

# Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

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## 43. How would I know what she wants?

I am taking a break from writing about system development and will focus on defense on my next few columns. The ideas for the next three columns are in my head so I will give you a preview.

Column #43 (this column) will be on figuring out when partner is asking for a ruff and exactly what sequence to follow in those situations.

Column #44 will be called “Ruff and Sluff Illusions” and I will talk about instances where giving declarer a (useless) ruff and sluff is the only way for defense to prevail.

Column #45 will be called “Meddling with Middling”. I will talk about **surrounding plays** and **middling** --- two related defensive techniques where you, in mid-game, lead a middle card from your sequence.

Let’s start this column now with a specific example.

### Example 1.

The auction goes

Amit	N	Elizabeth	S
	1C	1S	2H
P	3H	P	4H

All pass.

I dutifully lead the 8 of S and dummy hits the table with the following cards.

Dummy:	Q 5 3 2	K 7 6 5	A	K J T 2
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My hand:

8 4  
Q J  
9 8 7 6  
A Q 9 6 3

Trick 1. 8 2 T 6.

Trick 2. Elizabeth switches to the 8 of C. and I win with the Ace.

Trick 3. Is she asking me to give her a C ruff? How would I know what she wants?

I looked at the sequence again. She won the first trick with the Ten. If she really wanted a C ruff, she would some way tell me that *there is no future in S*. The way to show that is to win with the Ten and cash the A of S next.

These are the full hands:

Dummy:	Q 5 3 2	K 7 6 5	A	K J T 2
My hand				Elizabeth's Hand
8 4				A K J T 7
Q J				2
9 8 7 6				J T 5 4
A Q 9 6 3				8 7 4

Declarer: 9 6                    A T 9 8 4 3    K Q 3 2    5

Note the beauty of the C switch by her at trick 2. If she does not play a C and continue with S and try to give me a ruff immediately, declarer would discard the 5 of C and make the contract. C Switch at trick 2 and *then* S continuation by me sets the contract as I would get an upper cut.

Here is another one.

**Example 2.**

The auction goes

Elizabeth	N	Amit	S
			1H
P	1N (f)	2H	4H

All pass.

My 2H was a “*delayed Michaels bid*” showing S and a minor; typically 5-5.

(**Side note:** another situation where this delayed Michaels bid shows up is when they transfer over a NT. For example,

1N (they)    P            2D ( transfer)                    2H by us = S + minor)

She leads the 9 of D and I see:

Dummy:        K J T            J 6 3            K Q T 5            J 8 6

Amit  
A 9 6 4 2  
T  
A J 8 6 4 3  
8

Trick 1.        D-9, K, A, 2.

Trick 2.        I am in the tank. What to do? My options are the following:

**Option 1:** Play her for a stiff D and no A of C

Or

**Option 2:** Play her for the A of C and a C ruff.

**Analysis of Option 1:** If she gets a D ruff, back to S and then an upper cut perhaps? I rule out this option because dummy bid 1N-forcing to show a limit raise in H next but without knowing that, declarer goes to 4H. The chance of uppercut is non-existent.

**Analysis of Option 2:** This line has a lot of promise. What is the danger? I take a look at the dummy again. There is K J T of spades in dummy. *My 8 of C might tell her to switch to a S.* How can I tell her that I want a C ruff and not a spade switch? I take a deep breath and cash the A of S before leading the C. Now she cannot go wrong. She will know what I want.

## References:

**Both Example 1 and 2 are taken from “The Deadly Defence Quiz Book” by W. Izdebski, R. Krzemien, and Ron Klinger. I might have modified the hands a little bit here and there to match my commentary.**