

Ruffing (trumping) in Dummy

NG34Bridge

Using Declarer's Trumps?

Normally you do not benefit by ruffing cards in your own hand if you have more trumps than dummy. Plan to ruff losers in the shorter trump hand. Trumps in the longer trump hand will win anyway, and there is a danger that by shortening declarer's holding before drawing trumps you will lose control of the trump suit and the opponents will be able to cash winners without the danger of being ruffed.

Contrast these two layouts of two suits with spades as trumps:

<i>A.</i>	<i>B.</i>
Dummy	Dummy
♠ 10 9 8	♠ 10 9 8
♥ A 3 2	♥ 2
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Declarer	Declarer
♠ A K Q J 7	♠ A K Q J 7
♥ 4	♥ A 4 3

In A, you can make just six tricks, five spades plus ♥ A. It doesn't help you to cash ♥ A, voiding your hand, then ruff ♥ 2; you're making that spade anyway.

However, in B, cashing ♥ A and ruffing ♥ 3 gains you an extra trick because you're ruffing in dummy with a trump that would otherwise have fallen helplessly under yours. You can cross to your hand and then ruff ♥ 4, scoring another extra trick: eight tricks in all.

Ruffing in the short trump hand (normally dummy) is a fabulous way to make extra tricks. But you need to do it early. You cannot draw trumps (not all of them) or you'll draw dummy's trumps. So next time you declare a trump contract, look to see if there's a shorter suit in dummy. If so, void it early, so you can do some ruffing with trumps that wouldn't otherwise win.