

Play Low From Dummy

By Billy Eisenberg

Most declarers realize the advantage of playing low from dummy when the queen is led through a king at trick one. The ace is almost certainly over the king and by playing low once or twice from the dummy the ace may fall on the right, establishing the king as a trick.

However, there are also many other holdings where declarer can gain a full trick by playing low from dummy in situations that are not as well known.

My first example is from the final stages of an international trial:

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

		♠ K J 8 5		
		♥ Q 4		
		♦ K J 4 2		
		♣ A Q 7		
♠ 10 9 6 4 2			♠ A 7 3	
♥ J 7			♥ K 9 2	
♦ 10 6 5 3			♦ A Q 9 8 7	
♣ 10 2			♣ 8 4	
		♠ Q		
		♥ A 10 8 6 5 3		
		♦ —		
		♣ K J 9 6 5 3		

West North East South

	1 NT	Pass	2 ♦ ¹
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♣ ²
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♣ ³
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	6 ♣ ⁴

All pass

1. transfer to hearts
2. game force
3. slam try
4. we were behind at the time

When West led the five of diamonds (playing third and fifth leads) I immediately played low from dummy. Why? Why not play the jack, hoping that West had underled the queen?

Well, if West really had led away from the queen, East was going to have to make a pretty good play of the ten from A-10 if he happened to hold that card. Most players would play the ace. Besides, there was a strong possibility that East held both the ace and the queen, in which case playing the jack from dummy would be no use at all.

All in all, I felt the percentages were very strongly in my favor and that to play low from dummy was the best way to build up a diamond trick for a spade discard.

As it happened East, fearing his partner might have led from 5-3 doubleton, played the queen. I ruffed, entered dummy with a club and played the king of diamonds, covered by the ace and ruffed.

Dummy was re-entered with a club, the spade discarded on the jack of diamonds and a heart conceded to make the slam. Had I played the jack from dummy at trick one I would have gone down in the slam.