

GETTING EXTRA TRICKS IN THE OPPONENTS' TRUMP SUIT by Maritha Pottenger

- 1) If you think **partner is leading a doubleton** and you have the Ace in that suit and a sure outside entry, take the Ace and lead back a card that is *suit preference* to indicate where your entry is. If you do NOT have an outside entry, signal encouragement on the first round of that suit. Hopefully, partner will have a trump entry and then will play the bottom of the doubleton to you and get that ruff!
- 2) If you think **partner is leading a singleton** and you have the Ace, take the Ace, and lead back the suit. The card you return should be *suit preference* to indicate where your entry (or possible entry) is for another ruff for partner.
- 3) When **partner leads a singleton and you have the Ace AND you have the Ace of trumps**, count how many times your partner will be able to ruff. If partner will only be able to ruff once anyway (having two trumps), you should consider doing one of two things rather than immediately giving partner a ruff. One option is to shift to your own singleton. Then, you can take Ace of trumps on first round, give partner a ruff, & partner can give you a ruff! The second option is to shift to a side suit where you know you need a trick to set the contract and you know that partner cannot profitably attack that suit from his/her side of the table. It may be vital to set up that side suit trick **before** you give partner a ruff. For example, Dummy has xxx in a side suit and you have xxxx behind Dummy. There is a good chance that partner is sitting with Kxxx or AQxx or AJxx behind Declarer and may need you to lead through.
- 4) **Uppercutting** Declarer or Dummy (one opponent ruffing in front of Declarer or Dummy with an intermediate spot card that forces a higher spot—or an honor—from Declarer or Dummy when they overruff) can promote trump tricks for partner.
- 5) It is often a good idea to **not overruff the first time when you have a sure trump trick and good intermediate spot cards**. Often you can generate another trump trick by waiting. For example, Declarer ruffs (on your right) with the Queen of trumps and xxx of trumps are in Dummy. If you have K10x, do NOT overruff. You are always getting your King. By waiting and killing the Jack next time, you will get TWO trump tricks instead of just one.
- 6) **If you have trump control** (e.g., the Ace in their trump suit) and you are playing a forcing game, **and both Declarer and Dummy are void in the suit in which you are forcing them to ruff, take your Ace on the round in which the last trump in the short-trump hand is played**. (That allows you to continue to force the long trump hand effectively.)
- 7) **Do not trump “air”** (ruffing in front of Declarer as s/he can discard a low card) if your trump can be used later to over-ruff Dummy or if keeping your trump will present a high nuisance value to Declarer.
- 8) **When you have the top trump, it is usually worthwhile to cash it** (particularly if you are getting “two for one”). For example, Declarer is in a 4-4 fit and cashes the AK, leaving your Queen outstanding. Generally you want to remove one more round of trumps when you get the lead. An exception is when you need to retain that master trump to stop Dummy from running a long suit.
- 9) **When you have the master trump and an outside entry, it is usually better to NOT over-trump Dummy**. Wait until you can get the lead in that other suit and **take “two for one” trumps with your master trump**. The exception is if you can see that Declarer’s side suit losers are going away (e.g., on a long suit in Dummy).
- 10) **When Declarer has no other side-suit losers, presenting Declarer with a (useless) ruff-and-sluff** is often an excellent play. [With a Forcing Game, if Declarer has to ruff once in hand and then again in Dummy with a 4-4 fit, the Defender with 4 trumps now has more than either Declarer or Dummy.] You must be sure the ruff-sluff is useless, i.e., the Defenders have NO MORE side suit winners.

11) **Look for opportunities to give a ruff-and-sluff** (when Declarer has no other side-suit losers) **which will void you or your partner at the same time.** This sets up a chance for one of you to do an uppercut or over-ruff Dummy or Declarer later.