. West has ♠KQ3 and East has ♠98.

Vincent and judging by the result most declarers got that play right, or maybe some of them received a more helpful lead.

On hand 19 it was all on, competitive bidding at its fiercest.

Round: 9
 Board: 19
 Dealer: S
 Vul: E-W

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	7	-	17	6	
W	7	-	17	6	

West	North	East	South
			3♦
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	Double	6♠	All Pass

♠Q42		
♥AT753		
♦QJ53		
♣8		
♠A9		♠KJT8653
♥KQ986	↓	♥
♦		♦AT
♣AQJT93		♣6542
9		
	♠7	
16HCP8	♥J42	
	♦K987642	
7	♣K7	

North could have made things even harder with a jump raise to 5♦ rather than lurking.

Note West's excellent reevaluation of his hand in the light of East's bidding.

The best contract of 6♣ was reached by six pairs, two bid 6♠, three in game contracts and one lucky NS got to play 5♦ undoubled.

How did you get on? With the benefit of seeing all the hands what would your sequence be?

Mark Hangartner