

Play Low From Dummy - Part 3

By Billy Eisenberg

The next hand is also from Pairs play and again resulted in declarer managing an overtrick for a top score by making an 'unusual' play from dummy at trick one.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A 8 4
♥ A 10 9
♦ A J 3
♣ K 9 7 6

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

♠ Q J 9 7 6 5 2
♥ 8 3
♦ 7
♣ A 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	1 NT	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

On the two of diamonds lead, South played low from dummy, knowing full well that even if East won the trick cheaply the ace would always furnish a quick heart or club discard.

What was East to do? Play the eight? Would you? Maybe partner's lead was a singleton. Maybe partner had led from Q-x-x and declarer had 10-x, in which case the trick might not come back. In the event, East rose with the king and made the good switch to a heart.

Declarer won in dummy, discarded a heart on the ace of diamonds, ruffed a heart and led the queen of spades which was covered. He then ran all his spades, squeezing West in the minors, with the jack of diamonds the threat card. That card would not have been a threat had South played the ace of diamonds at trick one because East would have been able to guard diamonds.

Perhaps the advantages of playing low from dummy when a small card is being led through a king can be most clearly seen by taking a look at the difficulties that are created for the defender sitting over dummy.

North Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 7 6
♥ J 10 5 3
♦ A K J 8 4
♣ 10

♠ A J 5 4 3
♥ 9
♦ 7 6 5
♣ J 8 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
All pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥

West leads the two of spades and declarer plays low from dummy. As East, what do you play at trick one?

Let's say you play the jack because declarer may have:

♠ 9 8
♥ K 8 7 6 4 2
♦ 3
♣ A K 6 2

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Too bad. Your partner has led a singleton and declarer actually held:

♠ Q 10 9 8
♥ K Q 8 4 2
♦ —
♣ K Q 7 6

And partner is still wondering why you didn't give him an early ruff to defeat the contract easily.

Now let's say you did play the ace in order to give your partner a ruff. This time your partner thinks that you have lost your mind, because he has underled Q-10-x and holds the ace-queen of hearts, and the hand was beaten off the top if you had just cashed your two spade tricks.

So, to drive the opponents crazy and gain extra tricks by the cartload, my bridge tip is:

TIP: *Play low from dummy when it can't cost you a trick.*