

PULLING TRUMPS AND NOT PULLING TRUMPS by Maritha Pottenger

Some experts have suggested that only about 40% of hands in a trump contract require Declarer to pull trumps immediately. A skilled Declarer must identify correctly those hands in which trumps should be removed right away, and those hands which require a postponement of the drawing of trumps. Identifying and counting your tricks as Declarer is the vital first step, as ever, at the bridge table.

It is important to **pull trumps** when:

- 1) Opponents are threatening to ruff (or even develop a cross-ruff).
- 2) You have a long suit ready for discards, but could be cut off from the long suit if you do not remove all of the opponents' trumps.
- 3) You have a long suit to develop, but risk getting it ruffed if you try to develop it before pulling trumps.
- 4) You have no reason NOT to pull trumps.

It is important to **NOT pull trumps** immediately when:

- 1) You are best off playing the hand on a cross ruff.
- 2) You need to ruff one or more losers in the short trump hand BEFORE pulling trumps.
- 3) You need to develop a quick discard before letting the opponents in too many times.
- 4) You need trumps for transportation in developing a long suit.
- 5) You need a high trump as an entry card once your long side suit is developed.
- 6) You need to do a dummy reversal in order to make enough tricks for your contract (or overtricks at matchpoints).
- 7) Where "higher priorities" exist, e.g., you may need to cut communications between opponents before pulling trumps.