

TRANSPORTATION

by Maritha Pottenger

When playing the hand, it is important to pay attention to your **transportation**—how you get back and forth between your hand and dummy's hand. Generally, dummy's hand will have fewer entries and your hand more (so you should strive to preserve entries in dummy), but that is not always the case!!

The saying: “**Honors from the Short Side First**” was devised to keep people from blocking themselves when running a long suit. If, for example, you hold Kx opposite AQJxx in dummy and dummy has no other entries, unless you play the King first, you will block yourself in your hand and take only 2 tricks instead of 5 tricks. (The exception is if you play the Queen first, you can still play the Ace and drop your King under it, but then you will often get only 3 tricks instead of 5!)

Often, **when you have limited entries in one hand and want to take several finesses**, choosing the “**right**” finesse first will solve your transportation problems. If, for example, you hold: QJ108 xxx xxx Kxx opposite A9xx AQJ AQ AQx, and the opponents lead a club, you should take it in your hand (with the King) and put the Queen of spades on the table. Even if the spade finesse loses, you will still have 2 spade entries to your hand to try the heart finesse (twice if it works) or the heart finesse once and the diamond finesse once.

When you need a finesse for your contract, and need to take it more than once, you must guard your entries with care. Suppose you have AKQx xxx xxx xxx opposite 10xxx AQJ10 Ax AKQ and the contract is 6S. The opponents lead the King of diamonds. You can see that the heart finesse must be right for you to make your contract. (If the King of hearts is offside, you will lose one heart and one diamond.) However, the **ONLY** entries to your hand are in the trump suit. Therefore, you must take the Ace of diamonds on dummy and resist temptation to pull all the trumps at once. Pull **one** round of trump only. Take the heart finesse. If it holds, return to your hand with the second round of trumps and take the heart finesse again. Repeat with 3rd round of trumps. Cash the Ace of hearts. If the King falls, great. If not, just give up a diamond. Making 6. **Be sure to note:** if you pull all 3 rounds of trump immediately, you cannot take the heart finesse more than once. Thus, you will go down unless the King of hearts is onside AND doubleton—unlikely!

When you have a choice between ruffing in dummy and setting up a long suit, it is usually better to set up the long suit. You may end up using a ruff to get an entry to dummy, but if you use it early, you will not be able to set up the long suit AND get back to it. Example: J864 J 3 QJxxxxx opposite AKxxxx K10x Ax xx with a diamond lead. Play a club immediately. If they return a diamond, ruff it and play a spade to your Ace and play another club. If they return a heart, duck to the Jack. (If they then play another heart, let it ride to your hand. If they play a diamond, ruff on dummy; play spade to your hand and another club.) If they play a spade, play a second club toward dummy. As long as spades are 2-1 and the club honors are split (likely), you will make 4. My partner tried to ruff diamonds and hearts in dummy and held himself to only 9 tricks (3 spades).

When you have a guaranteed high cross-ruff, it is OK to simply ruff from one hand to the other: AKQJ10 Ax xxxx xx opposite 98765 Kxxx void AKxx with a contract of 7S. High diamond is led. Ruff in dummy and play only **ONE** round of spades, then AK of clubs and AK of hearts and cross-ruff the rest of your tricks (ruffing hearts and clubs in your hand, and diamonds in dummy). Note that if you pull **TWO** rounds of trump, you will limit yourself to 12 tricks.

Sometimes a hand should obviously be played by finessing into one hand, then the other, then the first, etc. For example: AQJ10 xxx AQ10 xxx opposite xxx AQJ10 xx AQJ. Plan to finesse spades in dummy and hearts in hand, repeat; then diamonds in dummy and clubs in hand. Could make from 9 to 13 tricks.