

RUFF LOSERS IN THE SHORT TRUMP HAND (USUALLY DUMMY)

by Maritha

Generally, taking ruffs in the short trump hand provides extra trump tricks for you. You need to recognize those hands where ruffing in the long trump hand does NOT increase your trick total, but every ruff in the short trump hand is an extra trick. As with most guidelines, there are some exceptions. Times to NOT ruff in the short trump hand include:

When Ruffing Would Kill a Vital Entry.

If the short trump hand has a long suit, you need enough entries to develop and get back and cash winners in that long suit. If one of the entries is in the trump suit, taking a ruff may take away an essential entry and prevent you from using the long suit once you develop it.

When Ruffing Might Prevent You from (Effectively) Drawing Trumps.

Sometimes taking that ruff in the short trump hand blocks the trump suit and you would not be able to draw trumps thereafter. You could get “stuck” in that hand (usually dummy) and lose an extra trick or two because you did not pull all of the opponents' trumps.

When Dummy Reversal Will Get You More Tricks

On some hand, ruffing in the long trump hand and then eventually pulling trumps in the short trump hand (which must have at least 3 trumps with at least two good ones), will generate more tricks. When you calculate your plan for the hand, you need to identify these “Dummy Reversal” hands and play to make Dummy good—which might entail ruffing two or three or even four times in the long trump hand before pulling trumps with the former short trump hand (which has now become the long trump hand).