FIGHTING AGAINST A BAD TRUMP SPLIT

This is your hand as dealer.



You can fearlessly open 1. With only 5 hearts you have a a difficult second bid if partner doesn't support your hearts or doesn't bid 1. But with 6 hearts, you can always rebid them for your second bid. Here, your partner responds 1NT and raises your 2. rebid to 3. He is inviting you to game and it's time to revalue your hand.

Alfter your partner supports your major suit, you can add points to your starting point. You started with 12 HCP and added 2 for length. Now that North has show 2 card support, you can add one more for length and 1 more for the 4-card spade suit, such as it is. Now, with 16 total points you can accept and raise to 4. Another way of evaluating your hand is to count losing tricks. You have 3 spades (the maximum for any one suit), 1 in hearts and 1 in diamonds. You need partner to cover 2 of these and his invitation usually promises at least two cover cards.

West leads the $\mathbf{\Phi}Q$. How would you plan the play?



West leads •Q



You have 3 spades losers, 1 heart and 1 diamond loser. You could ruff two spades in the dummy, but you will need dummy's heart honors to pull the outstanding trump. If trumps split 3-2, pserhaps you could use one of those honors for ruffing. Another possibility exists in the diamond finesse. Finally, if either opponent would lead the A, you could discard a spade on the K. So there are possibilities.

The first decision is whether to take the first trick with the A. If you don't take it, West will keep the lead and switch. If he switches to the clubs, your K is in jeopardy if the A is in East. Better to take the A and let East win the next spade with his "known" K.

Your'e in the dummy and you might as well pull one round of trump. West wins his A and plays a low spade to East's A. East then takes his A which you ruff. Now you can trump a spade with dummy's last trump and discard a spade on the good A. It's now time for the finesse. Lead a low diamond to your 10. Thankfully, this holds and now you lead your high trump. East shows out. This means that West started with 4 hearts and he still has the 96 over your Q85. You can pull one of them with your Q but West still holds the setting 9. The answer to this problem is to use an end play. Strip your hand of the AK and throw West in with a low heart. If he leads the 9, you win the Q and your last trump is high; if he leads a diamond, you ruff with your low heart and pull his 9 with your Q.

	N North	W	N	Е	S
15 ■	 ▲ A8 ♥ J10 ◆ J964 ▲ K10963 	P P P	1NT 3♥ P	P P P	1♥ 2♥ 4♥
W West		ΕE	East		
♠ QJ7		♦ K1063 7			
♥ A964 ♦ 8753					
▼ 0755 ♣ QJ		◆ Q2 ◆ A87542			
	S South				
	♠ 9542				
	▼ KQ8532				
	♦ AK10	4 ∀ S		NS: 0	EW: 0
		4,0		140. 0	LW. 0

This is the entire deal:

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

http://tinyurl.com/y7u2heyx, 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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