

A Choice of Promotions

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Here is a hand where E-W can beat South's 3♥ contract in one of two ways, each involving a trump promotion.

Board 14			
East Deals	♠ J 10 7		
None Vul	♥ 9 8		
	♦ A Q 5 4		
	♣ 9 5 4 3		
	♠ K 2	♠ A Q 8 6 5 3	
	♥ Q 2	♥ J 3	
	♦ J 10 3 2	♦ 9 8 7	
	♣ A K J 10 7	♣ 6 2	
	♠ 9 4		
	♥ A K 10 7 6 5 4		
	♦ K 6		
	♣ Q 8		
West	North	East	South
		2 ♠	3 ♥
All pass			

With trumps 2-2, it may appear that the defense can manage four black suit winners and nothing else. But the defense can also rustle up a trump trick. West cashes the ♣A and ♣K and leads a third club. East must ruff with the ♥J and now the defense has a trump trick, because an overruff by declarer sets up West's ♠Q. But do you see the snag? Yes, of course, declarer won't overruff, instead he'll dump a spade loser, still making nine tricks.

Let's try it a different way. This time the defense starts out by cashing its *spade* winners, and, at trick three, East leads another spade. As before, this promotes a trump trick for the defense, whether declarer ruffs high or low. But, that won't do either; again he'll wriggle out of his predicament by pitching a loser, this time it will be a club.

OK, here's the defense's last chance to get it right. They must cash *all four* of their side-suit tricks first. So, the ♣A, ♣K, ♠K, ♠Q take the first four tricks. Now, at trick five, another spade from East dooms declarer. The defense having cashed all their winners first, Declarer has no losers left to pitch, and this time the trump promotion produces a fifth trick. Down one.

Post Script It may be trump promotion overkill, but there is even a *third* one on this deal. Picture East declaring 2♠ (perhaps South was snoozing through the auction). The ♥A, ♥K are cashed, then the three diamond winners. When North leads a fourth diamond, Declarer is helpless, and the defense has conjured up the setting trick in trumps.