

Learning Points – GNTQ Strips and End Plays and Bad Trump Splits

February 2, 2009

by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

LEVEL: Intermediate/Advanced

E Deals

♠ xx	Jim
♥ KQxx	
♦ Qxx	
♣ A9xx	

NS Vul

Spot Cards
Approximate

Saturday January 31, 2009. Flight B Grand National Team Qualifying Round, District 11, CBA Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070. Thanks to our teammates Rob Weidenfeld and Jim Edmiston.

♠	N	♠
♥	W 18	♥
♦	E	♦
♣	S	♣

Our teammates found an outstanding way to beat a 4-0 trump split and make a thin game. 11 HCP opposite 13 HCP games often need some help. Reading the cards accurately improves declarer's chances. IMPs incentivizes games like this one.

♠ Jxx	Rob
♥ A108xx	
♦ AJ6	
♣ K10	

Bidding

Rob and Jim use 2/1 Game Forcing. Even if Rob bid only 3♥, Jim would likely pursue the game given the trump length and ♠ shortness.

East	South	West	North
1♠	2♥	Pass	2♠ ¹
Pass	4♥ ²	Passed Out	

The Play South can count 8 winners (5♥, 1♦, and 2♣) off the top. Prospects for additional tricks can come from ruffing ♣ in hand (dummy reversal). The ♠ lead means 2 immediate losers. South might have 2 ♦ loses and perhaps a ♥ loser if ♥ split 4-0. 5 possible losers is not a good sign. In with the ♠K, West cleared

West Leads ♠x

1 = Invitational or Better ♥ raise.

2 = Accepts invitation.

the ♠ as North ruffed low. A small ♣ to the ♣K then the ♣10 toward the table (covered by West's ♣J) won by North's ♣A. Declarer played a low ♣ ruffed low and a small trump to the dummy's ♥K noting the small ♠ from East. Trumps were indeed 4-0. Missing ♥J9xx one loser is assured. Undeterred, declarer played the ♣9 ruffed low in hand, East pitching a ♦. A small ♥ to the ♥Q allowed the ♦ finesse (low to the ♦J). This succeeded as expected - after all East opened the bidding. Declarer cashed the ♦A completing the strip of West's hand. Down to the ♥A108, declarer led the ♥8 won by East with the ♥9. East was end played. South was now in command holding ♥A10 over East's ♥Jx. All in all South lost 1♥ and 2♠. 4♥+4 for +620 earned 3 IMPS as teammates came to the table with a -500 sacrifice.

Post Mortem

In adverse circumstances, hope distribution is on your side. South eliminated all of West's out cards (the Strip) and threw West in at trick 11 (the End Play) preserving a valuable tenace in trumps.

At IMPS we strive to bid vulnerable games that are 38% chance or better. Why? Ignoring equal results at both tables, IMP scoring guides what risk we should take:

	<u>Our Score</u>	<u>Their Score</u>	<u>Net Score</u>	<u>IMPS</u>
<u>Vulnerable</u>				
We bid and make, they make a partial.	+620	-170	+450	+10
We bid and fail, they make their partial	-100	-140	-240	-6
<u>Nonvulnerable</u>				
We bid and make, they make a partial.	+420	-170	+250	+6
We bid and fail, they make their partial	-50	-140	-190	-5

For nonvulnerable games, risk and reward are about equal, so a 55% chance is adequate. Vulnerable games offer 5:3 payoff odds. This means that Vulnerable games with odds no worse than 3:5 are a breakeven proposition (net 0 over time). That translates to 37.5% risk [for example, 2% points better than a 3-3 break when you hold a 5-2 suit (35.5%)]. Risk exceeds expected value only in dire circumstances.

Learning Pointers:

- 1) See a bad trump split as an opportunity – look for ways to strip and end play the opponent with long trumps.
- 2) Bid those close Vulnerable games at IMPS. Bid those 50% or 1 finesse non-vulnerable games too. Make them by reading the cards well and using what you know.