



Play & Learn

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You ruffed my trick!

Here is a defensive problem that you might encounter at the table.

South opened 1♠, North raised to 2♠ and South rebid 4♠. Partner (West) led the ♦Q, won by dummy's ace. Now declarer leads the ♦6 from dummy. What do you (East) play to this trick and why?

Dummy (North)

♠ 9 7 2
♥ J 9 3 2
♦ A 6
♣ J 8 6 5

You (East)

♠ 10 8 5
♥ A Q 10 8 7
♦ 8
♣ K 10 7 2

With three relatively insignificant trumps, it's tempting to ruff. Did you yield to that temptation? If you did, you ruffed partner's trick and let declarer make an unmakeable contract. The full deal:

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

Declarer counted four losers — two diamonds, one club and one heart — and hoped to take advantage of dummy's doubleton by ruffing at least one diamond loser. If you ruff the ♦6, you win that trick. Good for you, but declarer is going to make 4♠ now. All

he has to do is draw your remaining two trumps, cash the ♦K and ruff the last diamond. Declarer has lost only one trick and has only a heart and a club left to lose.

If you discard on the ♦6, declarer wins the king. You don't win the trick, but you're going to win the battle. If declarer tries to ruff those two diamond losers, you can overruff each one. Did you notice that each of your spades can beat a spade played by dummy?

It's difficult to know exactly what is going to happen, but defending at bridge is like playing detective. You try to figure out what declarer is trying to do and how you can foil him. You know from partner's ♦Q opening lead that declarer holds the king. You should also be aware that, if you ruff, you will not be ruffing declarer's ♦K. Declarer will play a diamond loser instead. The fact that declarer continued diamonds instead of drawing trumps, coupled with dummy's diamond shortness, is a clue that declarer hopes to ruff a diamond or two. Normally, ruffing losers in dummy is good for declarer and bad for the defenders but, in this case, the fact that you have dummy out-spotted in trumps and can overruff means it's good for you. If you don't ruff the second diamond lead, you set the contract. □

Erik Kirchhoff

Erik Kirchhoff, expert player and coach of open and Junior Dutch teams, died Nov. 24 of a heart attack while on vacation in Saba, Dutch Antilles. He was 60.

Over a period of four decades, Kirchhoff was one of the most influential bridge players in the Netherlands. He represented his country on many occasions winning two bronze medals at European and World Championships. He was one of the founding editors of Bridge Magazine IMP and a successful as coach of Dutch teams.

Jan van Cleeff, editor of the magazine said, "For top players, Kirchhoff was a true bridge-guru, an expert-expert. The Dutch bridge scene will never be the same."

