

vulnerable.

Instructive in the bidding and play. EW are silent. South opens 1♠, North raises to 2♠, South bids?

♠ AJ10983
♥ 952
♦ 8
♣ AKJ

South evaluates their playing strength now a nine-card trump fit is found. The ♠A with ♠J10, means if North has one of ♠K or ♠Q South may lose no spades plus there is a good chance of no club losers. If North can cover one of South's red suit losers, 4♠ will be a good contract. So South jumps to 4♠ and doesn't torture North with 3♠. If North has the "right minimum", 4♠ will likely make. South didn't count points, they have an unbalanced hand with an "extra trump" trump fit. South sharpened their axe and evaluated their hand's trick-winning potential after North bid 2♠.

West leads ♦A and continues with ♦K against South's 4♠:

♠ 652
♥ AQJ103
♦ 1073
♣ 65

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AJ10983
♥ 952
♦ 8
♣ AKJ

South ruffs ♦K and counts and plans to reduce their losers.

1st Step: Losers from South, 1♠(or 2)+1♥+1♦+1♣ = 4

2nd Step: Reduce losers by? Finesse in ♥s and later discard ♣J on a ♥.

3rd Step: Your plan. Draw trumps first, take ♥ finesse and discard J♣.

Take no risks, draw trumps first.

Trick 3: Lead of ♠A draws ♠4 and ♠K. Continue drawing trumps.

Trick 4: ♠J is won by West's ♠Q (East discards ♣2). West continues with a ♦2 (best) forcing South to ruff. South draws West's last trump with ♠10, the hands are now:

♠ -
 ♥ AQJ103
 ♦ -
 ♣ 65

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9
 ♥ 952
 ♦ -
 ♣ AKJ

South has only have one trump, but this is all they need.

Trick 6: Lead ♥2 and finesse ♥Q which wins.

Trick 7: Lead ♣5 to ♣A so South can repeat the ♥ finesse.

Trick 8: Lead ♥9 and run it. Playing ♥s like this allows South to pick up four ♥s to ♥K with West. However East now wins ♥K.

Whatever East returns South claims the remaining tricks, discarding ♣J on ♥J. South makes 4♠ with minimal risk.

Club Results: At the club no South played 4♠ like this. The two Souths who were successful in 4♠ took the heart finesse before drawing trumps. An expert East would allow the first heart finesse to win, win the next heart finesse and give West a heart ruff and defeat 4♠. The other Souths started ruffing clubs and diamonds and ran themselves out of trumps and lost control and went down, unnecessarily so.

South, take no risks, draw trumps and finesse in hearts for a safe 10 tricks.

The EW hands were:

West: ♠Q74 ♥86 ♦AKJ62 ♣1094

East: ♠K ♥K74 ♦Q954 ♣Q8732

Summary:

When you have an unbalanced hand with an "extra trump" trump fit, counting points is like trying to chop wood with a blunt axe. Sharpen your axe, evaluate the playing strength of your hand by working through your suits, counting how many tricks you might win as declarer, taking into account what partner has shown. If not sure "bid more". As declarer have a plan - on this hand, the best plan was the simplest: draw trumps and set up your long side suit for winners.