

Tidbit 11

Don't send a boy to do a man's job, when ruffing

Interpretation: As declarer, don't put yourself at risk of being over-ruffed if that is unnecessary. As defender, don't ruff low if you know declarer can over-ruff cheaply.

Example:

Dir: North
Vul: All

♠A8
♥AKJ2
♦1075
♣Q832

	North	
West	13	East
	South	

♠KJ10762
♥Q4
♦AK42
♣9

♠Q54
♥10875
♦83
♣AJ105

	93	
7	13	6

♠93
♥963
♦QJ96
♣K764

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	-	4	1	-
W	-	-	4	2	-

This was an example from Tidbit 3 concerning ruffing losers in your diamond suit before drawing trumps. You are East in 4S. Let's assume North has bid hearts along the way and South leads a heart. North takes the AH and KH and switches to a diamond. You win play the other high diamond and ruff a diamond in the dummy. You come back to hand via a club ruff and then ruff your fourth diamond with what? Certainly not the 5S. That would be sending a boy on a man's job and North will over-ruff with the 8S and you will go one down. You must ruff with the QS. If North over-ruffs they must use their AS which would win a trick anyway. It is clear here that North has only 3 x diamonds meaning you must ruff high but that is not always the case.

Example:

	North ♠6542 ♥4 ♦QJ1042 ♣AJ9	
West ♠AJ97 ♥10853 ♦K753 ♣Q	East ♠KQ83 ♥J2 ♦A6 ♣107542	
	South ♠10 ♥AKQ976 ♦98 ♣K863	

E/W vul. South dealer.

Bidding: 1H-Pass-1S-Pass-2H-Passed out

West leads the 3D, East wins with AD and plays the KS, South dropping the 10S. East now leads a diamond to West's KD and West, believing South had only a singleton spade, plays a third round of diamonds.

West is hoping that East will ruff the third round of diamonds and set up 1 to 2 x heart tricks for her. However, to do this, East must ruff high with the JH. This play is called an "uppercut" and requires sending a "man" not a "boy" to do the ruffing job. Note that this is an example of a play called a "trump promotion" and will only work if South has no loser to discard, in this case a second spade.

Exercise: Switch the East and West hands above and think of how another type of a trump promotion play could be executed by the defence to enable an additional trick..

Answer to Tidbit 10 exercise:

Dir: West
Vul: None

♠76
♥6
♦A83
♣AJ98654

♠QJ1053
♥K8742
♦Q75
♣--

North		East	
W	8	E	
South			

♠842
♥109
♦J106
♣KQ732

♠AK9		♣AK9	
♥AQJ53		♥AK9	
♦K942		♦K942	
♣10		♣10	

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	4	4	2	1	3
S	4	4	2	1	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

9
8 6
17

You are South in 3NT. West leads the QS from her sequence. In this case, West is the danger hand and you have a combined five card holding with 2 stoppers in the danger suit and the opportunity to duck once. In this situation and where you may have to let the defence in twice to make your contract, the guideline is to let the danger hand in first and then when the non-danger hand gets in second she has no more spades to lead to her partner, provided you ducked along the way. Let's say you duck the QS and win the JS continuation. Double dummy, seeing how badly the clubs are positioned what suit do you attack first and how? (This is counter-intuitive and not easy).

This was a difficult exercise because of the club position but, in the spirit of following the guideline and letting the danger hand in first, don't waste your diamond entry, just play AH and JH. If West has the KH that will be her last chance of an entry. You were never making more than 2 hearts anyway because you could finesse only once and you might just slip the JH through West. If West wins with KH and plays another spade win and lead a diamond covering the QD if West plays it. Otherwise play the 8D. You will end up making 2 x spades, 2 x hearts, 3 x diamonds and 2 x clubs because East will eventually have to lead them back to you herself. (she will be end-played with no other suit to lead).