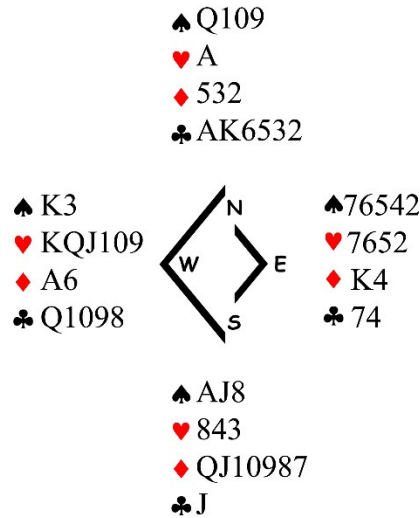


184. Making Short-Hand Ruffs

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E	S	W	N
		1 ♥	2 ♣
P	2 ♦	All Pass	

--East West Vulnerable--

A sign of an advancing player is one who appreciates the difference between short-hand and long-hand ruffs. The short-hand is the hand with the shorter length of trump. Any ruff in the short-hand gains a trick, while any ruff in the long-hand does not gain a trick, and not only that, ruffs in the long-hand may compromise the contract if there is a bad split.

The defense wants to make declarer ruff in the long-trump hand and wants to stop declarer ruffing in the short-trump hand. If declarer gets shortened so that one defender has more trump, he has lost control of the hand.

The bidding:

West, with 15 points, opens one heart. West could have chosen to open one No Trump to secure the lead to protect a king in a short suit and to adequately describe his point range. However, if he opens one No Trump, East transfers him to spades and passes, thus missing a five-four heart fit for a weak five-two spade fit. Therefore, the best bid for West with two spades is to open one heart.

North makes a two-level overcall. South cannot stand clubs and suggests a better spot, and the auction passes out in two diamonds.

The Lead: West leads the King of hearts, the top of an honour sequence and a natural lead.

The play:

Declarer wins the Ace of hearts and takes a spade finesse. West wins and plays two rounds of trump. A heart can be ruffed and one heart can be pitched on the clubs. Declarer makes four diamonds the safe way.

Had declarer used clubs as transportation, he would not have been able to take the spade finesse for fear of West drawing trump, and he would have only made three diamonds if the trump had been three-one and two diamonds if the trump had been four-zero.

Result: Two diamonds made plus two for +130.