

Don't Overruff!

by [Brian Gunnell](#)

You are South, defending 3♠. You must make *three* good plays in order to beat this contract. Are you up to the challenge?

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K 5		
	♥ A K 10 9 8		
	♦ J		
	♣ K J 9 8 5		
♠ 2	♠ Q J 10 9 7 4 3		
♥ Q 7 6 4	♥ 5 3		
♦ K Q 7 5 2	♦ A 10 3		
♣ Q 10 4	♣ A		
	♠ A 8 6		
	♥ J 2		
	♦ 9 8 6 4		
	♣ 7 6 3 2		

West	North	East	South
		1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	2 ♥	2 ♠	Pass
Pass	3 ♣	3 ♠	All pass

First of all, let's admire declarer's robust spade suit. The ♠10 and ♠9 are big cards. After the high enemy spades have been knocked out, those intermediates can look after the rest of the suit. In fact, even if the trumps split 4-1, that lovely ♠9 will come to the rescue and make sure that the enemy ♠8 does no damage. Well, "Phooey!" is what N-S have to say to about that. They are about to score their lowly ♠8, even though trumps are 3-2!

You (South) lead the ♥J. That holds the trick, partner playing the ♥10. You lead another heart, this one being won by partner's ♥8. Declarer ruffs the third round with the ♠9, and it's time for your first good play. *Don't overruff!* Now declarer leads the ♠Q, and you make your second good play, *you duck your ♠A*. Well, perhaps that play was not so brilliant; there was no rush to take that trick. And, anyway, you would look extremely foolish if your ♠A crashed partner's singleton ♠K. As it happens, partner wins the trick with the ♠K and, with relentless single-mindedness, leads another round of hearts. Declarer ruffs with the ♠10 and it's time for the third good play. *Don't overruff!* That's right, your stubborn refusal, on three occasions, to play the ♠A has orchestrated a trump promotion. The defense scores two hearts and three trumps for down one. Who would have thought that ♠A86 would produce *two* natural trump tricks?