

Learning Points – Declarer Play – When Trumps split 5-0

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Declarer Play Level: Intermediate

South Deals None Vul Swiss Teams Round 6 of 8	♠ QJ ♥ 10987 ♦ AQ10954 ♣ 9	Steve
♠ 10543 ♥ - ♦ K876 ♣ KJ654	N W E S	♠ K876 ♥ QJ532 ♦ J ♣ Q87
Bruce	♠ A92 ♥ AK64 ♦ 32 ♣ A1032	NS: ????

Wednesday 2-Session Stratified Swiss Team, Afternoon & Evening
 May 5, 2010 at the Cincinnati Flying Pig Regional Tournament. My partner is Bruce Parent. We play 2/1 Game Force.

OK, so a Swiss Team result of 4-3-1 is nothing to write home about. That doesn't mean there weren't any interesting hands to share. Sometimes a hand sticks with you because of the many ways to play and defend. Sometimes you wonder "Can this hand be beat?" Here's my partner Bruce Parent with his thoughts about one such hand we bid and he declared at the recent Flying Pig Regional.

South	West	North	East
1N	2♣ ¹	Double ²	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

1=DONT (♠s & higher suit)
 2=Stayman (Rose Double – they stole my bid!)
 West leads the ♣5

"Here's a hand that I thought was cute at the time. I was in 4♥ and my first play in trumps was a ♥ to the Ace revealing ♥QJxxx on my right. When the smoke had cleared I had made 11 tricks and commented well that will be a nice story hand. It was felt that if the defense led back a high trump the first time they were in that the hand could be defeated. I have been playing this hand over in my head for some time and discovered that even that cannot defeat

the hand. I put the hand into Deep Finesse (a double dummy solver that estimates the number of tricks each side can make on any given hand) and the program said the defense could not defeat the 4♥ contract.

That makes this hand one of genuine interest."

The Bidding

South's opening is a very standard 15-17 1 NT. The 2♣ call by LHO is DONT, showing ♣s and a higher suit. Responder's double simply said "Stayman" (a Rose Double, meaning "they stole my bid partner"). Many defensive bidding approaches use Double and 2♣ to interfere over a 1NT opening frequently. We use the Rose Double and SYSTEMS ON over their double and 2♣ to keep our constructive bidding arsenal intact. Finding a 4-4 ♥ fit North duly bid the game.

The Play

- 1) "West's opening lead was the ♣5 to the ♣Q and ♣A.
- 2) A ♦ was finessed to the ♦Q with the ♦J from East.
- 3) A ♥ was led to the ♥2 and ♥A with West showing out!!
- 4) Another ♦ was finessed to the ♦9 with East ruffing with the ♥3."

"There are 2 things East can do to try to defeat the hand. One is to pitch 2 ♣s or 2 ♠s on ♦s and over-ruff dummy. The other and best is to lead trumps and cut down on the ruffs declarer is counting on. Both these defenses eventually fail. Letting the lead stay in dummy concedes an extra trick to declarer, while forcing declarer to win in his own hand allows declarer to take additional ruffs in dummy."

*Position at trick 5
East on lead...*

	♠ QJ ♥ 1098 ♦ A1054 ♣ -	Steve
♠ 1054 ♥ - ♦ K8 ♣ KJ64	N W E S	♠ K876 ♥ QJ5 ♦ - ♣ 87
Bruce	♠ A92 ♥ K64 ♦ - ♣ 1032	

“Pitching a ♣ (or ♠) when the ♦A is led from dummy can be countered by dummy leading a trump back to declarer's hand and then ruffing the suit where East took one pitch before East can pitch his last card.”

Position at
trick 8
East on lead...

		♠ J	Steve
		♥ 10	
		♦ A1054	
		♣ -	
♠ 105	N	♠ K87	
♥ -	W E	♥ J5	
♦ K8	S	♦ -	
♣ KJ		♣ 8	
		♠ A9	
		♥ 64	
Bruce		♦ -	
		♣ 103	

“East can prevent this by returning the ♥Q after taking his first ♦ ruff. This forces South to use up his ♥K to win the trick. Declarer now ruffs a ♣ in dummy and finesses the ♠Q (it does no good to cover the first ♠). This creates the threat that East can ruff a ♦ high and return his last trump to take out dummy's last trump. Declarer counters this by **leading a low ♦ to ruff**.

If East ruffs this high, then the last trump is an entry to dummy, removes East's last trump as well, and dummy's ♦s are now all good (the ♦A drops West's ♦K). This means East cannot ruff the small ♦ high and either ruffs small or takes a pitch.”

Now Declarer cashes the ♠A and takes his ruff in whatever suit East has pitched. This is declarer's 9th trick and leading the ♦A lets declarer score his last trump *en passant* to make the contract.”

At the table, Bruce found East ruffing ♦s at every turn. Bruce made 5 ♥s for a game swing! Well done partner. Thanks for the hand analysis and insights from this interesting position too!

Learning Points

1. Some hands are worth spending additional time analyzing after the fact. This *post hoc* analysis often leads to great insight that will help in similar situations you'll face in the future.
2. When faced with a bad trump split, try to score your trumps individually, or set up an *en passant* situation to add additional tricks to your ledger.
3. When Declarer has a bad trump split, try to force declarer or lead trumps to limit the number of ruffs declarer can make. 1 trump led eliminates 2 potential tricks for declarer.
4. When opponents play an unusually high card on your winning trick, prepare for a bad split and plan your play accordingly.
5. Check out the Deep Finesse website (www.deepfinesse.com) if you are serious about post-mortem analysis!
6. For more information on DON'T, Hamilton, Capiletti, Astro and other approaches to interfere over opponents INT check out the web! A search will return lots to think about.

Keywords: score trumps en passant, Double Dummy Analyzer, DONT, Rose Double,