

# Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

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## 46. Meek Rules: The Power of Under-ruffing

Under-ruffing can be effective for both defense and the declarer. For defense, the effectiveness of under-ruffing is prominent when you have a discard problem. If you discard from any other suits, you do not do very well. So you *discard* your small trump. Another situation where under-ruffing for defense might work well is when you are trying to avoid being end played. For declarer, under-ruffing can be most effective when you are trying to set up a trump end play (sometimes this play is called a trump coup; but they are actually different. More on this topic in a later article). Here are a couple of examples:

### Example 1. Under-ruffing in Defense (Discard Problem)

The auction goes

S	W	N	E
1N	2H	3D	P
4C	P	5C	all pass.

Dummy:	95	72	A K T 9 6	J T 9 4
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LHO:

You:

Q J 7 3
T 3
Q J 8 3
6 5 2

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Partner leads A K of hearts and you echo. He then leads a third heart which declarer ruffs with the Jack of C. Which card do you play? You have a *discard* problem. To keep your length in both S and D, you discard a small trump --- also known as under-ruffing.

Yes, the under-ruff tells the declarer where the Queen of trump is and he drops it in two rounds. However, he cannot establish an extra trick in either S or D and goes down. The declarer's hand was:

Declarer:	A K 8 2	Q 8 6	7 5	A K 8 3
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**Example 2. Under-ruffing by Declarer (as part of a trump end-play)**

The auction goes

<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>
1S	P	4S	P
P	X	all pass.	

The lead is A of H.

Dummy:	T 7 4 2	7 6 5 4	3	A K 8 3
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LHO:

Q J 9 3  
A K J 8  
Q J 2  
T 4

RHO:

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Q 9 3  
T 8 7 6 5  
J 9 6 5 2

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Declarer/You:	A K 8 6 5	T 2	A K 9 4	Q 7
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You ruff the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of H in hand and plan how to handle all four trumps being with West. Here is what you do next.

- Trick 4. C to the A.
- Trick 5. Ruff the 4<sup>th</sup> H.
- Trick 6-7. Cash the A, K of D, pitching a C.
- Trick 8. Ruff a D in dummy.
- Trick 9. This is a critical play. Cash the K of C (never mind the Queen of C.)

These are the 4 cards in LHO, dummy and your hand

Dummy:	T 7 2	---	---	8
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LHO:

Q J 9 3  
Nothing else

RHO: immaterial

Declarer:	A K 8	--	4	--
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Trick 10. Play the C-8 from dummy and ruff with the A of S.

Trick 11. 4 of D from hand. West ruffs with the J and dummy under-ruffs.

West is now end-played and 4S-X making.

**References:**

**Both of these hands are from Guy Leve, "Encyclopedia of card play techniques in Bridge".**