

**Board 2**  
 East Deals  
 N-S Vul

	♠ Q 5 4		
	♥ J 10 9 3		
	♦ 9 6		
	♣ J 6 5 2		
♠ A K 6	♠ 7 3 2		
♥ 8 4 2	♥ A Q 6		
♦ 8 5	♦ A K Q J 10		
♣ K 10 9 8 4	♣ A Q		
	♠ J 10 9 8		
	♥ K 7 5		
	♦ 7 4 3 2		
	♣ 7 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
6 NT	All pass		

**Auction Commentary:** East has 22 HCP, so they open 2 ♣. They are too strong to open 2 NT which shows 20-21 HCP. West's 2 ♦ bid is "waiting", giving partner a chance to describe their powerful hand. When East shows 22-24 HCP and a balanced hand with 2 NT, West jumps to slam. West gives themselves an extra point for having a good 5-card suit, so they count themselves for 11, 10 HCP and 1 for the suit. Since East has at least 22, the slam should have a good play.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ J (top of a series)

**Play Commentary:** East can see 11 tricks on top, 2 top spades, 1 top heart, 5 diamonds and 3 top clubs. The 12th trick can come from either the clubs breaking 3-3 or the heart finesse. Pretty good, right? We can win the first spade, cash the ♣ AQ, run the diamonds, go back to dummy with the other top spade and test the clubs. If they don't split, we try the heart finesse. Can we do any better?

Take a longer look at the club suit. See that ♣ T98? Once the ♣ J has been forced out, they are worth two tricks on their own. What if we win the ♣ A, overtake the ♣ Q with the ♣ K, and then continue clubs? True, we give up a trick to the ♣ J, but we now have FOUR club tricks guaranteed, instead of three. 2 spades, 1 heart, 5 diamonds and FOUR clubs is 12, and we are home and dry one hundred percent of the time.

**Takeaway:** When partner complains that you wasted the ♣ Q, just smile and apologize as you mark down the +990.

**Board 6**

East Deals  
E-W Vul

		♠ 5 4 3		
		♥ 2		
		♦ 6 5 3 2		
		♣ K 10 8 6 2		
♠ K Q J 10 9 8 2			♠ 7 6	
♥ A J			♥ K 8 7 6 5	
♦ Q 10 9 8			♦ J 4	
♣ —			♣ A J 9 5	
		♠ A		
		♥ Q 10 9 4 3		
		♦ A K 7		
		♣ Q 7 4 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		Pass	1 ♥	
4 ♠	All pass			

**Auction Commentary:** West has a 4-loser hand with a self-sustaining spade suit. West knows what suit is going to be trumps, and they need only one card from East to make a game, so it is best to just bid it.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 2. Hearts are partner's suit and we're hoping to get a ruff.

**Play Commentary:** At first glance, it seems simple; we have two diamond losers and one spade loser. There is a fly in the ointment though; we are missing the ace of trumps, and we KNOW that North has singleton heart. South is going to be able to win the ♠ A on the first round and give partner a heart ruff. Down 1. What can we do?

Well, what do we normally do with our losers? DISCARD THEM! Win the opening lead in the dummy with ♥ K, and then play the ♣ A and discard the ♥ A!. For fun, you can look stricken, as if you've made a terrible mistake. Continue with a trump, and now, when South wins and eventually plays a heart, you can ruff high, draw the other trumps, and set up the diamonds.

**Takeaway:** Sometimes, you have a loser because you have a winner that will get ruffed. Look for opportunities to discard them if you can, just like you would a "regular" loser.

**Board 9**

North Deals  
E-W Vul

	♠ A K Q J 10 9 5										
	♥ J 6 4										
	♦ 5										
	♣ A Q										
♠ 7 6	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 10 8		♥ A 9 7									
♦ A Q 7		♦ J 10 9 8 3 2									
♣ J 10 7 4 3		♣ 9 5									
	♠ 8 4										
	♥ Q 5 3 2										
	♦ K 6 4										
	♣ K 8 6 2										
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>								
	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT								
Pass	4 ♠	All pass									

**Auction Commentary:** With at worst 5 losers and self-sustaining trump suit, North jumps to game as soon as they find South with a pulse.

**Opening Lead:** ♦ J (top of series). West plays the ♦ 7, leaving East, somewhat unexpectedly, on lead.

**Defensive Commentary:** East knows that North is out of diamonds, since West surely has ♦ AQ. Otherwise, North would have won the first trick. It isn't clear that East should change suits; it could be a disaster. East continues safely with another diamond.

**Play Commentary:** After ruffing, North takes stock of the hand. North has lost one diamond and will lose the ♥ AK. They have to avoid losing a third heart, but if they lead them themselves they will almost certainly lose three heart tricks. Thankfully, they can pitch a heart loser on the ♣ K after they cash the ♣ AQ.

You see what I did there, at the beginning of the paragraph? If North had waited until after ruffing the second trick to make the plan, they have likely waited too long. The ♠ 8 in the dummy is the only possible entry to the ♣ K. Did you ruff the second trick with the ♠ 5, the only card that you could reach the dummy with, or, did you consider the problems before playing to that trick, and ruff high -- (♠ A wins the most style points!).

Ruffing with the ♠ 5 at trick two leads to down 1, ruffing with a high spade, preserving the entry to dummy, leads to making the contract.

**Takeaway:** When you have a very strong trump suit, you should always have "trumping high" in the back of your mind when you play the hand. If you can afford to do it, the small trump(s) may provide you a crucial entry to an otherwise weak dummy.