

Playing a Bridge Hand RUFFING IN DUMMY

One of the big advantages of playing a suit contract is that we can trump (or “ruff”) our losers — usually in the hand with the shorter trumps, which is most often the dummy. A critical decision we face at Trick 1 is whether to draw trumps right away, or take ruffs first.

Example:

| | | |
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| | ♠ T62 | |
| | ♥ Q | |
| | ♦ AT84 | |
| | ♣ A8542 | |
| ♠ Q97 | _____ | ♠ J3 |
| ♥ J76 | | ♥ KT9432 |
| ♦ 63 | | ♦ 975 |
| ♣ KQJ96 | | ♣ 73 |
| | ♠ AK854 | |
| | ♥ A85 | |
| | ♦ KQJ2 | |
| | ♣ T | |

South is in 6♠ and the ♣K is led. We will almost certainly lose to the Q or J of trumps — we must hope not both if there is a chance to make the slam. So we must eliminate all other losers. Note, we should NOT ruff clubs in our hand as we’re counting on those long spades anyway. We must ruff on the side with fewer trumps, which is dummy. We postpone drawing trumps until our two losing hearts are both ruffed. Play the ♥Q to the ♥A and ruff a heart; return to hand on the ♦K and ruff another heart. Now we draw two rounds of trumps and everything else is good except the one trump loser.

Tips on ruffing in dummy

- When you need to trump losers in dummy, you might have to wait to draw trumps.
- If you can afford to, without risking the later loss of a trump trick, ruff high in dummy to prevent being overruffed.
- Usually, ruffing in the short hand gives you extra tricks. Ruffing in the long-trump hand does not.