

DEFENDING AGAINST DIFFERENT DUMMY TYPES by Maritha Pottenger

Both from the auction & when dummy comes down, you should figure out the type of dummy and adopt the appropriate defense against it.

Dummy Types

Balanced Hand (no long suits; no great ruffing power in dummy): play passive

Dummy with Ruffing Power (but otherwise weak): play trumps at every opportunity

Dummy with Long Side Suit: If side suit is usable, defenders must be very aggressive and try to take their other side-suit tricks as quickly as possible. If long suit is not usable, defenders can play passively.

Dummy Fairly Balanced (3 trumps) but Declarer has shown 2-Suiter: a forcing game is often best by defenders. Change “often” to “almost always” if one defender has 4 trumps. Lead a suit that Declarer will be forced to trump in the long hand—and do it again every time you get in. If you have lots of strength in Declarer’s 2nd suit, you want to lead trumps as often as possible so that your winners do not get ruffed away in dummy.

Remember, passive defense is top-of-sequence and top-of-nothing and trump leads. Do not break new suits for Declarer.

When **dummy has a threatening long suit**, if you can **remove dummy’s entries** before Declarer can use that long suit, you win the battle. Or, **if Declarer has only one or two cards in dummy’s long suit and you can force him to use those up before trump are pulled**, Declarer will probably not be able to get all the discards s/he needs. Sometimes you can give partner a ruff in the threatening long suit WITHOUT setting it up for discards (You still retain top cards for control.)

Remember, in some hands (e.g., with a Jacoby transfer sequence), the “short trump hand” is Declarer and the long-trump hand is Dummy. Your goal is still to cut down on ruffs in the short trump hand.

Some Examples:

Dummy has xx x AQxxxx Jxxx and the contract is 4S. Partner leads the King of hearts and you have the Ace of hearts. If your hand is: xx Axxx KJ10x xxx, take the Ace of hearts and shift to a trump. (Partner may not be able to lead trumps from the other side of the table.) You know the diamond suit is NOT a threat, so you can afford to cut down on ruffs in dummy.

If your hand instead was xx Axxx xxxx Kxx, you should take the Ace of hearts and immediately shift to a LOW (promising an honor) club. You can see that the diamond suit in dummy is a grave threat and your side’s best hope is to cash a few club tricks before clubs are discarded on the diamonds.

Dummy has 10x 10x xxxx Jxxxx and Declarer has shown a STRONG hand with 5 hearts and 5 spades. Partner leads the Queen of diamonds. You rise Ace and Declarer’s King falls. If your hand is: xxx QJ98 A108 xxx, you must lead a trump back to cut down on heart ruffs in dummy. If, however, your hand is 9xxx xx A109x Q10x, you should lead a diamond back. If you can make Declarer ruff diamonds twice (in the long hand), you will have more trumps than Declarer does. (This is called the “forcing game.”)