

§40. Avoiding Overruffs.

By the end of this chapter you should understand the following terms:

Don't sent a boy on a man's errand: A semi-joke phrase meaning: don't ruff with a small trump when you can afford to ruff with a high trump.

Loser-on-loser play: A clever ploy by which you refuse to ruff an opponent's lead but discard a loser from another suit. This may well pave the way to a ruff on table in an unexpected way.

This chapter is concerned with using your trump suit in a judicious manner so that you avoid the ignominy of being overtrumped by the opponents.

There are two major aspects to this, one is that you should ruff with high trumps *when you can afford to do so*, and the other is that sometimes you can avoid the problem by not ruffing at all, by discarding a loser in another suit.

Let's look at the first type of hand – that where ruffing high in dummy is essential. Take the wheel in 4♠; West leads the ♥K and continues the suit, forcing you to ruff the third round. What next?

Hand 1
South plays in 4♠.
South leads the ♥K.

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|
| | ♠ J 10 4 | |
| | ♥ 9 7 4 2 | |
| | ♦ A Q 7 3 | |
| | ♣ J 5 | |
| ♠ 5 2 | N | ♠ 7 6 3 |
| ♥ K Q 10 | W E | ♥ A 8 6 5 |
| ♦ 8 4 | S | ♦ J 10 6 2 |
| ♣ Q 10 8 7 4 2 | | ♣ K 9 |
| | ♠ A K Q 9 8 | |
| | ♥ J 3 | |
| | ♦ K 9 5 | |
| | ♣ A 6 3 | |

Your all-important **Count** and **Plan** shows you that there are three sure losers (two Hearts and at least one Club) and nine sure winners (five Spades, three Diamonds and a Club). You might rely on a 3-3 Diamond break by drawing trumps and hoping for an even Diamond split, but better odds can be found by trying to ruff a Club on table.

With that idea in mind you play off the ♣A and concede a Club at trick five. East takes that and plays another Heart (maybe he hopes West can overruff you?) Anyway, you ruff that and ruff a Club in the dummy – but with the ♠10 or the ♠J. This costs you nothing and it prevents embarrassment if Clubs are splitting 6-2; it would be humiliating to call for dummy's ♠4 and lose a trick to the ♠6 on an overruff.

Bridge players have a saying here; it is: *Don't send a boy on a man's errand*, meaning don't ruff with a small trump when you can afford to ruff with a high trump. After the ♠10 wins (as it must) you draw trumps (which are fortunately split) and cash the three winning Diamonds. Ten tricks come from **six** Spades, three Diamonds and a Club.

How would you play 4♠ on the next deal? Yes, 3NT is easier, but that's not the point – you arrive in 4♠; maybe partner bid the hand badly. West leads the ♦K and you have to take stock.

Hand 2
South plays in 4♠.
South leads the ♦K.

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | ♠ J 3 | |
| | ♥ A J 7 6 4 | |
| | ♦ A 9 8 4 | |
| | ♣ A 10 | |
| ♠ 7 5 | N | ♠ 9 6 4 2 |
| ♥ Q 3 | W E | ♥ K 10 8 5 2 |
| ♦ K Q J 10 | S | ♦ 5 2 |
| ♣ J 9 7 5 2 | | ♣ Q 6 |
| | ♠ A K Q 10 8 | |
| | ♥ 9 | |
| | ♦ 7 6 3 | |
| | ♣ K 8 4 3 | |

Your essential **Count** and **Plan** shows you that there are two sure Diamond losers and a couple of Club losers – at least, there would be if you were to draw trumps. In terms of winners you have five Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and two Clubs, which totals nine. The tenth trick can only come from ruffing a Club (maybe two) in dummy (the short trump hand, note).

Thus, you win the ♦A, cash the ♣A and the ♣K and lead another Club. Now, you may be overcome by greed here and attempt to ruff the Club with dummy's ♣3. All fine and dandy should East follow suit, but fatal on this layout. East would overruff and should, if up with the game, *return a trump*. Now you have a losing Club and nowhere to park it. As your **Count** and **Plan** showed you that just one extra trick was necessary, you should ruff the third round of Clubs with the ♠J before drawing trumps.

There are times where the bidding obliges you to ruff high, even though a bad trump break would defeat you. Here, in Hand 3, West opens 2♥ and leads the ♥A K against 4♠ on which East *peters* with the ♥J and the ♥3, showing a doubleton. How should you play?

Hand 3
South plays in 4♠.
South leads the ♥A.

| |
|--------------|
| ♠ Q 3 |
| ♥ Q 6 |
| ♦ K J 10 7 5 |
| ♣ J 9 7 3 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----------|
| ♠ 9 5 | W | N | E | ♠ 10 8 2 |
| ♥ A K 10 9 7 5 | | | | ♥ J 3 |
| ♦ 8 2 | | | | ♦ A 9 6 3 |
| ♣ 10 8 4 | | S | | ♣ Q 6 5 2 |

| |
|---------------|
| ♠ A K J 7 6 4 |
| ♥ 8 4 2 |
| ♦ Q 4 |
| ♣ A K |

Your **Count** and **Plan** should clearly show you that you have to lose the ♦A in addition to the two top Hearts, so ruffing the third Heart low (with the ♠3) invites disaster. The bidding (and the defence) makes it clear that Hearts are 6-2, so the third Heart is bound to be overruffed and you cannot afford a trump loser. You have to ruff with the ♠Q and hope trumps are 3-2. If they are 4-1 then 4♠ will fail. *C'est la vie*.

Finally, there are those deals where refusing to ruff is the winning play. How would you handle 4♠ on this deal after West has opened 2♥ and the defence once again starts with three rounds of the suit?

Hand 4
South plays in 4♠.
South leads the ♥A.

| |
|---------------|
| ♠ Q 8 |
| ♥ Q 6 |
| ♦ A J 8 6 5 3 |
| ♣ J 8 4 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----------|
| ♠ 10 3 | W | N | E | ♠ J 5 2 |
| ♥ A K 10 9 7 5 | | | | ♥ J 3 |
| ♦ 10 2 | | | | ♦ K Q 7 4 |
| ♣ 10 9 5 | | S | | ♣ Q 7 6 2 |

| |
|---------------|
| ♠ A K 9 7 6 4 |
| ♥ 8 4 2 |
| ♦ 9 |
| ♣ A K 3 |

Your **Count** and **Plan** shows you that you have two Hearts and a Club to lose; losing a trump trick will surely doom 4♠ to a slow and agonising death. How should you play?

Ruffing high (with the ♠Q) is no answer – now the defence would have a sure Spade trick. Ruffing low (with the ♠8) is a desperation play, succeeding only if West held the ♠J 10. Best is to refuse to ruff, chucking off a losing Club from dummy instead. Now the defenders can do nothing.

West, still on lead, switches to the ♣10, say, and you play off three rounds, ruffing the third on table. Now you can cash the ♠Q, come to hand by playing the ♦A and a Diamond ruff and draw trumps.

This play, of throwing away a loser in another suit rather than risking a damaging overruff, goes by the name of a *loser-on-loser play*. Here, in Hand 4, you can swap a Club loser for a Heart loser – in essence you lose just three Heart tricks and nothing else. Ten winners come from **seven** Spades, one Diamond and two Clubs.

§40. Quiz on Avoiding Overruffs.

Here are three full deals for you to try.

In each case you are South, declarer. Obviously, your first act is to **Count** and **Plan**.

The Preliminary Analysis talks you through the first trick or two. What is your best subsequent play?

The answers are overleaf.

Q1.

How should you play in 4♠?

West leads the ♠A.

Preliminary Analysis.

West cashes the three top Clubs, East pitching a Heart, and attempts to cash the ♦A at trick four.

After ruffing that, what is your best line of play, given that you need the rest of the tricks?

♠ 9 7 2
♥ A J
♦ Q 10 8 3 2
♣ 9 7 5

| | |
|----------|---|
| Dummy | |
| W | E |
| Declarer | |

♠ A K Q J 10 3
♥ K 7 3 2
♦ None
♣ J 6 4

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | | 1♠ |
| 2♣ | 2♠ ¹ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| 4♠ by South | | Opening lead: ♠A | |

1. North has to bid *something*, and it is rarely wrong to support your partner, especially in these competitive auctions.

Q2.

How should you play in 4♥?

West leads the ♠Q.

Preliminary Analysis.

West's ♠Q lead tells you that the ♠K in dummy is toast, as the Americans have it.

With two sure Spade losers and a certain, slow, Diamond loser you have to avoid losing any Clubs.

What's the best way to eradicate those two losers?

♠ K 8 2
♥ A 7 3
♦ 7 5 4 3 2
♣ 6 3

| | |
|----------|---|
| Dummy | |
| W | E |
| Declarer | |

♠ 7 5
♥ K Q J 10 9
♦ A J
♣ A K 7 5

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | Pass | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2♥ ¹ | Pass | 4♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| 4♥ by South | | Opening lead: ♠Q | |

1. North takes the view that supporting Hearts is a better bet than responding with a dampening 1NT.

Q3.

How should you play in 4♠?

West leads the ♦A.

Preliminary Analysis.

West cashes the ♦A before hastily switching to a trump.

You win, play off the ♥A and ♥K and lead another Heart, but the Queen does not appear from West.

What now?

♠ 7 5 2
♥ A 4
♦ Q 8 6 5 4 2
♣ 10 6

| | |
|----------|---|
| Dummy | |
| W | E |
| Declarer | |

♠ A K Q J 10
♥ K J 8 7 5
♦ 10
♣ A 2

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass | 1♠ |
| Dble | 2♠ ¹ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| 4♠ by South | | Opening lead: ♦A | |

1. North was merely being obstructive with his 2♠ raise; he just wanted to make it more difficult for East to bid. He certainly didn't expect to be dummy in a game.

Answers.

A1.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|--|---|---|----------|--|--|
| <p>♠ 8 5 ♥ 10 9 6 4 ♦ A 9 ♣ A K Q 10 3</p> | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Dummy</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Declarer</td></tr> </table> | Dummy | | W | E | Declarer | | <p>♠ 9 7 2 ♥ A J ♦ Q 10 8 3 2 ♣ 9 7 5</p> <p>♠ 6 4 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ K J 7 6 5 4 ♣ 8 2</p> |
| Dummy | | | | | | | | |
| W | E | | | | | | | |
| Declarer | | | | | | | | |
| <p>♠ A K Q J 10 3 ♥ K 7 3 2 ♦ None ♣ J 6 4</p> | | | | | | | | |

West cashes three top Clubs (East pitching a Heart) and hopefully tries the ♦A next.

To make the hand you must ruff this and then ruff your two losing Hearts on table. After the Heart discard from East it would be more than a little optimistic to ruff the third Heart with the ♠2. *Don't send a boy on a man's errand.* You have to ruff with the ♠7 and the ♠9, hoping East cannot overruff.

The play is to ruff the ♦A at trick four, cash the ♥A K, ruff a Heart with the ♠7 (offering a silent prayer), return to hand with a high trump and ruff the last Heart with the ♠9. Now your hand consists only of high trumps, so the rest are yours. You make **eight** trump tricks and the ♥A K.

A2.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|--|---|---|----------|--|--|
| <p>♠ Q J 10 9 ♥ 8 2 ♦ Q 6 ♣ Q 10 9 4 2</p> | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Dummy</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Declarer</td></tr> </table> | Dummy | | W | E | Declarer | | <p>♠ K 8 2 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ 6 3</p> <p>♠ A 6 4 3 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ K 10 9 8 ♣ J 8</p> |
| Dummy | | | | | | | | |
| W | E | | | | | | | |
| Declarer | | | | | | | | |
| <p>♠ 7 5 ♥ K Q J 10 9 ♦ A J ♣ A K 7 5</p> | | | | | | | | |

West leads the ♠Q against 4♥ by South. With the ♠K a dead duck after the lead, you can count two Spade losers and a sure Diamond loser.

To make the hand you must ruff your two Club losers on table; should Clubs prove to lie awkwardly you need to use the ♥A 7 to ruff these losers, rather than risk using the ♥3.

Thus... ruff the third round of Spades, cash the ♠A K, ruff a Club with the ♥7, return to hand with the ♦A, ruff a Club with the ♥A and then you are in a position to claim your game.

Note that ruffing with the ♥A first and then the ♥7 works on this layout, but is poor play. Ruffing with the ♥7 and then the ♥A would work if Clubs were 4-3 and East held the ♥8.

A3.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|--|---|---|----------|--|--|
| <p>♠ 8 3 ♥ Q 10 9 3 ♦ A K J 3 ♣ K J 7</p> | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Dummy</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Declarer</td></tr> </table> | Dummy | | W | E | Declarer | | <p>♠ 7 5 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ Q 8 6 5 4 2 ♣ 10 6</p> <p>♠ 9 6 4 ♥ 6 2 ♦ 9 7 ♣ Q 9 8 5 4 3</p> |
| Dummy | | | | | | | | |
| W | E | | | | | | | |
| Declarer | | | | | | | | |
| <p>♠ A K Q J 10 ♥ K J 8 7 5 ♦ 10 ♣ A 2</p> | | | | | | | | |

Against 4♠, West cashes a top Diamond and switches to a trump. After West has made a take-out Double of 1♠ it is more likely that Hearts lie 4-2 than 3-3; ruffing Hearts on table is not likely to prove successful.

Best play is to take the trump switch and to play off three rounds of Hearts – When West follows with the ♥10 it is correct to make the *loser-on-loser play* of chucking a Club from table.

The defence can do nothing now; you can win a further trump lead, play to ruff a *Club* on table, draw trumps and concede a Heart. In essence, you lose a Diamond and two Hearts. On the other side of the coin, you are due to make **six** trump tricks, three Hearts and the ♣A.

§40. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Love all, dealer North

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| ♠ A K Q J 10 3 ♥ K 7 3 2 ♦ None ♣ J 6 4 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | ♠ 6 5 ♥ 10 9 6 4 ♦ A 9 ♣ A K Q 10 3 | |
| N | E | | | | | | |
| W | S | | | | | | |
| ♠ 7 4 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ K J 7 6 5 4 ♣ 8 2 | | ♠ 9 8 2 ♥ A J ♦ Q 10 8 3 2 ♣ 9 7 5 | | | | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♠ | 2♣ | 2♠ |
| Pass | 4♠ | All Pass | |
| 4♠ by North | | Opening lead: ♣A | |

After North opens 1♠ and East intervenes with a non-vulnerable 2♣, South supports his partner with 2♠. North's 4♠ is a punt, but he hopes for Club shortage opposite. Nope – East cashes three top Clubs (West pitching a Heart) and hopefully tries the ♦A next. To make the hand North must ruff this and then ruff his two losing Hearts on table. After the Heart discard from West it would be the height of folly to ruff with the ♠2, especially as the ♠9 8 cannot be overruffed. *Don't send a boy on a man's errand.* The play is to ruff trick four, cash the ♥A K, ruff a Heart with the ♠8, return to hand with a high trump and ruff the last Heart with the ♠9. Now North's hand consists only of high trumps, so he can spread his cards and claim.

Hand 2 North-South game, dealer East

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| ♠ A 7 5 3 2 ♥ K 5 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ 9 7 2 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | ♠ K J 10 8 4 ♥ 6 4 2 ♦ J 9 ♣ Q J 10 | |
| N | E | | | | | | |
| W | S | | | | | | |
| ♠ Q 6 ♥ 9 8 ♦ Q 10 8 6 4 ♣ K 6 5 3 | | ♠ 9 ♥ A Q J 10 7 ♦ A 5 3 2 ♣ A 8 4 | | | | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 2♦ |
| Pass | | Pass | 4♥ |
| 4♥ by South | | Opening lead: ♥9 | |

South reaches 4♥ after North gives *jump preference* in the auction. With no attractive lead, West kicks off with a trump and South settles down to **Count** and **Plan**. There are nine clear winners (one Spade, five Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club), so one more needs to be found from somewhere. Ruffing Spades in hand is the wrong play (*don't ruff in the long hand*) but there is a ruff available in the short trump hand. South should take the trump lead in hand and play off the ♦K, the ♦A and (care now!) ruff a Diamond with the ♥K. With the 5-2 Diamond split he would be defeated if he ruffed low; East could overruff and lead a trump, ending the chance of a ruff in dummy.

Hand 3 East-West game, dealer South

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| ♠ A 6 4 3 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ K 10 9 8 ♣ J 8 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | ♠ 7 5 ♥ K Q J 10 9 ♦ A J ♣ A K 7 5 | |
| N | E | | | | | | |
| W | S | | | | | | |
| ♠ K 8 2 ♥ A 8 3 ♦ 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ 6 3 | | ♠ Q J 10 9 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 6 ♣ Q 10 9 4 2 | | | | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |
| 4♥ by East | | Opening lead: ♠Q | |

East opens 1♥ and West does better to raise to 2♥ than make a dampening 1NT response. East has an easy 4♥ call then. South has an obvious ♠Q lead and East should pause to **Count** and **Plan**. With the ♠K a dead duck after the lead, declarer can count two Spade losers and a sure Diamond loser. To make the hand he must rid himself of his two Club losers by ruffing them on table; to avoid "accidents" he must make use of the providential holding of the ♥A 8 to ruff these losers high, rather than risk using the ♥3. So... ruff the third round of Spades, cash the ♣A K, ruff a Club with the ♥8, return to hand with the ♦A, ruff a Club with the ♥A and claim the game.

Hand 4 Game all, dealer West

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| ♠ 7 3 ♥ J 10 9 8 ♦ Q J 7 5 2 ♣ Q 9 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | ♠ A 5 ♥ Q 5 4 3 ♦ 9 4 ♣ A J 7 5 3 | |
| N | E | | | | | | |
| W | S | | | | | | |
| ♠ Q J 10 9 8 4 ♥ A ♦ A K 6 3 ♣ 6 2 | | ♠ K 6 2 ♥ K 7 6 2 ♦ 10 8 ♣ K 10 8 4 | | | | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| 4♠ by West | | Opening lead: ♥J | |

West reaches 4♠ and North leads the ♥J. West's **Count** and **Plan** reveals an almost certain Spade loser and a Club loser – so he has to do something about his two losing Diamonds. Should he attempt to draw trumps, declarer would lose a Spade, two Diamonds and a Club. Best play is to ruff a Diamond on table early. Winning the ♥A in hand, West should play off the ♦A K and ruff a losing Diamond on table, but with the ♠A. Should he ruff low he'd be defeated on this layout – South would overruff and (if in form) return a trump, putting paid to any chance of a ruff in dummy. By ruffing high, declarer ensures **six** Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds, and one Club.

§40. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 North-South game, dealer North

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| ♠ A 5 3 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ K Q J 10 5 2 ♣ Q | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | | E | W | | S | ♠ K Q J 10 7 6 4 ♥ A K Q ♦ 6 4 ♣ 9 | ♠ 8 ♥ 10 9 8 7 3 ♦ 7 ♣ K 10 8 6 3 2 |
| N | | E | | | | | | | |
| W | | S | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 9 ♥ J 6 2 ♦ A 9 8 3 ♣ A J 7 5 4 | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♦ | 4♠ | 5♦ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| 5♦ by North | | Opening lead: ♥A | |

A brief but exciting auction lands North in 5♦, against which East tries to cash three top Hearts. Ruffing the last round, North realises that he has to ruff his three losing Spades on table – should Spades be 8-0 then the contract is doomed. Ruffing the third Heart he must play the ♠A, ruff a Spade with the ♦8, come to hand with the ♦3 to the ♦10 and ruff another Spade with the ♦9. Now, cash the ♣A and a Club ruffed in hand – care now! – with a high trump, a Spade ruffed with the ♦A, another Club ruffed high and, finally, the last trump drawn. Declarer makes one Spade, **nine** trump tricks and the ♣A. Failure to ruff Spades high on table or Clubs high in hand leads to defeat as either West makes the ♦7 or East makes the ♦6.

Hand 6 East-West game, dealer East

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| ♠ Q J 10 8 5 ♥ 4 ♦ K J 9 5 ♣ A 10 9 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | | E | W | | S | ♠ 6 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ Q 10 6 2 ♣ Q J 8 7 3 | ♠ A K 7 4 ♥ K Q 10 8 7 6 ♦ A ♣ 4 2 |
| N | | E | | | | | | | |
| W | | S | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 9 3 ♥ J 5 3 2 ♦ 8 7 4 3 ♣ K 6 5 | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♥ | 1♠ | Pass | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | Dble | Pass |
| 4♥ by West | | Opening lead: ♠Q | |

West plays in 4♥ after North has shown at least five Spades and East has made a *negative Double*. North leads the ♠Q and West's **Count** and **Plan** reveals two Club losers and two Spade losers (not to mention a potential trump loser should trumps break 4-1). Spades can be ruffed on table, but as the suit is sure to break 5-2, there is a danger in ruffing the third round with the ♥9 – should South overruff and return a trump the contract would be in ruins. 4♥ is cold, assuming that the ♠A K stand up; West has to cash two top Spades, ruff a Spade with the ♥A, come to hand with the ♦A and ruff the last Spade with the ♥9. At most, West loses two Clubs and a trump.

Hand 7 Game all, dealer South

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| ♠ 8 ♥ J 9 6 4 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 4 ♣ K 7 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | | E | W | | S | ♠ 7 5 3 ♥ Q 7 ♦ K 6 5 3 2 ♣ A 10 9 | ♠ 6 4 2 ♥ A 8 ♦ 9 8 ♣ Q 8 6 5 4 2 |
| N | | E | | | | | | | |
| W | | S | | | | | | | |
| ♠ A K Q J 10 9 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ A 7 ♣ J 3 | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 4♠ |
| 4♠ by South | | Opening lead: ♦Q | |

Hands 7 and 8 are on the theme of swapping losers, also known as *loser-on-loser plays*. South plays in 4♠ after North has dredged up a 2♠ raise and West has led the ♦Q. With two sure Club losers and a Diamond loser, it looks a trivial matter to trump a Heart loser on the table making seven Spades, two Hearts and a Diamond. With that in mind, declarer takes the ♦A, cashes the ♥A, the ♥K and plays the ♥10. The fall of the ♥Q from East should give him pause for thought, especially when West covers the Ten with the Jack. Ruffing the Heart on table is dangerous – much safer is discarding the ♦9 from dummy, losing a Heart trick but losing no Diamond as South ruffs the ♦7 instead.

Hand 8 Love all, dealer West

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| ♠ K 9 7 3 ♥ Q 9 8 3 ♦ A K 5 ♣ 7 2 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | | E | W | | S | ♠ A 5 ♥ A K 7 4 2 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ J 9 3 | ♠ Q 6 4 2 ♥ J 10 6 ♦ J 7 3 2 ♣ 10 5 |
| N | | E | | | | | | | |
| W | | S | | | | | | | |
| ♠ J 10 8 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ A K Q 8 6 4 | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1NT | Pass | 2♦ | 3♣ |
| Pass | Pass | 3♥ | Pass |
| 4♥ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| 4♥ by East | | Opening lead: ♠A | |

East plays in 4♥ after South has interjected 3♣, surely showing a six-card suit. South starts off with the ♣A K and North should *petter* with the ♣10 5, showing encouragement. South continues with the ♣Q and East has a real problem; what to do at trick three? Ruffing with the ♥8 will lead to defeat as North will overruff. Ruffing with ♥Q is also fatal, unless declarer is gifted with X-ray vision. With a sure Diamond loser, declarer looks booked to lose two Clubs, a Diamond and a Heart. The solution? Don't ruff the third Club, pitch the ♦5 from dummy instead! Win the next trick, draw trumps and, in time, ruff the Diamond loser on table (the *short trump hand*).