

Blackwood on Bridge

By Easley Blackwood

To lead trumps or not to lead trumps, that is the question. Inexperienced players go wrong on this more than on any other department of declarer's play of the hand.

On about 75 per cent of your hands the proper procedure is to pick up the enemy's trumps as soon as you get the lead. This prevents your opponents from getting in their small trumps on your good cards in the side suits.

But on about one-fourth of your hands it is necessary to defer leading trumps for one reason or another. I have shown you a number of situations where that practice is desirable.

None vulnerable
Mr. Dale dealer

Miss Brash	Mr. Masters
S-Q-K 10 6	S-9 8 2
H-K 9 5 3	H-A 6
D-A 9	D-J 8 7 4 2
C-8 6 2	C-10 9 7

Mrs. Keen
S-K 7 5 3
H-9 2
L-10 5 3
C-K Q J 5

Mr. Dale
S-A 4
H-Q J 10 7 4
D-K Q 6
C-A 4 3

The bidding:
Date Keen Brash Masters
1 H Pass 1 S Pass
2 H Pass 3 H Pass
4 H All pass

Today's hand illustrates another reason for postponing trump leads. You will note that Mr. Dale cannot pull trumps without surrendering the lead, because one of the opponents has the ace of the trump suit hearts.

Mrs. Keen opened the king of clubs, and Mr. Dale won with the ace. Now if he had led trumps at once the opponents would have won and quickly cashed two club tricks. The success of the contract would then depend entirely on the spade finesse.

HAS BETTER PLAN

Mr. Dale had a better plan than that. Beginning at trick two he led three rounds of diamonds and on the third round got rid of one of dummy's clubs. Then he led trumps and Mr. Masters took the ace of hearts and led the 10 of clubs which held the trick.

He shifted to the nine of spades, and Mr. Dale ducked and lost the trick to the king. But that was all. The old boy made

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