Trump Management when Declaring

When to draw trumps: Ask yourself these questions....

1. Do you have all the tricks you need? You must count losers in a suit contract.

2. Do you need to trump anything in the dummy? If so, you must postpone until after trumping losers.

3. Can you afford to lose the lead to a high trump, before getting rid of other losers? Maintaining control when high trump out (ducking)

4. Do you have too many quick losers? Where to put them?

Quick losers - Immediate Slow losers - After two rounds of a suit played

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After the opening lead has been made, count declarer points, and dummy points together. From this you have learned just what high cards your opponents hold.

Next, determine from the bidding why this PARTICULAR lead was made i.e - if an honor - it tends to place other honors in the lead suit. If there are 2 or 3 honors out in a suit, and it is NOT lead - honors are split, or are in your Right Hand Opponents hand. Were there overcalls, indicating suit lengths?

Next, determine the correct line of play - how many tricks do you need, what tricks are available, what finesses are helpful, unnecessary etc.

After every trick, total up suits - rethink your play according to your plan, if necessary. Watch the spot cards - could they help you play the hand differently, by noticing what is missing vs what has been played?

For example, you are leading trump - your combined holding is AKQ10984. On the lead of the Ace, your left hand opponent plays the Jack. What does this tell you?

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Under normal circumstances, how many losers do you have in these hands?

Dummy AJ83 Dummy J1083 Dummy 1083 Dummy 1083

You --KQ742------KQ742-------A7642------AQJ42

Losers?_____ _____ _____ _____

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How to develop this suit - play straight out, play to promote, or finesse?

_____ _____ _____ _____

Opening lead against 4s in the following hands is the Q of Hearts.

Decide whether to draw trumps immediately or not: give reason.....

Dummy ---- Dummy ---- Dummy

AQ86-----Q1082----H964

A95------AK3------A84

742------J8-------AQ3

K54------KQJ5-----Q74

Declarer-Declarer-Declarer

KJ754----KJ976----Q10873

1083-----984------762

Q--------Q10------K5

AQJ2-----A82------AK8

Quick Losers?_____ _____ _____

Slow Losers? _____ _____ _____

Total Losers?_____ _____ _____

Draw trumps? _____ _____ _____

Reason (losers)_____ _____ _____

How are you expecting these suits to split?

Dummy --A8642--Dummy--AK864-- Dummy --AK964

DeclarerK7----Declr--32--Declarer---2

Expected Suit Split_____ _____ _____

How many times generally must you trump in this suit to establish it?

_____ _____ _____

DummyA97632DummyAK9842DummyAQ742

Declr5Declarer--53Declarer-K5

Expected Suit Split_____ _____ _____

How many times generally must you trump in this suit to establish it?

_____ _____ _____