

Dummy Reversal

(Exception to Ruffing in the Short Hand)

On some deals it is inconvenient to ruff in the short hand and easy to ruff in the long hand. Unfortunately ruffing in the long hand generally does not gain a trick unless the long hand becomes the short hand after multiple ruffs. Here is an example:

Contract: 4 ♠ by South

♠ J 10 3

♥ Q 5 3

♦ A 9 7 6

♣ A Q 4

♠ 7 5 2

♥ A 10 8

♦ Q 10 2

♣ J 9 8 2



♠ 9 6

♥ K J 9 2

♦ K J 8 5 3

♣ 10 3

♠ A K Q 8 4

♥ 7 6 4

♦ 4

♣ K 7 6 5

Lead: ♠ 2

On this deal you have three heart losers and one club loser in the main hand (South). It looks like your best chance for a 10th trick is a 3-3 club break, but a 4-2 break is more likely. What about ruffing your fourth club in dummy? This would work if the opponent who is short in clubs held no more than two trumps, but most of the time it would fail and one of your club winners would be ruffed.

A much better plan is to ruff diamonds in your hand. This requires *three* ruffs to gain only one trick, but it is convenient to do and there are adequate entries to dummy. Win the opening trump lead in your hand and lead a diamond to the ace; ruff a diamond, lead a trump to dummy; ruff a diamond high; club to the queen; ruff a diamond high; club to the ace; draw the last trump. This line of play works on 4-2 club breaks and would produce an *overtrick* if the clubs happened to break 3-3.

The technique of converting the long trump hand into the short trump hand is called a “dummy reversal.” For this technique to work you need be able to ruff enough in the long hand to make it the short hand. You also need some high trumps in the short hand to effectively draw trumps after you take your ruffs.