




Practise ruffing losers in dummy (NOT drawing trumps).  
Emphasis on ruffing in short hand. Part 2 of 2. ACOL version.  
Updated winter 2015/6

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Y1 VBlue #10 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 4H     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                                 | By: South        |
| Dealer: North                                    | Board #: 1       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>           | Vulnerable: None |

|         |   |         |
|---------|---|---------|
|         | North   |         |
|         | ♠ 73  |         |
|         | ♥ KJT   |         |
|         | ♦ 653   |         |
|         | ♣ K8632   |         |
| West    |  | East    |
| ♠ QT5   |   | ♠ KJ962 |
| ♥ 6     |   | ♥ 7532  |
| ♦ QJT92 |   | ♦ 74    |
| ♣ JT74  |   | ♣ A9    |
|         | South   |         |
|         | ♠ A84   |         |
|         | ♥ AQ984   |         |
|         | ♦ AK8   |         |
|         | ♣ Q5  |         |

This series continues the theme of ruffing losers in the dummy. Remember, many hands demand that you draw trumps as quickly as you can. However, there are an equal number of deals where you need to do something else. How can you tell what type of hand it is?

Remember, success is all down to **counting**. When dummy appears you must carefully count your winners. If you can see sufficient for your contract then – in general – you should draw trumps. If you can't see enough tricks then you should look to ruff some of your losers.

It is only worthwhile ruffing losers if you ruff in the **short trump hand**. Ruffing in the long hand – in general – achieves nothing and should be avoided unless forced to do so.

Hand 1 forces you to think about that extra trick.

Where is it coming from?

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| -    | P     | P    | 1♥    |
| P    | 2♥    | P    | 4♥    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♦ Q

### Bidding.

We open 1♥ and partner, with a slightly awkward choice, raises to 2♥. You might not like the 2♥ raise on the North cards but this is something of a question of **style**. At VuBridge we believe that raising partner's suit with a 4-4-3-2 hand with no intermediate cards is superior to a frankly grotesque 1NT response. Further examples will follow in this series...

[Note that a 1NT response from North would be raised to 3NT by us. A Spade lead from East would kill that one stone dead].

After the 2♥ raise it is obvious to venture 4♥ on the South cards.

### Play.

West leads the ♦Q against 4♥. **Count, count, count**. The formula never varies. We must count our tricks and make a **Plan** before playing a card.

Here we can count an easy nine tricks (to wit: one Spade, five Hearts, two Diamonds and a slow Club). Where is the tenth trick?

Well, ruffing Clubs in hand is certainly **not** the answer. If we do we'd make five Heart tricks – and we have already counted those. The essence of this type of hand is to make **six** trump tricks and that can only be achieved by ruffing in the **short trump hand** – in dummy.

If you wish, as an alternative way of seeing the problem, you may care to look at losers in the closed hand. Here there are two Spade losers, no Heart losers, one Diamond loser and one Club loser. So the problem is – how can we eliminate a (Spade) loser? By ruffing it in dummy, of course! To that end we need to ruff a Spade on table and the only way to do that is to clear a path by voiding dummy of the suit.

So we take the ♦K at trick one and play off the ♠A and another Spade. The defenders take that and play back another Diamond. That's no problem – we win that in hand and immediately ruff a Spade on table, simultaneously

increasing our number of Heart winners to six and decreasing the number of losers to three.


From here it's easy We draw all the outstanding trumps and set up the tenth trick by knocking out the ♣K.

We make one Spade, **six** Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club.



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| Y1 VBlue #10 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 4S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                                 | By: South        |
| Dealer: East                                     | Board #: 2       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>           | Vulnerable: None |

|         |   |         |  |
|---------|---|---------|--|
| North   |   | East    |  |
| ♠ K63   |  | ♠ 82    |  |
| ♥ 42    |   | ♥ AQ987 |  |
| ♦ K84   |   | ♦ T762  |  |
| ♣ 87652 |   | ♣ 43    |  |
| South   |   |         |  |
| ♠ A9754 |   |         |  |
| ♥ J53   |   |         |  |
| ♦ AQJ   |   |         |  |
| ♣ AK    |   |         |  |

In this deal you have a familiar problem – how can you avoid four losers in a game contract?

Put another way, can you see your way to ten tricks?

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| -    | -     | P    | 1♠    |
| P    | 2♣    | P    | 4♣    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♣ Q

### Bidding.

We reach 4♣ after the simple sequence of 1♠ – 2♣ – 4♣. When dummy appears we see that partner is minimum for his raise but that 2♣ is entirely reasonable. With a 5-3-3-2 hand 2♣ is a better reply than 1NT, at least in our view.

### Play.

We have to count our tricks after the ♣Q lead. What **winners** can we see? Well, there are three or four Spade tricks (much depends on the trump break), three Diamonds and two Clubs. In terms of **losers** there are one or two Spades and three Hearts (looking at the closed hand only). There are no minor-suit losers.

The first thing that is apparent is that if trumps break 4-1 we are surely going down. Why? Because then we would be certain to lose two trumps and two Hearts. So we have to rely on a 3-2 trump break. If we make that assumption then we can see four Spade winners and five minor-suit winners – for nine tricks. When we are short of a winner we don't draw trumps (in general), we look around for ruffs.

Again, to beat the drum, ruffing Clubs in hand is pointless – that would be *ruffing in the long hand*. We need to seek a ruff in dummy. That can only come from trumping a Heart so the right play is to prepare to ruff a low Heart on table.

So we take the Club lead and immediately lead a Heart. East wins that and – alive to the danger – switches to a trump. Well defended but too late! We win that on table and patiently lead another Heart, voiding the dummy of the suit. West wins that trick to play another trump but we are in complete control.

We take the ♠A, ruff the losing Heart in dummy and relax. True, the opponents have the boss trump but that is all. We can play out our winners and let the opposition take the master Spade whenever they like. The only losers are two Hearts and a Spade.

West could defeat 4♣, of course. How? By leading a trump at trick one. Now the defenders


could take three rounds of trumps before we  
could ruff a Heart on table.

It is an instructive deal.



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| VB#10 Y1 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 4S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                             | By: South        |
| Dealer: South                                | Board #: 3       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>       | Vulnerable: None |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ AQ97</p> <p>♥ 76542</p> <p>♦ AT</p> <p>♣ 63</p> |   | <p>East</p> <p>♠ 5432</p> <p>♥ 83</p> <p>♦ KQ2</p> <p>♣ KT72</p> |  |
| West  |  |  |  |
| ♠   |   |  |  |
| ♥ KQJT  |   |  |  |
| ♦ 98764   |   |  |  |
| ♣ Q984  |   |  |  |
| <p>South</p> <p>♠ KJT86</p> <p>♥ A9</p> <p>♦ J53</p> <p>♣ AJ5</p> |   |  |  |

Where do your extra tricks come from on this deal?

Should you "Draw trumps first and then look around"?

Or is there something better?

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| -    | -     | -    | 1♠    |
| P    | 3♠    | P    | 4♠    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♥ K

### Bidding.

We reach 4♠ as South after an *invitational* bidding sequence of 1♠ – 3♠ – 4♠.

### Play.

West leads the ♥K and we contemplate the dummy. Counting our *winners* we can see only eight (five Spades and three Aces). Not enough. Counting *losers* we can see no Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds and two Clubs (remember, we are looking at the South hand here).

Now, two of these minor suit losers can be trumped in dummy – but only if we don't draw trumps. So we must pave the way for Club and Diamond ruffs in dummy. To that end we take the ♥A and play off the ♦A and another Diamond. East wins the ♦Q and leads a trump (good defence – when declarer is intent on ruffing things: lead trumps!)

We take that carefully in hand so that we can ruff a Diamond loser on table (in the *short trump hand*). Now we have to prepare the groundwork for a Club ruff in dummy. We could play off the ♣A and another Club (voiding dummy of Clubs) but slightly more elegant is to play a Club to the ♣J. West wins and cashes a Heart. We ruff the next Heart and are well placed to cash the ♣A and ruff a Club on table. At this point the closed hand is high, with winning trumps.

Note, again, that the two ruffs (a Club and a Diamond) were taken in the *short trump hand*. Ten tricks come from **seven** trump tricks and three Aces.



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| Y1 VBlue #10 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 4S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                                 | By: South        |
| Dealer: West                                     | Board #: 4       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>           | Vulnerable: None |

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| North   |        |
| ♠ KQJ   |        |
| ♥ 752   |        |
| ♦ 87532 |        |
| ♣ J8    |        |
| West    | East   |
| ♠ 643   | ♠ 52   |
| ♥ QJT9  | ♥ 8643 |
| ♦ Q9    | ♦ JT64 |
| ♣ KT96  | ♣ AQ4  |
| South   |        |
| ♠ AT987 |        |
| ♥ AK    |        |
| ♦ AK    |        |
| ♣ 7532  |        |

What are the right tactics here?

After playing the deal ask yourself how you might have defended the hand...

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| P    | P     | P    | 1♠    |
| P    | 2♠    | P    | 4♠    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♥ Q

### Bidding.

We open 1♠ and North gives that a simple raise to the two-level. After that it's routine to advance to game. That makes the auction 1♠ – 2♠ – 4♠.

Another three-card raise but, really, what is North's alternative? 2♦ is absurd with only 7 points and 1NT a gross distortion.

### Play.

West thinks he has found a sound lead with the ♥Q and we contemplate the dummy.

It is axiomatic to **count winners and losers**. We should be able to see that here are insufficient winners to justify drawing trumps. All we would make is five Spades, two Hearts and two Diamonds – for nine in all. Where can the tenth come from? Not by trumping Diamonds in the closed hand, that's for sure! **Don't ruff in the long hand.**

If we count losers, focusing on the closed hand, we can see four – all in Clubs. How can we eliminate a Club loser? By trumping it on table, that's how. Note that we will be ruffing in the *short trump hand*.

To prepare the groundwork we have to give up Club tricks. So we take the ♥A and lead a Club. The defenders can see our plan and know the counterplay – they immediately lead a trump. Nice try – no cigar! This defence comes too late. We win that and patiently give up another Club. The defenders grab that and play another trump but everything is under control. We win that (actually with the ♠A) and make the crucial play of ruffing a losing Club on table. After that it's plain sailing.

We come to hand (with a Heart) play off a trump to draw the last one and eventually concede our last loser (a Club) at the very end.

Note that if the opponents don't lead trumps we would make eleven tricks. Note also that East-West can defeat 4♠ if West leads a trump at trick one and the defenders play trumps every time they are on lead.

It's not easy to see that one from the West seat.  
Wouldn't you have led the ♥Q?



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| Y1 VBlue #10 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 2S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                                 | By: South        |
| Dealer: North                                    | Board #: 5       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>           | Vulnerable: None |

|        |  |         |  |
|--------|--|---------|--|
| North  |  | East    |  |
| ♠ K52  |  | ♠ Q87   |  |
| ♥ Q975 |  | ♥ AT86  |  |
| ♦ AQ5  |  | ♦ T2    |  |
| ♣ Q83  |  | ♣ K974  |  |
| West   |  | South   |  |
| ♠ JT   |  | ♠ A9643 |  |
| ♥ KJ3  |  | ♥ 42    |  |
| ♦ J984 |  | ♦ K763  |  |
| ♣ AJ62 |  | ♣ T5    |  |



A modest part-score deal, this one.

But can you see sufficient tricks for your contract?

How might you dispose of an irritating loser?

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| -    | 1NT   | P    | 2♠    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♠ J

This deal looks to be out of place. What does it have to do with the theme of ruffing in dummy? Oh, everything!

### Bidding.

North opens 1NT (12 to 14 points) and we make a weakness take-out of 2♠, ending the auction.

### Play.

Tired of misdefending West decides he'll lead a trump on this deal (it would have been best on Hands 2 and 4, anyway). Besides, what else should he lead? He has a barrel full of rotten apples to lead from.

We **count** our tricks and see four Spades (assuming the suit breaks 3-2) and three Diamonds. The Hearts and Clubs are too diaphanous to rely on for any solid tricks – the opponents would have to be very generous to allow us a trick there. So, seven tricks on a reasonable trump break.

What about losers? One Spade (again, assuming a 3-2 break), two Hearts and two Clubs. Five for certain. Now, what about Diamonds – fine if they break 3-3 but what if they are 4-2? There is a slow Diamond loser there as well, making six in all. Note that a 4-1 trump break makes 2♠ hopeless as there would be six losers without the option.

Right – how to play the hand? Well, deals like this aren't difficult once you have seen the theme. Cash the ♠A K (leaving the opponents with the master trump) and play the side-suit. It makes no odds at all if any of the ♦A, ♦K or ♦Q gets trumped by the opponents. If that happens the remaining ♠5 on table becomes a winner and takes care of the last Diamond.

As the cards lie, we cash the ♦A Q (*play the high cards from the short suit first*) and lead a Diamond to the ♦K. East can do no good for his side by trumping so we win the ♦K and ruff the last Diamond on table. East can please himself whether he over-ruffs (promoting all the little trumps in our hand to winning rank) or not. If he resists temptation then our eighth trick is the Spade ruff in the dummy. Heads we win, tails East loses.



The defence makes one Spade, two Hearts and two Clubs.



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| Y1 VBlue #10 Ruffing losers in dummy Part 2 ACOL | Contract: 4S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                                 | By: South        |
| Dealer: East                                     | Board #: 6       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>           | Vulnerable: None |

|       |      |      |      |
|-------|------|------|------|
| North |      | East |      |
| ♠     | QJT8 | ♠    | 54   |
| ♥     | Q653 | ♥    | AJ82 |
| ♦     | 74   | ♦    | T63  |
| ♣     | KQ9  | ♣    | T642 |
| South |      |      |      |
| ♠     | AK97 |      |      |
| ♥     | T4   |      |      |
| ♦     | A852 |      |      |
| ♣     | AJ8  |      |      |

Much of bridge bidding – as you will discover – is centred around locating a major suit distributed 4-4 between declarer and dummy.

Textbooks devote a lot of space to the way pairs should bid so that they don't miss these vital fits. What they neglect to say is how you should play the subsequent contracts.

Often, they are tricky beasts to handle...

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| -    | -     | P    | 1♠    |
| P    | 3♠    | P    | 4♠    |
| P    | P     | P    |       |

Lead: ♦ K

### Bidding.

Here we open 1♠ and locate our all-important 4-4 Spade fit immediately. Partner makes an *invitational* raise to 3♠ and, with 16 points, we have enough to bid game.

That makes the auction 1♠ – 3♠ – 4♠.

### Play.

West attacks the final contract of 4♠ with the ♦K lead.

Let's **count** the tricks. There are four Spades, no Hearts, one Diamond and three Clubs – a total of eight tricks. What about *losers*? No Spades, two Hearts, three Diamonds (looking at the South hand, remember) and no Clubs.

How can we eradicate some losers? By trumping them in dummy. Here, we must trump two Diamonds on table. This eliminates two losers and increases the winner count by making six trump tricks and four winners outside. This suggests that we must not draw trumps – if we do so we'd have insufficient Spades on table to take care of the losing Diamonds.

To get the timing right we take the ♦A and play back a Diamond immediately – voiding dummy of the suit. This prepares the groundwork nicely.

West sees our plan and tries his best to counter it by switching to a trump but we are well ahead of the game. We win that in hand with the ♠9 and ruff a Diamond on table. We then cross to the ♠J in the closed hand and ruff another Diamond.

With two ruffs safely in the bank the path is clear to draw the remaining trumps and enjoy the last two Club winners.

True, two Hearts have to be conceded to East-West but by then that really doesn't matter at all.