

THE Encyclopedia OF

CARD PLAY
TECHNIQUES
at BRIDGE



GUY LEVÉ

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Preface

Guy Levé, an experienced player from Montpellier in southern France, has a passion for bridge, particularly for the play of the cards. For many years he has been planning to assemble an in-depth study of all known card play techniques and their classification. The only thing he lacked was time for the project; now, having recently retired, he has accomplished his ambitious task. It has been my privilege to follow its progress and watch the book take shape.

A book such as this should not be put into a beginner's hands, but it should become a well-thumbed reference source for all players who want to improve their game. It will be an important text for experts as well, because all types of coups, even the strangest or rarest, are described. Can you execute a boomerang stepping-stone squeeze? Are you familiar with waiting moves? If not, you can find out what they are in these pages. What's more — and in my view, an indispensable feature — much space has been dedicated to defensive techniques, one of the most exciting aspects of card play.

Many of these deals have been published previously in books or magazines, but Guy identifies his various sources and has added personal analysis and commentaries. What's more, all the examples are classified by topic, rendering them easy to retrieve as well as remember.

Savor and use this book; its 800+ deals and diagrams will provide long and thought-provoking reading. It should become *the* reference book for everyone.

May the seven of clubs bring you fun and fascination for many years to come!

Philippe Poizat,
European Senior Champion

Foreword

When did you last perform a dummy reversal, a Morton's Fork, an avoidance play, an intra-finesse, or delight of delights, a squeeze? Have you ever thought about applying one of these techniques at the table? Do you know them well enough to do that?

Okay, so you need to brush up a little — but where can you find the details? Here! This book lists all the techniques of card play at bridge from both declarer's and defender's point of view. There are many techniques that good players think they know, but I'll wager that everyone, including the experts, will be surprised by the diversity of card play techniques that are known today. This book should be a useful resource for improving players, as well as those experienced players who are looking to enhance their skills. In fact, this book is for anyone who wants to explore in depth (or even just browse) those techniques that do not come up every day, but which come up often enough to make them matter in the long run.

A small number of the chapters are designed to be educational. However, my goal is not to present a bridge course with inherent pedagogy and specific explanations. Rather my vision is of a collection of topics, a sort of dictionary or reference guide. Although most of the situations that I cover have already been described in books and magazines, they have never been brought together in one place... until now.

In addition to card play techniques, the book addresses thinking methods, strategies, and the context in which each card play technique can be applied. However, many other aspects of card play are not described here: signaling and discarding, opening leads, safety plays, probabilities, etc. Our game is so rich and varied that it would have taken a mammoth tome to cover them all! Bidding is included only when needed for overall comprehension. Opponents' bids, when given, are an indication of adverse distribution and strength; otherwise bidding is not discussed here.

Thinking techniques and strategies are the foundation of the game of bridge. Their execution requires knowledge of the card play techniques that are described extensively in the following pages. Even finesses, which are usually thought of as simple or trivial, can produce surprising results. Maneuvers and coups often produce excitement and admiration for their complexity and elegance. Are squeezes a technique of last resort? In many cases, they represent an additional chance for declarer. The relevant thinking techniques are described, followed by all known positions.

I do not claim to have invented anything in this book, except perhaps for the one-suited trump squeeze, but that has a low frequency indeed! Rather, during my reading and from my own experiences at the table, I have noted many wonderful card play techniques. Most of them have been described by well-known bridge authors, to whom I am very grateful indeed for the many deals that appear in this book. Where I have used a previously published deal, I give credit where credit is due. Where a play or maneuver has no name in English, I have sometimes invented one. It is interesting to note that everything that exists in the world has a name — even the famous ‘Coup without a name’ is now more aptly described as the ‘Scissors Coup’. A name is a common reference that facilitates communication and also serves to explain what it represents. It helps us to imagine and categorize the ‘thing’ better, to conceive and memorize it better, and thus to use it better. In the original edition of this book, I used the French names and classifications of Dr. Bertrand Romanet, at least for the positions he described. Where applicable, these have been translated or modified to suit English bridge terminology.

What could be more beautiful than an elegant avoidance play? Or a new deceptive play? The human factor prevails: the technician becomes an artist! As I have said, this book illustrates the enormous diversity of techniques in bridge, a diversity that adds to the social and human aspects of our game, providing challenge as well as attraction. Without such a vast array of possibilities, this intellectual, passionate, captivating and unique mind sport would not have charmed so many people. I hope this book, once you have used some of the techniques described within it, will have served to enhance that charm for you.

Bon bridge!

Guy Levé
Castris, France
Winter 2005

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: THINKING TECHNIQUES

Planning the play	13
What's the problem?	16
Counting	18
Discovery play	21
Card reading	25
Assumptions	26
Inferences	28
Getting into an opponent's head	30
Combining your chances	34
Timing	36
Strategies at notrump	42
Defensive strategies at notrump	44
Strategies in trump contracts	46
Defensive strategies in trump contracts	51

SECTION 2: SPECIAL PLAYS, COUPS AND GAMBITS

Communication	55
Blocking and unblocking plays	60
Playing to create or cut off an entry	66
Deschappelles Coup	72
The Merrimac Coup	73
Elimination play	76
Throw-in play	81
Suit establishment	94
Ducking play	100
Hold up play	104
The Bath Coup	111
Defensive duck	112
Avoidance play	115
Morton's Fork	122
Isolation play	128
Changing tack	130

Keeping the right card	131
Sacrifice	136
Grosvenor Gambit	138
Deceptive plays	142
Shell game	156

SECTION 3: TECHNIQUES SPECIFIC TO TRUMP CONTRACTS

Ruffs and underruffs	161
Transferring a ruff	170
Dummy reversal	172
Ruff and sluff (ruff and discard)	175
Defending against ruffs	180
Waiting move	182
Loser-on-loser play	184
Maneuvers with winners	189
Scissors Coup (Coup without a name)	191
Keeping trump control; forcing leads	193
Trump pick-up	197
<i>En passant</i> play	199
Elopement	201
Guillemard's Maneuver	205
Uppercut	207
Lob	209
Trump promotion	210
Smother play	214
Trump coups	217
Forcing defense	229
Trump reduction	230
Grand Coup	232

SECTION 4: FINESSES

Finesses and playing towards an honor	237
Intra-finesse	249
Backwards finesse	253
False or Chinese finesse	255
Entry-creating finesse	257
Obligatory finesse	260
Ruffing finesse	261
Finesse percentage play	264
Restricted choice	266

SECTION 5: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF SQUEEZES

About squeeze play	271
Counting your tricks	274
Falling back on a squeeze	276
Recognizing the elements of a squeeze	278
Identifying the squeeze suit	279
Identifying the squeeze card	280
Rectifying the count	281
Keeping an idle card	282
Vienna Coup	283
Isolating the menace	286
Transferring / shifting the guard	287
Communication	289
Choosing the type of squeeze	290
Defending against squeezes	291
Let's look at all types of squeezes	297

SECTION 6: NOTRUMP SQUEEZES

Simple squeeze	301
The simultaneous double squeeze	305
Non-simultaneous double squeeze	307
Reciprocal squeeze	309
Compound squeeze	313
Octagonal squeeze	323
Guard squeeze	324
Finesse squeeze	331
Vice squeeze	334
Stepping-stone squeeze	336
Winkle	339
Delayed duck squeeze (squeeze without the count)	342
Strip squeeze	345
Strip squeeze and endplay	348
Mole squeezes	353
Triple squeeze (three-suit squeeze)	356
Progressive (repeating) squeeze	362
Entry squeeze	365
Overtaking (entry-shifting) squeeze	369
Count squeeze (discovery squeeze)	372
One-threat squeeze	374
One-suit squeeze	376
One-card squeeze	377

Clash squeeze	378
Guard reduction squeeze	384
Non-material squeeze	386
Pseudo squeeze	390
Suicide squeeze	391

SECTION 7: TRUMP SQUEEZES

Simple trump squeeze	395
Double trump squeeze	397
Compound trump squeeze	399
Trump guard squeeze	401
Trump finesse squeeze	404
Schroeder squeeze (trump stepping-stone squeeze)	406
Trump triple squeeze	407
Trump entry squeeze	409
Trump entry-shifting (overtaking) squeeze	410
One-suit trump squeeze	411
One-card trump squeeze (MacGuffin)	413
One-threat trump squeeze	414
Backwash squeeze	415
Knockout squeeze	417
Trump clash squeeze	419
Trump suicide squeeze	420

BIBLIOGRAPHY	421
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SECTION 1

THINKING TECHNIQUES

Before learning to walk, one must learn how to think



Planning the play

A word, an important one, before we start. "Wait."

All the techniques you are going to see later in this book will be useless if you do not stop and think before trying to use them. As soon as the opening lead has been made, it is time to stop and think, to count winners and losers, to review the opposition bidding (or lack of it) and to draw conclusions, to search for where the missing trick(s) might come from and, of course, to decide what technique to apply. In short, it is time to plan a line of play.

Do not touch a single card in dummy, even if it is a singleton, before planning the play. You do not set off in a car to go somewhere (the contract) without knowing which route to take (the line of play); otherwise you risk trouble ahead (going down). Sometimes, even, because of an unexpected incident, you must take a different route (modify the line of play). Just as a driver decides on his route before starting his engine, so must we look ahead from behind the wheel of our contract. Bad traffic, construction, and other road hazards might appear, so let's be prepared. We'll look at one example just in case you're not convinced:

♠	A J 4						
♥	J 5 2						
♦	K Q 5 3						
♣	Q 9 4						
<table border="1"><tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr></table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
♠	K 9 5						
♥	A K 4 3						
♦	A 7 6 4						
♣	A 2						

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦ 2.

Initial thinking and diagnostic

What's the lead convention? Fourth best.

Even with 31 combined points, South has only eight tricks. One more must be found. There are several possible ways we might do this:

- establish the fourth diamond
- establish the fourth heart
- lead up to dummy's honors in hearts and clubs
- spade finesse
- endplay an opponent
- a squeeze

Let's keep thinking:

- 1) Establish the fourth diamond. From the lead, West probably has four diamonds and they are all higher than ours, so this line is very unlikely to work!
- 2) Establish the fourth heart. This is possible if hearts are 3-3 or if the queen is doubleton — keep this line in mind.
- 3) Playing towards dummy's honors. Yes, we only need West to have one of the ♠Q, the ♥Q and the ♣K. We could win the ♦A and play once towards the ♥J, once towards the ♠J and once towards the ♣Q. Three chances! Not bad. Surely one of them will succeed.
- 4) Endplay an opponent to give us a free finesse. That works after eliminating his exit cards. Keep it in mind.
- 5) A squeeze? For the time being, that's not an obvious choice.

Let's try Line 3. We want the lead in the South hand, so we put in the ♦3 at Trick 1 and East plays the ♦10. That should start an alarm bell ringing. 'Stop, look, listen,' was what the traffic signs used to say at the beginning of the automobile era. Before grabbing that ♦A, let's think some more. What if East has all the honors after all? In addition, what if the hearts are not 3-3 and the queen is not doubleton? In that case, we are going to go down, although we will be able to complain about our bad luck.

Any other ideas? Is there something we forgot to take into account? Stop and think now; do not mechanically take the trick! Maybe there's a better line. Thinking further brings us to the endplay, Line 4: if a play is due to fail when South tries it, perhaps it will succeed if East has to make it (the reverse of 'Anything you can do, I can do better!'). If West has four diamonds, East has only one, and if we let him hold this trick, he is endplayed right now! His return will, perforce, be in one of the three other suits, the ones that we are interested in. Wherever the missing honors are, he will be obliged to give us a trick.

	♠ A J 4	
	♥ J 5 2	
	♦ K Q 5 3	
	♣ Q 9 4	
♠ 10 3 2		♠ Q 8 7 6
♥ 9 7		♥ Q 10 8 6
♦ J 9 8 2		♦ 10
♣ 10 7 5 3		♣ K J 8 6
	♠ K 9 5	
	♥ A K 4 3	
	♦ A 7 6 4	
	♣ A 2	

	N	
W		E
	S	

We can call it a (very) early throw-in. Assuming that the ♦2 really is a fourth-best card, the contract is 100% safe from the very first trick — nice, isn't it? All we had to do was count 4+4+4+1= 13 diamonds — not too difficult at all. No difficult technique whatsoever was required here, just a ducking play at the first trick. Yes, East could have been thrown in later, but it's much neater and more effective this way. Above all, the important thing was not to play mechanically.

Of course, 'Stop, Look, Listen' is not a maxim for declarer only; it is just as important for the defenders.



What's the problem?

Even when applying the principle 'Stop, Look, Listen', many players, even relatively good ones, have difficulty deciding what needs to be done. As in a police enquiry, or a medical diagnosis, the collection of facts (here, that West has four diamonds) does not suffice to solve the problem; one must know how to make deductions and draw conclusions. The first deduction (East has only one diamond) will not suffice. It is the consequence (if left on play, East must now lead another suit) that ultimately indicates the right line of play. How many times do we think, 'I can't believe it was so simple. How did I never think of it?' Intellectual laziness, lack of concentration, distractions, too many things to think about... everything plays a role. However, a player can develop the necessary analytical discipline by following a checklist. After 'Stop, Look, Listen', we can add 'Analyze, Imagine, Draw conclusions, Verify that nothing has been overlooked'. All good players, without exception, force themselves to do just that, and it is an even more valuable process for aspiring players, whether they are declarer or defender.

As declarer

♠	KJ72									
♥	AJ5									
♦	983									
♣	1073									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	A653									
♥	K9872									
♦	Q2									
♣	A2									

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♦	1♥
2♣	2♥	3♦	3♥
pass	pass	4♦	4♥
all pass			

A competitive auction and a difficult contract. West leads the ♦6 and East takes the king, then the ace and jack. Declarer discards the ♣2 on the third diamond, escaping an overruff. West throws the ♣9 on this trick. East now plays the ♣8, taken with the ace.

East had six diamonds and it's reasonable to assume he has two clubs, since West should have six clubs rather than five, with the three missing honors. East surely has the two major queens for his opening bid. If the ♥Q is doubleton, the ♠Q will be third and impossible to pick up, because the ten, nine and eight are also missing. You therefore have to assume the opposite situation: that the ♠Q is doubleton. We have to play the ♥A and ♥J, a backwards finesse, hoping to pin West's doubleton ♥10. If that works, we can play off the top spades to drop the queen.

As defender

♠ AQ842

♥ 64

♦ 842

♣ AK7

♠ J9765

♥ 532

♦ AK5

♣ J8

N

W E

S

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*.

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
pass	1♠	pass	4♥
all pass			

West leads the ♦ Q.

East may be surprised by North’s pessimism in passing 4♥ with such a good hand, but it is still his job to try to defeat the contract. North’s bid obviously enhanced South’s hand, but South nevertheless made no slam tries, so he probably has two losing diamonds. What’s more, South certainly has some spades. So why can’t West be void? Overtake the ♦ Q with the king, a revealing card, and give West a spade ruff. You can then regain the lead with the ♦ A and give partner another spade ruff for the setting trick.

Counting

Counting is often the alpha and omega, the start and very often the end of the thinking techniques that one must apply to any bridge deal. Counting, never to more than 13 in regard to distribution and rarely to more than 20 as far as points go, often leads to precise knowledge of the concealed hands, the distribution as well as the placement of missing honors. Any self-respecting player pays careful attention to the cards that are played, so as to be able to make useful and necessary inferences. Using our driving analogy, we look at the road and other cars; we drive carefully and pay attention to everything that happens around us. If we don't, we're going to have an accident!

Declarer counts the distribution

♠	K53									
♥	A42									
♦	Q842									
♣	K103									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	AQ7									
♥	KQ6									
♦	AKJ3									
♣	AJ5									

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 7NT; West leads the ♠J.

It's easy to count twelve tricks; all that remains is to locate the ♣Q. The only effective way to find her is to cash all the winners in the other three suits and watch what happens. The opponents will follow or discard; their distribution will then be known. On the diamonds, at least one opponent will show out, possibly also in another suit. Suppose East follows only twice in each major suit and follows three times in diamonds. Now twelve of West's cards are known and it is clear that he has a singleton club. Cash the ♣K and take a proven finesse against East's queen.

A defender counts the distribution

♠	KJ								
♥	1053								
♦	A863								
♣	A872								
			N					♠	AQ6
		W			E			♥	J976
								♦	QJ10
			S					♣	J95

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 5♦; West leads the ♠5.

East takes the ♠J with the queen and returns the ace, ruffed by declarer. Declarer cashes the ♦A and ♦K, West following only once. Then he plays the ♥A, ♥K and ♥Q, West following three times. Declarer then plays a diamond to East's queen.

The count of the South hand is simple: 1-3-5, leaving four clubs. A club play now could well be disastrous, but a heart return, even though it is a ruff and sluff, cannot allow the contract to make.

Declarer counts points

♠	432
♥	AQ65
♦	6543
♣	J2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠	QJ10965
♥	432
♦	AJ
♣	KQ

East opened a strong notrump and South plays in 2♠.

East has 15-17 points; North-South have 20 and West has the rest (3-5 points).

West leads a diamond to East's king, taken with declarer's ace. Now declarer plays the ♠Q: West takes the king, and cashes his ♦Q.

West has already shown up with 5 points. He can't have anything else! West plays another diamond, ruffed in the closed hand. A second round of spades goes to East's ace (West discards a club) and East cashes his ♣A and continues clubs. Declarer wins and draws the last adverse trump.

Where are the heart honors? Obviously, East has them, so the heart finesse will lose. Declarer has to hope that the ♥KJ are doubleton, giving East a 3-2-4-4 hand with 15 points. He can then play a small heart from both hands, followed by the ace (or vice versa). When the heart honors fall doubleton, the ♥Q is high.

A defender counts points

♠	KJ102
♥	AJ964
♦	76
♣	J8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠	76
♥	52
♦	A954
♣	KQ932

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Gagnant*.

South plays 3NT after he has opened with a strong 1NT; West leads the ♥6.

East plays the ♥8 and declarer wins with the ♥10. He then cashes the ♣A, plays the ♣4 to the king and cashes the ♣Q, discarding the ♥3. Then he plays the ♦5 to his jack, followed by the ♦K and ♦A. Presumably disappointed that neither minor suit is breaking, he now plays the ♥5 to his king, West taking his ace.

At this stage, West still has ♠KJ10 and ♥J9. Counting declarer's points, he has seen 4 in clubs, 4 in diamonds and 5 in hearts, for 13 points in all. Therefore, South cannot have both the ♠A and ♠Q for his 15-17 point 1NT opener. If he has the ace, he already has nine tricks; if he has the queen, however, he will go down two when West now leads the ♠10 to East's ace and a second spade is led through.

A defender counts declarer's tricks

♠ K752	♠ 103	♠ J984
♥ 103	♥ A852	♥ 97
♦ AK2	♦ QJ109	♦ 863
♣ AK109	♣ 843	♣ 7652
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ6	
	♥ KQJ64	
	♦ 754	
	♣ QJ	

South plays 3♥; West leads the ♣K.

East gives count. West can see four tricks for his side and asks himself if he should look for one more in spades where East has a high honor, before North's diamonds are established.

However, counting declarer's potential tricks, only eight can be found. West must not give him a ninth trick.

West simply takes his four honor tricks in the minors and belatedly gives the lead back to declarer, in any suit but spades.

A defender helps his partner to count declarer's hand

♠ A9	♠ K765	♠ J108432
♥ 9	♥ 102	♥ K
♦ AK1072	♦ Q963	♦ 854
♣ AQJ102	♣ K54	♣ 763
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q	
	♥ AQJ876543	
	♦ J	
	♣ 98	

South has bid to 5♥ after East-West competed to 4♠; West leads the ♠A.

On the ♠A lead, East plays the jack, denying the queen, which falls from declarer. West cashes the ♦K (East plays the ♦4, signaling count) and switches to a trump, fearing that declarer is void in clubs.

Declarer wins with the ♥A, crosses to dummy with the ♥10, discards the ♣9 on the ♠K, and returns to hand by ruffing a spade to cash all his trumps. At this point, East has to help his partner, who may not know what to discard on the last trump in a two-card ending. Was declarer 2-1 or 1-2 in the minors? Spade discards are meaningless — East must start by discarding all his diamonds and clubs. West can then count declarer's hand and throw all his diamonds, keeping the ♣A rather than the ♦A as his last card. If he does not do this, he could be in trouble, even more so if declarer throws the ♣K from dummy to keep the ♦Q, a nice decoy if West has forgotten the count signal in diamonds given by East. This is a 'memory squeeze', permitting the ♣8 to become Trick 12. Giving count is essential, but a little more help can be useful.

Discovery play

This technique is an intentionally instigated line of play that allows declarer to draw useful conclusions about distribution and high cards by watching the cards played or discarded by the defenders. We can also call it 'reading the cards'.

A discovery play can be used to count both adverse distribution and points. In some cases, it ends with complete knowledge; in others, it will provide only probabilities.

Discovery by counting distribution

	♠ Q	
	♥ KQJ1095	
	♦ K102	
	♣ 1085	
♠ 94		♠ KJ10762
♥ 8		♥ 764
♦ Q9863		♦ 74
♣ AK764		♣ 93
	♠ A853	
	♥ A32	
	♦ AJ5	
	♣ QJ2	

South plays 4♥.

West leads the ♣A and continues with the ♣K and the ♣4, ruffed by East, who returns a trump. Now declarer knows he must find the ♦Q.

Declarer takes the ♥K, the ♠A and ruffs a spade. Then he plays the ♥A, West discarding a club, and ruffs another spade, West again discarding a club. These ruffs didn't bring any extra tricks, but they served to uncover the adverse distribution.

Since West is now known to be 2-1-5-5, declarer should play West, who has more diamonds, to have the ♦Q.

Discovery by counting points

	♠ 10842	
	♥ K983	
	♦ AQ43	
	♣ Q	
	♠	
	♥	
	♦	
	♣	
	♠ AQ975	
	♥ —	
	♦ 652	
	♣ AK74	

South plays 6♠ after East has passed as dealer; West leads the ♣9.

Declarer must find either the ♠K or the ♦K. Instead of trying the trump finesse immediately, declarer leads the ♥K from dummy and ruffs East's ace. Then he tries the diamond finesse, but East takes his king and returns the ♥Q.

The ♣9 lead denied the ♣J and the discovery play showed that East had the ♥A, the ♥Q and the ♦K. It is now more probable, since he is a passed hand, that East does not have the ♠K as well. Declarer cashes the ace of trumps to drop West's singleton king.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Discovery before committing to a line of play

	♠ 842	
	♥ AK10863	
	♦ AJ93	
	♣ —	
♠ QJ107		♠ 9653
♥ 4		♥ J752
♦ Q85		♦ 1062
♣ A9752		♣ 64
	♠ AK	
	♥ Q9	
	♦ K74	
	♣ KQJ1083	

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer can easily count twelve tricks, unless neither the clubs nor the hearts behave. He can play two rounds of clubs, throwing spades from dummy, but which red suit should he discard on the third round?

Declarer wins the first trick in hand and plays clubs from the top, West ducking twice. Before playing another club and committing to one line or the other, let's check the heart situation by playing the ♥A and ♥Q. West discards on the second heart!

Now we know that we need four tricks from diamonds, so a heart should be discarded on the third club instead of a diamond.

Discovery and inference

	♠ A2	
	♥ A93	
	♦ K1074	
	♣ 9653	
♠ KJ874		♠ Q109653
♥ 105		♥ QJ874
♦ J653		♦ 8
♣ 82		♣ 7
	♠ —	
	♥ K62	
	♦ AQ92	
	♣ AKQJ104	

David Bird and Martin Hoffman, *Inspired Card Play*.

South plays 7♣, with no adverse bidding; West leads the ♣8.

Since declarer's heart loser can be discarded on the ♠A, the only problem is which way to play the diamonds in case they are 4-1. A bit of discovery is useful. Declarer draws two rounds of trumps, then throws a heart on the ♠A and eliminates hearts, West discarding on the third round of the suit. Let's sum up: West started with doubletons in hearts and clubs, so if he possesses only one diamond, he would then have eight spades. Wouldn't he have bid with that hand? Of course he would have! He has more than one diamond for sure. Declarer should play off the ♦AQ and finesse against the jack when East follows only once.

Defending against discovery: concealing your holdings

	♠ AQ103	
	♥ J973	
	♦ 1097	
	♣ 96	
♠ 96		♠ K842
♥ K		♥ 1082
♦ J863		♦ A52
♣ AKJ743		♣ 1052
	♠ J75	
	♥ AQ654	
	♦ KQ4	
	♣ Q8	

South plays 3♥; West, who had overcalled 2♣, cashes the ♣AK and then plays a diamond to East's ace.

A second diamond goes to declarer's king and he then plays the ♠5 to dummy's ten. If East takes his ♠K, declarer will know that West has the ♥K, since he needs it to justify his overcall. Declarer will then have no option but to play his ♥A and hope the king was singleton. If East ducks the ♠10, however, declarer will certainly seize the opportunity to take an immediate heart finesse, and the ♠K will score in due time.

Defending against discovery: misdirection

	♠ 105	
	♥ J96	
	♦ Q108	
	♣ Q10742	
♠ Q72		♠ A84
♥ 83		♥ 75
♦ A953		♦ KJ62
♣ AJ65		♣ K983
	♠ KJ963	
	♥ AKQ1042	
	♦ 74	
	♣ —	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A and continues with the ♦3.

East takes his ♦J. Since declarer has shown a major two-suiter during the bidding, he is likely to be void in clubs, so East should try for two spade tricks.

An immediate low spade switch now could well lead declarer astray. Fortunately, there is an even better line. East should lead the ♣K, as if he had the ace and king, concealing the ♠A. After all, with 15 points, East would surely have made a bid. When declarer is in dummy with the ♥J, he will try the spade finesse of his own accord.

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*.

Defending against discovery: concealing the distribution

♠ J97432	♠ 10	♠ 865
♥ 9872	♥ KQJ10	♥ 643
♦ J54	♦ Q2	♦ 10763
♣ —	♣ A109763	♣ Q42
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AKQ	
	♥ A5	
	♦ AK98	
	♣ KJ85	

Danny Kleinman, *The Bridge World*, November 1998.

South plays 7NT; West leads the ♥ 9.

Declarer takes the ♥ A, ♥ K and ♥ Q, discarding the ♣ 5 from the closed hand. What should East discard on the fourth heart?

A club is suicide. A spade will permit declarer to take three rounds of spades and get a good count on the hands, East's discard telling all. East is actually squeezed, but declarer doesn't know it. East has to discard a diamond. It is unlikely that declarer will discard another club. He will very likely discard a diamond. East can still follow three times in diamonds and now declarer has a good chance to go wrong in clubs.

A better declarer would have taken his three spades and three diamonds before the hearts, when the squeeze on East would have been totally obvious.

Card reading

Card reading is the ability to draw appropriate conclusions about distribution and the placement of missing honors. Counting the hands is a prerequisite for this. Strictly speaking, it is not a card play technique, but an extension of the hand-counting technique. Again, we can think of a police inquiry, or a medical diagnosis, where it is possible to draw accurate conclusions from incomplete but convergent data. It is certainly one of the most fascinating aspects of our noble game of bridge.

		♠ 10862	
		♥ K65	
		♦ Q5	
		♣ AJ76	
♠ J743			♠ AQ95
♥ Q742			♥ J10
♦ 9632			♦ A87
♣ 8	✓		♣ Q543
		♠ K	
		♥ A983	
		♦ KJ104	
		♣ K1092	

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥2.

Declarer takes his ♥A, cashes the ♣A and then leads the ♣J from dummy. This holds the trick, West discarding a diamond.

Declarer now leads the ♦Q from dummy; East takes his ace and must think. Should he return a heart? Declarer is known to have four clubs, since West followed only once. From the ♥2 lead, declarer probably has four hearts also. If West had the jack or ten fourth in diamonds, he would not have discarded one, but if he has only three diamonds, the contract is unbeatable.

East has to hope that declarer has a 1-4-4-4 distribution and should lay down his ♠A. Bingo! This will be followed by a lead of the ♠5 to West's jack and a final spade through dummy's 10-8 to East's Q-9.

Assumptions

Making assumptions is a thinking technique in which one posits a lie of the cards necessary for the contract to be makeable: if a crucial card has to be in a particular hand for the contract to succeed, then let's assume it is in the right place. If, on the other hand, we could succeed even with this card badly placed, then we need to analyze the consequences and modify our line of play accordingly.

Assuming favorable honor placement

♠ A2	♠ KJ107	♠ Q
♥ J87	♥ AQ962	♥ K105
♦ QJ854	♦ 103	♦ 976
♣ 654	♣ K2	♣ AQJ987
	♠ 986543	
	♥ 43	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ 103	

South plays 3♠ after East overcalls in clubs and West raises; West leads the ♣4.

East takes two club tricks and exits with a diamond to the ace. Declarer could reason that if the heart finesse works, then he cannot lose more than two clubs and two spades. However, if this finesse loses, then West may well have the ace of trumps, with or without the queen. When the ♠2 shows up from West, declarer can infer the actual 2-1 split instead of 3-0, and he plays the ♠K at once. No certainty, of course, but highly probable.

Should the contract be 4♠ instead, then declarer has to assume that the heart finesse will work. If it does, East must have the ♠A for his bid, and a finesse against the ♠Q becomes mandatory.

Making an assumption about the distribution

♠ 9543	♠ AJ	♠ 10872
♥ K104	♥ 532	♥ 98
♦ AKQ10	♦ 9763	♦ J52
♣ 76	♣ AKJ5	♣ 9832
	♠ KQ6	
	♥ AQJ76	
	♦ 84	
	♣ Q104	

South plays 4♥; West starts with the top three diamond honors.

Declarer ruffs the third diamond and must avoid an upcut leading to a trump promotion. If he believes West has the fourth diamond, declarer must play the ♥A and ♥Q, but if he believes (in a different layout) that East has it, then he should play the ♠A followed by the heart finesse. The opponents' signaling might help him to decide which line to take.

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Declarer Play at Bridge*.

Assuming the defenders will beat you if they can

♠ J74
♥ J10932
♦ 9
♣ AJ85

♠ K1095
♥ 64
♦ 87543
♣ K3

♠ AQ3
♥ Q875
♦ 10
♣ Q10974

♠ 862
♥ AK
♦ AKQJ62
♣ 62

N
W
S

E

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥J.

South has eight top tricks, and needs to score one of the black kings for his ninth. It is tempting to lead up to the ♠K, since it looks safer than playing clubs. There are two reasons not to do this. First, if East has the ♠A, a second heart will lead to defeat. Second, if West has the ♠A, he will win it and play a club — which again leads to defeat if East has the ♣A. So if East has the ♣A, a spade play will always lose, whoever holds the ♠A. South must summon up his courage and play a club to the king. If West has the ♣A, the spades are not dangerous, and if East has it, the contract is doomed anyway.

Assumptions on defense

♠ 642
♥ 8632
♦ A1076
♣ 74

♠ K873
♥ Q
♦ KQJ84
♣ KQ6

♠ A105
♥ 754
♦ 92
♣ 109852

♠ QJ9
♥ AKJ109
♦ 53
♣ AJ3

N
W
S

E

South plays 6NT after making an opening bid in hearts; West leads the ♣7.

North-South did not use Blackwood, so even though two aces are missing, the opponents do not know that is the case. Declarer wins in hand and plays a diamond towards dummy, a spade to his jack, and then the ♠Q, which East takes with the ace. What should he return?

East should realize that if declarer is missing the ♥A, he has only eleven tricks, so there is no urgency to play a heart. However, even if he does not possess the ♦A, twelve tricks are there for the taking. East must play back a diamond right away.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Inferences

Like the preceding topic, this is not a card play technique but a thinking technique: a mental process. A whole book has been written on this subject (*Inferences at Bridge* by Marshall Miles). Here is an example.

Inferences from the bidding

♠	Q5									
♥	A10932									
♦	84									
♣	10632									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	AK7432									
♥	6									
♦	Q5									
♣	AQ84									

Terence Reese, *Bridge Tips by World Masters*.

South plays 4♠ after West's 2♦ overcall; the ♥4 is led.

What inferences can we draw from the bidding and lead?

In spades: no one doubled the final contract despite East-West having 19 points between them, so it is likely that neither opponent has four spades; spades are probably breaking 3-2.

In hearts: the lead is probably not a singleton because that would give East six hearts. Probably the lead is from honor third, East having four hearts with two honors.

In diamonds: West does not possess the ace and king, despite his bid, or he certainly would have led one of them. The split is 6-3 or 7-2 with East having a high honor.

In clubs: following this analysis, West has at least six diamonds, three hearts and two spades. He has two clubs, or possibly only one; he has one club honor.

In terms of points: West having bid 2♦ over the 1♠ opening, he has at least 10 to 12 of the missing points.

We want to lose no more than one club. After due consideration, declarer should realize that West has the ♣K, so there is no question of finessing; declarer should lay down the ♣A. If the king drops, he will take two rounds of trumps, hoping that West has only two, finishing in dummy to try a deep finesse in clubs.

On the left are the East-West hands consistent with this analysis.

♠ J6		♠ 1098									
♥ K54		♥ QJ87									
♦ AJ109632		♦ K7									
♣ K		♣ J975									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Inferences from the play

♠ 853

♠ KQ1062

♠ AJ

♠ 974

A good player would duck his ace when South leads a spade to the queen. The fact that East takes his ace at once implies that he has the above holding.

Getting into an opponent's head

It is important to understand that the defenders cannot see through the backs of the cards and do not have the same information as declarer. We ought to hide our strengths and weaknesses, but also try to understand why an opponent played one card rather than another. These inferences, where psychology prevails over technique, are more risky, because opponents don't always play logically and inferences might prove erroneous — against the proverbial little old ladies, for instance. However, it is so gratifying when these inferences prove to be correct.

Projecting a false impression

♠ 1095	♠ K876
♥ A3	♥ 10962
♦ KJ42	♦ 1096
♣ KJ105	♣ AQ
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>
	♠ J43
	♥ 54
	♦ AQ
	♣ 987643
	♠ AQ2
	♥ KQJ87
	♦ 8753
	♣ 2

José le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣J.

West	North	East	South
			1♥
pass	1♠	pass	2♥
dbl	redbl	3♣	4♥
all pass			

West showed points and East showed club length. Since declarer needs the club finesse anyway, he takes it and it wins. Now declarer must avoid losing three diamonds and the ace of trumps. Suppose he discards a diamond on the ♣A — as soon as West gets in with the ace of trumps, he will lead a diamond. However, if declarer discards a spade on the ♣A, West will be tempted to lead back a spade; now two diamonds can be discarded on the spades when they break 3-3. Try creating a false impression in an opponent's mind — it might pay dividends.

Failing to give a ruff

♠ Q3
♥ AQJ
♦ 862
♣ AKQJ6
<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>
♠ K1082
♥ 1098643
♦ Q3
♣ 8

The Bridge World, July 1988.

South plays 4♥, after East opened 1♦ and rebid the suit; West leads the ♦7.

East takes his king and then cashes the ace, on which West plays the ♦4. Now East cashes the ♠A and leads another spade. Evidently, East has the ♥K, or he would have played a third round of diamonds to allow his partner to score it. Declarer should play the ♥A, rejecting the finesse.

A Greek gift

♠ 1054

♥ 9652

♦ Q32

♣ J52

♠ K83

♥ K

♦ AK1085

♣ 8764

N

W E

S

♠ 9762

♥ 104

♦ J97

♣ Q1093

♠ AQJ

♥ AQJ873

♦ 64

♣ AK

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A.

With no way to reach dummy, declarer will have to play trumps by cashing his ♥A. When West continues with the ♦K and the ♦5, giving him an unexpected dummy entry, declarer must be suspicious and ask himself why West has suddenly become benevolent. If declarer succumbs to the temptation of the trump finesse, West makes his singleton king and the contract will fail.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!

Deduction

♠ 75

♥ 10954

♦ Q3

♣ KQ975

N

W E

S

♠ KQ10

♥ A86

♦ K1097

♣ A42

Philip Martin, *The Bridge World*, December 1987.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠3.

East plays the ♠J and declarer takes the trick with the ♠Q. A diamond to the queen loses to the ace, and East returns the ♠8 to the ten and ace. At this point, West plays the ♥2 to the ♥4, the ♥Q and the ♥A. Declarer cashes the ♣K, the ♣A and the ♠K, everyone following, and then runs all the clubs. West discards two spades and one diamond, while East discards a heart and a diamond. The contract is secure, but overtricks are always welcome. Who has the ♦J?

West's heart return makes sense only when he has ♥KJxx, hoping that East has the ♥A. What is more, if he had ♦J-x-x, he would have known that if declarer did not hold the ♥A, he had only eight tricks, and he would have continued the spade attack. Conclusion: East has the ♦J and the diamond finesse will be good for two overtricks.

Discarding a high honor on defense

♠ 9	♠ AQ753	♠ J86									
♥ Q106	♥ 2	♥ AKJ9874									
♦ KJ1083	♦ 642	♦ Q									
♣ 9763	♣ AQ105	♣ KJ									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K1042										
	♥ 53										
	♦ A975										
	♣ 842										

John Lowenthal, *The Bridge World*, February 2000.

South plays 4♠ after bids in the red suits by the opponents; West leads the ♥ 6.

East wins and plays the ♦ Q, taken with the ace. Then declarer ruffs a heart and draws three rounds of trumps. The ♣ 2 follows to the ace ... and East drops the king, because if he gets thrown in, he will have to give declarer a ruff and sluff in hearts.

Suppose declarer now returns to his hand with a trump and attempts a club finesse. East will win, but the heart return will not now give up a ruff and sluff. Moreover, if declarer plays two rounds of diamonds to get a better count of the hands, he will certainly lose to the hidden ♣ J. This ♣ K has thrown a monkey wrench into declarer's mind and can be compared to a [Grosvenor Gambit](#) (see p. 138).

Discarding a high honor as declarer

♠ AK94	♠ 76	♠ QJ532									
♥ A42	♥ 8	♥ 653									
♦ 2	♦ QJ1098	♦ K765									
♣ 76543	♣ KJ1098	♣ 2									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 108										
	♥ KQJ1097										
	♦ A43										
	♣ AQ										

The Bridge World, June 1980.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦ 2.

Since two spade losers and a heart loser are inevitable, a diamond ruff(s) would be lethal to declarer if West is courageous enough to underlead his ♠ AK. Dummy plays the ♦ Q at Trick 1, on which East withholds his king. Declarer takes the ace as if it were singleton and then leads the ♥ 9. West rises with the ace, plays the ♠ K (East playing the ♠ Q, indicating the jack) and West continues with the ♠ 4. Now East, under the impression that declarer had a singleton ♦ A, is likely to return a black suit, letting the contract through, a difference of two tricks.

Discarding a high honor as declarer

	♠ 53	
	♥ AQ64	
	♦ KQ2	
	♣ AJ83	
♠ KQ9		♠ A7642
♥ J752		♥ 1098
♦ 1084		♦ J65
♣ 752		♣ 64
	♠ J108	
	♥ K3	
	♦ A973	
	♣ KQ109	

The Bridge World, July 1984.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠K.

East plays the ♠7 and declarer the ♠10. West continues with the ♠Q and declarer plays the ♠J. West continues with the ♠9 and now East might think to duck. Believing that West has ♠KQ98, he will not want to block the suit. In fact, he has just succeeded in blocking it, thanks to declarer's subtlety.

Reading partner's mind

	♠ Q6	
	♥ AQJ95	
	♦ J94	
	♣ Q74	
♠ 105		♠ J94
♥ 862		♥ 73
♦ A72		♦ KQ105
♣ K10653		♣ A982
	♠ AK8732	
	♥ K104	
	♦ 863	
	♣ J	

Alfred Sheinwold, *A Shortcut to Winning Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣3.

East takes his ♣A and sees the jack fall. He returns the ♦K, which holds; West encourages with the ♦7 and East plays the ♦5 to the ace. West should now ask himself whether he should lead a third diamond or the ♣K.

The indication given by partner's spot cards is not enough. Declarer could distort the information, or at least spread doubt, by falsecarding. Better believe partner. If East has five diamonds, his contribution should have been to take the ♦Q before switching to a club. Since he didn't, he has only four diamonds and West can play one back.

Combining your chances

This is another thinking technique, and we're going to look at four examples. Basically, what's involved is not putting all your eggs in one basket: you should have a Plan B, in case the main line of play runs into trouble.

Choosing the right suit to play first

	♠ AQ765	
	♥ J2	
	♦ 1053	
	♣ Q53	
♠ 1043		♠ KJ98
♥ 108743		♥ Q95
♦ Q97		♦ AJ6
♣ 42		♣ 876
	♠ 2	
	♥ AK6	
	♦ K842	
	♣ AKJ109	

Edwin Kantar, *Test Your Bridge Play*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥4.

Dummy's ♥J is covered with the queen and the king. There are two obvious possibilities for a ninth trick: a spade finesse, and a diamond play towards the king.

If declarer starts with the spade play and the finesse loses, East's ♥9 should be ducked. Unfortunately, West will overtake with the ♥10 and the subsequent spade continuation will lead to one down. If instead declarer starts with the diamond play to the king and it happens to lose, the spade finesse will still be available. The difference is that a late spade play does not involve letting the opponents in if it succeeds, while a late diamond play does.

Trying to set up a suit while keeping a finesse in reserve

	♠ 73	
	♥ 942	
	♦ 652	
	♣ KQJ109	
♠ J10985		♠ 642
♥ Q853		♥ J106
♦ K9		♦ Q1087
♣ 63		♣ A74
	♠ AKQ	
	♥ AK7	
	♦ AJ43	
	♣ 852	

Jimmy Tait, *Tales of the Club Expert*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠J.

The question is how to make the contract even when the defense ducks the ♣A twice. Only the diamond suit can provide an additional trick. Therefore, declarer should win the ♠A, play the ♣2 to dummy's king (East holding up) and duck a diamond in both hands. After winning the spade return with the ♠K, he can then play the ♦A, dropping West's king, followed by the ♣5 to the queen, East holding up again. Now comes the ♦6 towards the jack, and nine tricks come home.

Trying to drop an honor while keeping a finesse in reserve

♠ K2	♠ Q854	♠ 3
♥ K963	♥ AQ54	♥ J1087
♦ 743	♦ 82	♦ A10965
♣ QJ104	♣ A73	♣ K95
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AJ10976	
	♥ 2	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ 862	

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣Q.

The challenge is to make the contract even when the trump king does not cooperate. The ♣A is followed by the ♠Q from dummy. When no king appears, declarer tries the ace, but still no luck! Now comes Plan B: the heart finesse. When it succeeds, a club can be discarded on the ♥A.

Trying things in the right order

♠ J2	♠ KQ10	♠ 9874
♥ QJ753	♥ 109	♥ K842
♦ J1074	♦ K96532	♦ 8
♣ 108	♣ A9	♣ KJ53
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A653	
	♥ A6	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ Q7642	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥5.

Declarer wins with the ♥A, but cannot afford to give up the lead again. Maybe a 3-2 diamond split is not the only hope: there could be good news in spades, a useful extra chance. Since diamonds represent the only entries to the closed hand, declarer should not play on them right away. First, cash the ♠K and ♠Q, and if the ♠J does not fall, play a third round of spades to see if they break 3-3. On this layout, the jack falls doubleton and the ♠10 can be cashed. Now the carefully preserved diamond entry enables declarer to get back to hand to cash the ♠A and the ♦Q. Finally, a club back to the ace allows him to take the ♦K for his ninth trick.

Timing

When you want to take advantage of several different chances, it may be important to try them in a specific order. The element of timing becomes important. You may have to play one suit before another to know what play to make in the second suit, or protect a tenace, or preserve a stopper, or draw trumps. The story goes that there are many men who ended up on Skid Row because they failed to draw trumps. Just as many met the same fate because they drew trumps too soon. Correct timing is key.

Knowing what you need to play for

♠ Q106	♠ AK932	♠ 875
♥ J98	♥ K4	♥ Q1052
♦ 98432	♦ AQJ10	♦ 5
♣ KJ	♣ 63	♣ 108754
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ J4	
	♥ A763	
	♦ K76	
	♣ AQ92	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♦ 3.

Declarer needs tricks in spades. There are two possibilities: play the ♠2 towards the ♠J for four tricks or take a double finesse against the ♠Q and ♠10 for five tricks.

In order to make the right choice, declarer first needs to know the result of the club finesse, so this should be done first. When the club play loses, as here, declarer needs five tricks from spades. He must lead the ♠J in the hope that West has ♠Q10x.

Edwin Kantar, *Test Your Bridge Play*.

Knowing what you need to play for

♠ 875	♠ 42	♠ KJ96
♥ 2	♥ K10876	♥ 43
♦ Q9832	♦ AJ5	♦ K1076
♣ J976	♣ Q43	♣ K105
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ103	
	♥ AQJ95	
	♦ 4	
	♣ A82	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦ 3.

Again, knowing which finesse(s) to attempt in spades depends on the position of the ♣K. This is very similar to the previous deal. Take the ♦A, come to hand with a trump and play the ♣2 towards the queen. If this works, finessing the ♠Q will suffice. When the club play loses, two successive finesses, against the ♠J and the ♠K, are necessary. By the way, there is a good reason not to cash two rounds of trumps first. If you do, dummy will be missing a trump to ruff the last club. Try it!

Edwin Kantar, *Test Your Bridge Play*.

Protecting a tenace

	♠ 542	
	♥ A832	
	♦ QJ10	
	♣ K109	
♠ K10863		♠ 97
♥ 54		♥ QJ106
♦ K87		♦ 9432
♣ 432		♣ A75
	♠ AQJ	
	♥ K97	
	♦ A65	
	♣ QJ86	

Gilles Qu  ran, *Bridgerama*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠6.

The clubs will provide three tricks, but that only comes to eight. The ninth trick can come from diamonds, and this is the suit to tackle first, because if the finesse loses, West cannot lead spades again. Cross to dummy with the ♥A and attempt the diamond finesse. Win the heart return, which does not pose any threat, and finally attack the clubs.

Attacking the danger hand's entry

	♠ Q32	
	♥ K106	
	♦ A10865	
	♣ 104	
♠ KJ986		♠ 75
♥ A852		♥ Q973
♦ —		♦ K432
♣ Q986		♣ J32
	♠ A104	
	♥ J4	
	♦ QJ97	
	♣ AK75	

Paul Soloway.

South plays 3NT after West showed both majors during the bidding; West leads the ♠8.

Declarer wins the first trick with the ♠10. If the ♦K is offside, declarer is going to need a heart trick. Since West must have the ♥A on the bidding, as well as the long spades, declarer must play up to the ♥K before touching diamonds. When the ♥K wins, the contract is secure — declarer reverts to diamonds and the opponents can score only three hearts and a diamond.

Collecting a trick while preserving a guard

	♠ A652	
	♥ 9763	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AKQ10	
♠ J98		♠ 10743
♥ Q104		♥ A852
♦ AJ73		♦ 954
♣ 754		♣ 86
	♠ KQ	
	♥ KJ	
	♦ K10862	
	♣ J932	

Hugh Kelsey, *Bridge Wizardry*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠9.

Declarer wins the first trick in hand and plays the ♦2 towards the queen, which holds. If declarer cashes the ♠K and then takes four club tricks and the ♠A before playing the ♥3, East will rise with the ♥A. Now the ♠10 will squeeze declarer in the red suits and he will go down despite North-South's combined 28 points. When the ♦Q holds, declarer should play a heart to the king immediately; now everything is under control.

Preserving the right entry

	♠ J62	
	♥ 74	
	♦ A82	
	♣ 109632	
♠ 853		♠ 94
♥ AQ2		♥ KJ1085
♦ K73		♦ 9654
♣ AJ84		♣ Q7
	♠ AKQ107	
	♥ 963	
	♦ QJ10	
	♣ K5	

David Bird and Simon Cochemé, *Bridge with a Feminine Touch*.

South plays 3♠ after West made a takeout double of the opening 1♠ bid and East bid hearts in response; West leads the ♠3;

The trump lead is annoying because it prevents declarer from playing to ruff the third heart in dummy. A trick must be found from clubs and the diamond finesse must work as well. Although the ♣A is certainly wrong, leading the ♣10 on the above layout will force East to cover. A later club play up to dummy's nine will provide another trick.

Unfortunately, entries to dummy are sparse. Suppose declarer wins Trick 1 in dummy with the ♠J and plays the ♣10. West will win with the ♣A and can exit with the ♦K, a superb [Merrimac Coup](#), removing the late entry to the ♣9.

The right timing is to win the opening spade in hand, play diamonds until West covers with the king, and only then lead the ♣10. The ♠J will still be available as an entry.

Playing the right card

	♠ 742	
	♥ QJ108	
	♦ KJ65	
	♣ Q10	
♠ 83		♠ AQ1095
♥ A962		♥ K74
♦ A1098		♦ 42
♣ 754		♣ 863
	♠ KJ6	
	♥ 53	
	♦ Q73	
	♣ AKJ92	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

South plays 3NT after East has overcalled spades; West leads the ♠8.

Declarer wins East's ♠Q with the ♠K. Two tricks are needed in diamonds as well as one more in spades. If declarer leads the ♦3 to the king and then the ♦5 to the queen and ace, West will continue diamonds to set up his ♦10. One down. The correct play is to lead the ♦Q from hand; West cannot allow this to hold. Declarer still has two diamond stoppers and has set up his two tricks. Now it is time to play up to the ♠J.

In the right order

♠ AQ109	♠ 872	♠ 654									
♥ J92	♥ AQ5	♥ 1083									
♦ 9642	♦ A73	♦ K1085									
♣ K5	♣ J932	♣ 864									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ3										
	♥ K764										
	♦ QJ										
	♣ AQ107										

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10.

Declarer wins the first trick with the ♠J and must play to protect his ♠K. The club finesse is into the safe hand, but the diamond finesse is not. If declarer crosses to dummy with a heart to try the losing club finesse, he won't know what to do on a diamond return: finesse the diamond or hope that hearts split. So he should play three rounds of hearts first, finishing in dummy, and then take the club finesse. When it loses, declarer can go up with dummy's ♦A if the hearts behaved. Risk everything on a diamond finesse only as a last resort.

Don't play trumps too late

♠ J965	♠ 32	♠ 104									
♥ A	♥ J754	♥ KQ109862									
♦ K98643	♦ AJ2	♦ 10									
♣ J3	♣ 7642	♣ K105									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKQ87										
	♥ 3										
	♦ Q75										
	♣ AQ98										

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♥A and then switches to the ♦3.

If declarer lets the diamond run to his queen and then tries to get to dummy by finessing the ♦J, East will ruff in. Declarer will lose two more tricks: either an overruff and a trump, or two trumps. In fact, he doesn't actually need a third diamond trick, thanks to the spade suit. Declarer can put in the ♦J at Trick 2 and then play a club to the queen, followed by the ♣A. Only one trump will be lost.

Don't play trumps too late, but not too early either

♠ QJ7	♠ 65	♠ 108
♥ Q752	♥ K8	♥ AJ104
♦ KQJ4	♦ 9765	♦ 10832
♣ 87	♣ KJ1064	♣ 952
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AK9432	
	♥ 963	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQ3	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter la Manche à la Couleur*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

If declarer plays a heart to the king at Trick 2, East will take his ace and lead back a trump: goodbye heart ruff. Declarer will lose three hearts and a trump.

On the other hand, if declarer plays three rounds of spades, West will win the third spade and play a heart, and declarer will again lose three hearts and a trump. Declarer must duck a trump right away and accept that he is going to lose two hearts. He can take the rest, thanks to the watchdog, the ♠6, and dummy's club winners.

Don't play trumps too early

♠ K3	♠ 108762	♠ AQJ95
♥ J1032	♥ 76	♥ KQ984
♦ J64	♦ 9852	♦ —
♣ Q1095	♣ AK	♣ 873
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 4	
	♥ A5	
	♦ AKQ1073	
	♣ J642	

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

South plays 5♦; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer ruffs the second round of spades. If he draws even one round of trumps before playing on clubs, he will go down. He has used a vital entry to his hand prematurely and will be overruffed.

He must cash the ♣A and ♣K first. Then he can return to hand with a trump, discovering the bad break, ruff a club, return to the ♥A and ruff his last club. One trump is left in dummy to get back to hand and draw the last trump.

Don't play trumps too early

	♠ A62	
	♥ 109832	
	♦ —	
	♣ K8743	
♠ 10843		♠ KQJ9
♥ —		♥ Q74
♦ J863		♦ K10754
♣ Q10952		♣ 6
	♠ 75	
	♥ AKJ65	
	♦ AQ92	
	♣ AJ	

G rard Desrousseaux, *Le Bridgeur*.

South plays 7♥; West leads the ♦ 3 to the king and ace, as a spade is discarded from dummy.

As in the last example, if declarer cashes the ♥A and the ♦Q and then ruffs two diamonds and a spade, finessing against the queen of trumps in the process, he will finish in dummy. The only way back to hand is via a club ruff, but East will ruff the ♣K and it is all over. Declarer must ruff a diamond first, before playing even one round of trumps. Now the timing is right: play the ♠A, the ♥A (discovering the bad break), the ♦Q (discarding dummy's last spade), followed by the diamond ruff, the heart finesse, the spade ruff and finally the ♣A to return to hand and draw the last trump.

Strategies at notrump

This subject was studied extensively by Dr. Bertrand Romanet in his book *Bridge Total*. A selection of his examples is reproduced here.

Blitzkrieg

The defenders attack by leading their longest suit when there is some danger that it can be established to defeat the contract, assuming they also possess a control in declarer's suit. If both sides have the same number of controls, the defense has the decisive advantage of the opening lead (firing first). When the controls lie in the hand with the long suit, the defense will prevail. If the controls are split, declarer has to cut the communications between the adverse hands.

♠ QJ92
 ♥ A2
 ♦ Q1032
 ♣ A82

♠ 763
 ♥ 1087
 ♦ AJ874
 ♣ Q7

♠ A4
 ♥ QJ943
 ♦ 965
 ♣ J93

♠ K1065
 ♥ K54
 ♦ K
 ♣ K10654

N
 W E
 S

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ Q, ducked by declarer in both hands (severing communications).

The ♥3 continuation is taken with the ace. Declarer needs to set up the two black suits.

West is the danger hand. The spades must be tried first in case West has the ace. Then, after the ♥K is knocked out, West must be kept from gaining the lead when clubs are played. Declarer can play a club towards dummy, intending to play the ♣8, but West will insert the ♣9. Dummy is obliged to play the ace and East will very quickly discard his queen on it! Down goes the contract. Declarer must play with more subtlety: after knocking out the ♠A and winning the ♥K, he should cross to dummy with a spade and then lead the ♣2 towards his hand. He will win the ♣K if the queen does not appear from East and can then play a small club from both hands.

(See Avoidance play, p. 115)

War of maneuver

For this technique, there are no more long suits to set up on either side. On the contrary, there is a suit (sometimes more than one) positioned in such a way that declarer wants the opponents to lead it for him. How can he get them to do that? By giving them the lead.

	♠ 432										
	♥ 432										
	♦ AQ75										
	♣ AJ3										
♠ AQ7	<table><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	N			W		E		S		♠ J1098
N											
W		E									
	S										
♥ QJ1098		♥ 65									
♦ 94		♦ 1086									
♣ Q87		♣ 9642									
	♠ K65										
	♥ AK7										
	♦ KJ32										
	♣ K105										

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ Q.

Declarer can count eight tricks, but does not know whom to play for the ♣Q. In fact, there is no need to find it. Declarer can take his ♥A and ♥K; East follows twice, so West has only three heart winners to take. Now declarer can cash three rounds of diamonds and finally exit with a heart. West must either lead a spade around to the ♠K or give declarer a free finesse in clubs.

Comment: It is essential to preserve an ‘exit card’ for the throw-in; ducking a heart early would have been fatal.

Defensive strategies at notrump

The goal in a blitzkrieg is for the defense to get its tricks before declarer can take his. The defender who is short in the suit led, called the 'safe' hand, has the important task of protecting his partner, the 'danger' hand. Rising with an honor in second position, unblocking, and sacrificial plays like the Deschappelles Coup, are the safe hand's favorite weapons.

In the war of maneuver, the defensive sides are called the 'threatened' (the player to be thrown in) and the 'protector'. The latter should rise with high cards and play back high cards, while the threatened player should unblock high cards.

Rising in second seat in a blitzkrieg

	♠ K2	
	♥ K86	
	♦ A853	
	♣ 9432	
♠ Q10954		♠ J63
♥ Q92		♥ 10753
♦ J96		♦ Q1042
♣ A6		♣ K8
	♠ A87	
	♥ AJ4	
	♦ K7	
	♣ QJ1075	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠ 10.

Declarer ducks the first trick, but must take the second spade. He needs the club suit and immediately leads the ♣ 2 from dummy. East must go up with his king and return a spade; now West still has the ♣ A, his only entry for the established spades.

Refusing to take a trick in a war of maneuver

	♠ A32	
	♥ AK1032	
	♦ 75	
	♣ A32	
♠ KQ10876		♠ 9
♥ 5		♥ J9876
♦ KQJ106		♦ 98
♣ J		♣ 109865
	♠ J54	
	♥ Q4	
	♦ A432	
	♣ KQ74	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦ K.

Declarer takes the third diamond (East throws a spade) and he can count eight tricks. Cashing the ♥ Q and ♥ K brings no good news. Trying the ♣ A and another club to the king, East putting in the ♣ 10, brings no success either. Next declarer plays the ♠ A, on which East can now discard a heart, since dummy has no entries left. On the last club from dummy, East plays the ♣ 9. Declarer takes it and leads the ♣ 7... but East holds up. If he wins this trick, he will have to lead a heart, resurrecting dummy. When he ducks the club, declarer has no more than his original eight tricks. (See 'Ducking play', p. 100)

Strategies in trump contracts

This subject was studied extensively by Dr. Bertrand Romanet in his book *Bridge Total*. A selection of his examples is reproduced here. The basic options for making trump contracts are:

- 1) Make extra trump tricks.
- 2) Discard losers.
- 3) Use and preserve the control power of trumps.
- 4) Eliminate suits by ruffing and throw in a defender.
- 5) Trump reduction.

Plan #1. Score extra trump tricks

♠ A7	♠ J9	♠ 6542									
♥ 9876	♥ KQ2	♥ AJ1054									
♦ K9864	♦ AQJ32	♦ 10									
♣ J8	♣ K65	♣ Q97									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KQ1083										
	♥ 3										
	♦ 75										
	♣ A10432										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥9 to the king and ace.

East plays back the ♦10 to the jack. Declarer plays dummy's ♥Q, discarding a diamond, and then cashes the ♣K and ♣A. A third club puts East on lead, and he returns a heart, ruffed in hand. Declarer now plays a winning club, ruffs it, plays a diamond, which he also ruffs, and finally plays another club, ruffing again.

(See 'Ruffs', p. 161)

Plan # 2. Discard losers

Discard losers on a side suit.

♠ J107	♠ K543	♠ 9									
♥ A985	♥ Q742	♥ K63									
♦ KQJ7	♦ 32	♦ 10984									
♣ 94	♣ K65	♣ QJ1087									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AQ862										
	♥ J10										
	♦ A65										
	♣ A32										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer takes his ♦A. He has two hearts to lose and potential club and diamond losers also. The red losers are inescapable, but a heart can be established for a club discard. It must be done at once — ducking the lead would permit West to switch to clubs and then the discard would not come in time. Therefore, declarer needs to play three rounds of trumps and then lead the ♥J. He can take the club return with the ace and play another heart. The ♣K will still control the suit and the ♥Q can be used to discard the ♣2 from the South hand.

(See 'Suit establishment', p. 94)

Preventing declarer from discarding losers

Take what you are entitled to in the side suits.

	♠ K4	
	♥ J32	
	♦ 643	
	♣ KQ1032	
♠ 87		♠ 1096
♥ AQ97		♥ K1065
♦ KQJ7		♦ A1098
♣ 654		♣ J9
	♠ AQJ532	
	♥ 84	
	♦ 52	
	♣ A87	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

The challenge for the defense lies in knowing to take precisely two diamonds and two hearts. If West tries to cash a third diamond, declarer will ruff and two heart losers will be discarded on the club winners. Take what you are entitled to, but no more!

Plan # 3. Use and preserve the control power of trumps

Declarer must be cautious. His trumps could be shortened and he may lose control of the deal.

Here are eight recipes for keeping trump control:

- A 4-4 trump fit.
- Don't draw all the trumps right away.
- Duck a round of trumps.
- Do not ruff; instead, discard losers or even winners.
- Keep a guard (a watchdog).
- Set up your side suit first.
- Use a side suit for discards.
- Use a side suit as a trump suit-substitute (pick-up).

Use a side suit for discards

	♠ Q32	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 653	
	♣ AK6543	
♠ 106		♠ J87
♥ KQJ87		♥ 109652
♦ K1097		♦ J8
♣ J9		♣ Q108
	♠ AK954	
	♥ A3	
	♦ AQ42	
	♣ 72	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥K.

Declarer takes the ♥A, plays a club to the ace, returns to the ♠A and leads a club towards the king. When this survives, declarer discards his last heart on the third round of clubs. Now a heart return can be ruffed in hand, allowing declarer to draw trumps ending in dummy and enjoy the good clubs.

Use a side suit as a trump substitute (pick-up)

	♠ K932	
	♥ 3	
	♦ AK	
	♣ KQ10654	
♠ J		♠ A876
♥ J10975		♥ AKQ86
♦ 10643		♦ 75
♣ 987		♣ A3
	♠ Q1054	
	♥ 42	
	♦ QJ982	
	♣ J2	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥J.

East takes the first trick and plays another heart, ruffed in dummy. The ♠K is ducked all around, but the fall of the jack alerts declarer to the bad break. Declarer should not persevere with drawing trumps. If he does, East will take the third round and play another heart. Declarer will then lose control and East will take his hearts when he comes in with the ♣A. Instead, declarer should lead a club from dummy to his jack and continue the suit if East ducks. Now he can ruff East's heart return in dummy, cash two diamonds and leads winning clubs (the side suit) through East.

In defense, make declarer lose trump control

- Actively, by shortening declarer.
- Passively, by refusing to be shortened.

The signs to watch out for are long trumps headed by the ace and an established side suit in defense.

	♠ K7	
	♥ 952	
	♦ Q1074	
	♣ J752	
♠ J95		♠ 108642
♥ A64		♥ 873
♦ 963		♦ J5
♣ KQ103		♣ A84
	♠ AQ3	
	♥ KQJ10	
	♦ AK82	
	♣ 96	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣K.

East plays the ♣8 at Trick 1. He then wins the next trick with the ♣A and plays one more club, which declarer has to ruff. When declarer plays the ♥K and ♥Q, West withholds his ace and declarer cannot now make his contract. Either West will score another club as well as the ace of trumps or East will get a ruff. If West had taken his ♥A earlier, declarer could have ruffed a second club with no damage, as the ♥9 in dummy would have been big enough to draw the adverse trumps.

In defense, refusing to be shortened

	♠ 105	
	♥ 653	
	♦ A96543	
	♣ 54	
♠ 764		♠ 8
♥ QJ87		♥ K109
♦ Q7		♦ J108
♣ KQJ9		♣ 1087632
	♠ AKQJ932	
	♥ A42	
	♦ K2	
	♣ A	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣K.

Everyone can see that dummy has no side entry for the diamonds except the ♠10. Declarer cashes the ♠A and then plays the ♦K and ♦A and a small diamond, which he ruffs with the ♠2. If West overruffs, he will be left with one single trump like dummy, and the diamonds can be reached and cashed. West must refuse this Greek gift and keep one more trump than dummy — a trump that will cut declarer off forever from the good diamonds.

Plan # 4. Elimination by ruffing followed by a throw-in

This is similar to the analogous play in notrump, but here the elimination can also be accomplished by ruffing. The opponent can be forced to play into a tenace or to give up a ruff and sluff.

Partial elimination

	♠ 532	
	♥ AK64	
	♦ J	
	♣ Q8753	
♠ J76		♠ Q9
♥ 75		♥ Q98
♦ AK98		♦ 1076543
♣ K964		♣ J10
	♠ AK1084	
	♥ J1032	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ A2	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A.

West switches to a spade, which goes to the queen and the ace. Declarer ruffs his diamond loser and plays off the ace and king of trumps. Now he cashes the ♠K and leads a third spade. If West has to win this, he will be forced to lead away from the ♣K or give up a ruff and sluff by returning a diamond. Of course, East can ruff this trick and get his partner off the endplay, but he will be ruffing a loser with the master trump.

Defending against the throw-in: the protector's role

- Overtake partner's winner, as at notrump.
- Go up with a high card, as at notrump.
- Ruff partner's winner.

♠ J102
 ♥ 1053
 ♦ A76
 ♣ 9874

♠ Q5
 ♥ KQJ86
 ♦ Q84
 ♣ AQ3

N
 W E
 S

♠ 876
 ♥ 72
 ♦ 109532
 ♣ J102

♠ AK943
 ♥ A94
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ K65

South plays 3♠; West leads the ♥ K.

Declarer wins, draws two rounds of trumps and exits with the ♥4. West takes his jack and continues with the ♥Q. East should ruff his partner's winner and switch to the ♣J. Otherwise, West will be left on lead to give declarer a trick in one of the minors.

Plan # 5. Shorten your trumps for an endplay

See the specific section on [trump reduction](#).

Defensive strategies in trump contracts

- Set up a ruff and score tricks with trumps.
- Set up a side suit to discard losers.
- Shorten declarer, promoting your own trumps.
- Promote a trump trick for the defense.

Set up a ruff and score tricks with trumps

	♠ 976	
	♥ KJ8	
	♦ KJ843	
	♣ 65	
♠ 10842		♠ AK
♥ 107642		♥ A953
♦ Q		♦ A972
♣ K102		♣ 743
	♠ QJ53	
	♥ Q	
	♦ 1065	
	♣ AQJ98	

South plays 2♣; West leads the ♦ Q.

East takes his ♦ A and plays the ♦ 9 (asking for a spade return). West ruffs and duly returns the ♠ 10. East takes the ♠ A and ♠ K before returning the ♦ 7 for another ruff. West now gives East a spade ruff. East cashes his ♥ A before finally playing the ♦ 2 for West to score the ♣ K *en passant*: three down!

Set up a side suit to discard losers

	♠ 76	
	♥ QJ7	
	♦ Q1097	
	♣ K983	
♠ J2		♠ Q103
♥ 1063		♥ A8542
♦ 3		♦ AKJ52
♣ J1076542		♣ —
	♠ AK9854	
	♥ K9	
	♦ 864	
	♣ AQ	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ 3.

East wins the ♦ J and follows with the ace and king, West discarding two hearts. Now comes the ♥ A, followed by the ♥ 2, ruffed by West. The ♣ 2 switch is ruffed by East and another heart play promotes the jack or queen of trumps.

Shorten declarer, promoting your own trumps

♠ J10	♠ K76	♠ Q95
♥ AQ654	♥ 32	♥ K10
♦ J984	♦ 7	♦ AK6532
♣ J2	♣ AK109876	♣ Q3
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A8432	
	♥ J987	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ 54	

South plays 3♠; West leads the ♦9.

East takes the ♦K and switches to the ♥K and ♥10. West wins with the ♥Q and then plays the ♥A, ruffed with dummy's ♠7 and overruffed with the ♠9. East now plays his ♦A to force the dummy. Declarer can cash dummy's ♠K, but must then play clubs, permitting the opponents to promote the jack or queen of trumps.

Promote a trump trick for the defense

♠ J102	♠ A65	♠ 43
♥ AJ54	♥ 10763	♥ Q982
♦ 9765	♦ J102	♦ Q
♣ 83	♣ J109	♣ AKQ762
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ KQ987	
	♥ K	
	♦ AK843	
	♣ 54	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣8.

East takes Trick 1 with the ♣Q. Declarer had shown a spade-diamond two-suiter in the bidding, and the lead is obviously either a singleton or doubleton. If declarer is void in hearts, there is no defense, but there is a chance if he has one heart and two clubs. The ♥2 is played now so that the ace is cashed in time. West now returns the ♣3 to the king and East leads the ♣A to promote a trump trick for West.

SECTION 2

SPECIAL PLAYS, COUPS AND GAMBITS

Any human activity depends on the ability to communicate



Communication

Communication between the two hands is of prime importance on most bridge deals. This topic is very broad and there are many techniques designed to preserve, generate, destroy or simply jam communications as needed. We will see throughout this book that an isolated hand, held by declarer or the defense alike, loses most of its potential. Here are a few examples to convince you of the point before we start on the useful techniques.

Using a safe entry

	♠ K1063										
	♥ KJ1083										
	♦ J										
	♣ AK8										
♠ 982	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 762		♥ AQ95									
♦ KQ106542		♦ 97									
♣ —		♣ J976532									
	♠ AQJ754										
	♥ 4										
	♦ A83										
	♣ Q104										

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦K.

This deal is deceptively simple, so don't play too fast. If declarer wins the opening lead with the ♦A and draws one round of trumps, he will have no entry back to his hand after ruffing two diamonds. The ♣Q will be ruffed by West — just try it! Declarer must ruff a diamond at once, come back to hand with a trump, ruff his last diamond, come back to hand again by overtaking dummy's last trump, and finally draw West's last trump, all before touching clubs.

Retaining an entry

	♠ AKJ										
	♥ A										
	♦ 76543										
	♣ 9754										
♠ 762	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q1084
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q109		♥ 76532									
♦ J102		♦ Q8									
♣ KQJ10		♣ 83									
	♠ 953										
	♥ KJ84										
	♦ AK9										
	♣ A62										

Jimmy Tait, *Tales of the Club Expert*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♣K.

Declarer ducks his ace twice and takes the third round of clubs. He needs the diamond suit, but if the ace and king are cashed, the ♥K will be isolated. If declarer starts by cashing the ♥A instead, before playing the ♦AK and the ♥K, the defense's ♥Q will bring the contract down when they get in on the third diamond. Instead, just duck the ♦9, keeping all the required entries intact to cash winners in the right order.

(See 'Ducking play', p. 100)

Keeping the right entry

♠ 984	♠ J63	♠ Q105
♥ J754	♥ AK	♥ 10932
♦ 109	♦ 87532	♦ AJ4
♣ 10983	♣ QJ2	♣ 765
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AK72	
	♥ Q86	
	♦ KQ6	
	♣ AK4	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣10.

If declarer wins the first trick in dummy to play a diamond towards the queen and then goes back to dummy with the ♥K to play another diamond, East will rise with his ♦A, definitively blocking the diamond suit. The heart position is static, while the club entries are fluid or dynamic. Declarer should win the opening lead in hand and then play a heart to dummy, followed by a diamond. When this wins, he can return to dummy with another heart and play another diamond. East goes up with his ace, but he cannot knock out the ♣Q before the ♦K is cashed.

Keeping the right line of communication

♠ J94	♠ 652	♠ K108
♥ J96	♥ 8543	♥ A102
♦ J752	♦ AQ	♦ 108643
♣ Q93	♣ A762	♣ J10
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ73	
	♥ KQ7	
	♦ K9	
	♣ K854	

Barry Rigal and Sally Brock, *Fit for a King*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦2.

This example has the same theme as the last deal, but with added difficulty that the weak diamond suit is being attacked. Dummy's ♦Q wins the first trick and declarer leads a heart towards his hand, where he wins with the ♥K.

If he goes back to dummy with the ♣A and plays another heart, East goes up with the ace and plays a diamond, after which dummy is dead! No, the ♦A must be used to go back to dummy to play a second heart. Yes, this sets up three diamond tricks for the defense, but it retains the precious club entry to the hearts so that the ♥Q can be unblocked. Again, the diamond position is static, while the club position is fluid or dynamic.

Communication and timing

	♠ 1085	
	♥ J10	
	♦ A72	
	♣ KQJ92	
♠ 6		♠ A432
♥ 843		♥ A9752
♦ QJ1053		♦ 86
♣ A1087		♣ 54
	♠ KQJ97	
	♥ KQ6	
	♦ K94	
	♣ 63	

Edwin Kantar, *Test Your Bridge Play*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ Q.

If declarer takes the ♦ K and plays on hearts in order to set up a future discard for the third diamond, East will duck his ♥ A once. He will then take the second heart and play a diamond back. With no immediate entry to his hand, declarer will have to lose a diamond.

Instead, the diamond lead should be won in dummy, and declarer can later quietly discard his losing diamond on the ♥ K.

The story is not quite finished, because if declarer ruffs his losing diamond immediately after taking the pitch, East will discard a club on it. He can then ruff the second round of clubs. Declarer should play a club to the king before ruffing the ♦ 4.

Communication and suit establishment

	♠ 986	
	♥ Q6	
	♦ 76	
	♣ Q109764	
♠ 432		♠ KQ5
♥ 10843		♥ KJ92
♦ KJ1098		♦ 432
♣ 3		♣ K52
	♠ AJ107	
	♥ A75	
	♦ AQ5	
	♣ AJ8	

The Bridge World, May 1988.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦ J.

When declarer plays on clubs, East will duck to kill this nice suit. However, declarer needs three tricks from spades, as well as from clubs. The solution is to play the ♣ J and overtake with the queen, East ducking. Then the ♣ 10 is led and East cannot cover. Now, leading the ♠ 9 ensures three tricks in this suit.

(See 'Doorstep', p. 66)

Dutch entry

♠ —	♠ 95	♠ KJ4									
♥ KJ985	♥ 76	♥ AQ103									
♦ Q1054	♦ A98	♦ J62									
♣ KJ93	♣ A108742	♣ Q85									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AQ1087632										
	♥ 42										
	♦ K73										
	♣ —										

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 5♠ and West is strongly suspected on the bidding to be void in spades; the defense cash two hearts and shift to a low diamond.

Declarer needs two dummy entries for trump plays, but has only one. However, East doesn't know that the ♣A is a Dutch (or false) entry. Declarer crosses to the ♦A and does not take his discard, so as not to reveal the position. Instead, he leads the ♠9; East may fail to cover this, hoping declarer has a guess. When the ♠9 holds, declarer can discard a diamond on the ♣A, take a second trump finesse and claim.

Defense: reduce trump communication by playing them

♠ 3	♠ 10842	♠ 975									
♥ KJ10	♥ A76	♥ Q932									
♦ QJ1093	♦ K8742	♦ A									
♣ QJ73	♣ 6	♣ K10852									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKQJ6										
	♥ 854										
	♦ 65										
	♣ A94										

The Bridge World, March 2000.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦Q.

Declarer ducks in dummy and the singleton ♦A wins. East returns a trump and in spite of the quantity of trumps, declarer will be short the one he needs to get back to hand after the second club ruff. East will score a ruff and two hearts. In contrast, a heart return at Trick 2 would have left declarer a trump entry back to hand after the club ruffs to draw trumps, assuring the contract.

Defense: reduce trump communication by forcing a ruff

	♠ 7	
	♥ QJ4	
	♦ 1085	
	♣ A108542	
♠ KQ10843		♠ A65
♥ 86		♥ 732
♦ Q6		♦ AJ92
♣ QJ3		♣ K97
	♠ J92	
	♥ AK1095	
	♦ K743	
	♣ 6	

The Bridge World, March 2000.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠K.

West can see the menace of the long club suit and decides to reduce dummy's trump holding by continuing spades and forcing dummy to ruff. Declarer is held to nine tricks.

Defense: reduce trump communication by ducking

	♠ A53	
	♥ Q43	
	♦ 843	
	♣ KJ109	
♠ 72		♠ K86
♥ 9752		♥ KJ108
♦ 10976		♦ QJ2
♣ 642		♣ A73
	♠ QJ1094	
	♥ A6	
	♦ AK5	
	♣ Q85	

The Bridge World, March 2000.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦10.

East puts up his ♦Q and declarer wins with the king. The ♠Q holds the next trick and declarer, believing it is his lucky day, continues with the ♠J, which is taken with the king. East returns another trump. Now declarer can be cut off from one of his club tricks when East ducks his ace twice.

Note: Declarer should play on clubs earlier, but fear of a ruff often stops him from establishing his side suit early.

Blocking and unblocking plays

Communication between hands is essential, as we have just seen. A blocked suit has no value, even when established, because you cannot reach it to use it. How do we unblock it, or avoid blocking it? Playing high and discarding high cards are often the keys to success.

Partial blockage

♣ K10976	♣ A32 [] ♣ J54	♣ Q8
----------	-----------------------	------

When West leads this suit, declarer should go up with dummy's ace to block the suit if East has no side entry. East can unblock the queen if he has a side entry, but if he cannot get the lead, the ♣J will be protected.

Total blockage

♣ Q9876	♣ A32 [] ♣ 1054	♣ KJ
---------	------------------------	------

When West leads this suit, declarer should go up with dummy's ace to block the suit in case West has no side entry. East can unblock the king, but that is not good enough.

Blocking or stopping a suit

♣ KJ86	♣ A32 [] ♣ 10954	♣ Q7
--------	-------------------------	------

On a small club lead, declarer plays dummy's ace. If East plays low, he blocks the suit, but if he unblocks the queen, the ♣10 becomes a stopper.

Rising to unblock

♣ J104	♣ A2 [] ♣ K8765	♣ Q93
--------	------------------------	-------

Suppose West is the danger hand for declarer. Declarer leads the ♣5 and West should put in the ♣10; otherwise, declarer can play the ♣2 from dummy, forcing East to win the defensive club trick. Dummy has to win the ♣10 with the ace, and East must jettison the ♣Q. Now declarer cannot set up clubs without letting West in.

Unblocking with a sacrificial hold up

♣ A9876	♣ 32	♣ KJ10
	♣ Q54	

When West attacks this suit, East should put in the ♣10 to force out declarer's queen (See 'sacrificial hold up'). If East takes the king, the suit blocks unless West ducks the second round of clubs, and West will need to have a side entry.

Overtaking by declarer

	♠ A										
	♥										
	♦										
	♣ KJ10932										
♠		♠									
♥		♥									
♦		♦									
♣ 654	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♣ A87
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 2										
	♥										
	♦										
	♣ Q										

With only one other entry to dummy, overtake the ♣Q and continue the suit, or else East will duck his ♣A once to kill the suit.

Unblocking by the defense

	♠ Q3										
	♥ AK										
	♦ AKQJ2										
	♣ 9643										
♠ 542		♠ AJ109									
♥ J10987		♥ 65									
♦ 54		♦ 863									
♣ A82	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♣ KJ75
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K876										
	♥ Q432										
	♦ 1097										
	♣ Q10										

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥J, taken with the ace.

Declarer cashes dummy's ♥K and leads the ♠3. East must go up with his ace or else declarer has nine tricks. Now East plays the ♣K, on which West unblocks the ♣8 and leads the ♣5 to the ♣A. Finally, West returns the ♣2 through dummy's ♣96 to East's ♣J7.

Victor Mollo, *The Compleat Bridge Player*.

Barricade Coup

	♠ K102	
	♥ 87	
	♦ KQ632	
	♣ KQ4	
♠ 83		♠ AJ976
♥ KJ103		♥ 542
♦ A7		♦ 985
♣ J10762		♣ 93
	♠ Q54	
	♥ AQ96	
	♦ J104	
	♣ A85	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠8.

If declarer plays the ♠2 or the ♠10 from dummy, East should play the ♠6 or the ♠J. When declarer wins with the ♠Q, West can get in later with the ♦A and play another spade through to run the suit. However, if declarer plays the ♠K at Trick 1, East is forced to take his ace. The ♠Q is still a stopper, while dummy's ♠10 prevents East from playing another spade. This position is related to the [Bath Coup](#).

Milton Work's Coup

	♠ 1087	
	♥ J10763	
	♦ 62	
	♣ QJ3	
♠ 963		♠ 2
♥ 82		♥ 954
♦ KJ85		♦ 1073
♣ K1065		♣ A98742
	♠ AKQJ54	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ AQ94	
	♣ —	

José Le Dentu and Robert Berthe, *Mesurez-vous aux Champions*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♠3, taken with dummy's ♠7.

It is easy to see that if trumps are not 2-2, the hearts are blocked. The diamond finesse is at best 50% and loses on this layout. The simple solution is to play a club at Trick 2, discarding a blocking heart honor from hand. On any return, declarer can take the ♠A, then the ♥A and ♥K, before going to dummy with the ♠10. The diamond losers will disappear on the good hearts.

(See 'Winner on loser')

Unblocking the right card at the right time

	♠ Q10	
	♥ AK103	
	♦ AKJ10	
	♣ 764	
♠ AK9854		♠ J7632
♥ Q82		♥ J964
♦ —		♦ Q743
♣ 10932		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ 75	
	♦ 98652	
	♣ AKQJ85	

Andrew Diosy and Linda Lee, *You Have To See This*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠A.

Declarer ruffs and draws four rounds of trumps. What should he discard from dummy? If declarer keeps all of dummy's diamonds, the suit is blocked. East can win with the ♦Q and play a spade back to take out declarer's last hand entry (the trump). If declarer discards a diamond from dummy, East will refuse to take the ♦Q and declarer will have to come to hand with the last trump in order to force out the ♦Q. The solution is to discard the ♠Q! Then declarer can play the ♦A, the ♦K and the ♦J. When East takes his ♦Q and returns a spade, declarer can ruff it in hand while discarding dummy's blocking ♦10.

Quadruple unblock in defense (Fitzwilliam Coup)

	♠ 7432	
	♥ K74	
	♦ A84	
	♣ Q52	
♠ A6		♠ K10985
♥ QJ6		♥ 10832
♦ QJ52		♦ 1073
♣ A863		♣ 9
	♠ QJ	
	♥ A95	
	♦ K96	
	♣ KJ1074	

South plays 2♣; West leads the ♠A.

The defense continues with the ♠6 to East's king. A third round of spades is ruffed with the ♣J, West discarding a diamond. Declarer plays a trump to the queen and another to the ten, West ducking both times. Now comes the ♦A, West unblocking his ♦Q, followed by the ♥K and again West unblocks his ♥Q. On the two red kings, West unblocks his two jacks. Now East can gain the lead with a red ten and force declarer with the ♠10, bringing the contract down.

Declarer can foil this spectacular defense, however. Instead of ruffing at Trick 3, he discards a diamond. Now he comes to eight tricks, without letting East in again.

The Emperor's Coup

♠ 976	♠ KQ10	♠ J853									
♥ Q10973	♥ 864	♥ AJ									
♦ 105	♦ 876	♦ QJ432									
♣ J103	♣ A975	♣ K2									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A42										
	♥ K52										
	♦ AK9										
	♣ Q864										

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter 3 Sans Atout*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥10.

East takes the ace and returns the ♥J. If declarer ducks without thinking, West overtakes with the ♥Q and plays back the ♥3 (suit preference for clubs), as East jettisons his ♣K, promoting an entry for West in clubs. Discarding a high card to create an entry for partner is called the Emperor's Coup (after Bao Dai, the last Emperor of Vietnam, who is said to have performed such a play). However, if declarer wins the second heart, he can go to dummy with a spade to play the ♣5 towards his queen, thus preventing East from jettisoning his blocking king under the ♣A.

Ducking to unblock

♠ QJ105	♠ AK64	♠ 9873									
♥ 843	♥ —	♥ 97652									
♦ K2	♦ A987653	♦ 4									
♣ KJ107	♣ 54	♣ Q98									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 2										
	♥ AKQJ10										
	♦ QJ10										
	♣ A632										

The Bridge World, December 1998.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠Q.

Of course, 7♦ can be made with the help of a trump finesse. In 6♥, the problem is more complicated due to the diamond blockage. It seems impossible to draw trumps without using the ♣A prematurely. The pretty solution consists of ducking the opening lead! The second spade is won with the ace, declarer discarding a diamond from his hand. The ♣A now serves as an entry to draw the trumps. Then comes the ♦Q: if West plays the king, taken with the ace, the last blocking diamond is discarded on the ♠K. West can still beat the contract by playing the ♦K at Trick 2, a [Merrimac Coup](#).

Defending against an unblock

	♠ J6
	♥ J65
	♦ A86432
	♣ 74
♠ Q10842	
♥ 93	
♦ Q5	
♣ QJ53	

	N	
W		E
	S	

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Defense at Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠4.

Dummy's ♠J is covered with partner's king, which holds. East now plays the ♠9 to declarer's ace. Surprise — he returns the ♠7 to your ♠8! What's happening? What do you play now? When looking at dummy, it is easy to understand declarer's problem. Dummy has no entry and the diamonds are blocked. Declarer probably has ♦KJ10 and playing one more round of spades would permit him to unblock the ♦10. Let's get off play quickly with the ♣Q. We give up two tricks in spades, but we cut declarer off from four diamond tricks.

Playing to create or cut off an entry

Communications depend on available entries and reentries. A 'bridgehead' (to use Bernard Romanet's terminology) allows declarer to remain in hand and repeat a finesse. A 'doorstep' allows him to come back to hand to repeat the finesse.

A bridgehead

♣ K98	♣ AQ102		♣ 76
	♣ J543		

Starting with the jack allows South to repeat this finesse if West does not cover. If South has a side entry, starting with the ♣3 is a safety play against a singleton king in the West hand.

A bridgehead

♣ K876	♣ AJ102		♣ 54
	♣ Q93		

Starting with the ♣9 allows South to repeat the finesse by continuing with the queen. Starting with the queen, if West does not cover, would require another entry to the South hand to pick up the king fourth.

A doorstep

♣ K976	♣ AQ82		♣ 54
	♣ J103		

When two cards are equivalent, they form a 'reinforced bridgehead', which is called a 'doorstep', because one can remain on the doorstep to repeat the maneuver. Here, if West covers the jack with the king, the ♣10 allows an entry to South to repeat a finesse, this time against the ♣9.

Creating entries by overtaking

	♣ AQ108	
	♣ KJ97	

Depending on which hand needs entries to play another suit, all these cards except the ace can be overtaken in one direction or the other, to meet any need.

Creating an entry by overtaking

♣ 109	♣ A543		♣ 876
	♣ KQJ2		

If North needs two entries to play another suit, play the king and queen to make sure the suit is 3-2, and then overtake the jack with the ace. Later play the ♣2 to the ♣3 for a second entry.

Creating an entry by discarding

♣ J87	♣ 432		♣ Q109
	♣ AK65		

If the defense wants West on play, East should discard his queen at the first opportunity or throw it under the ace.

Rise in second seat to disrupt communications

♣ Q76	♣ AJ1032		♣ K98
	♣ 54		

If North has no side entry, West must rise with his queen when South leads the ♣4. The North hand can only score the ace and may take no tricks at all in the suit if declarer ducks and later tries a finesse against the ♣K.

Creating a bridgehead

	♠ A4				
	♥ QJ52				
	♦ Q10983				
	♣ 53				
♠ 10986				♠ KQ753	
♥ 10973				♥ K8	
♦ 62				♦ K74	
♣ Q109				♣ K87	
	♠ J2				
	♥ A64				
	♦ AJ5				
	♣ AJ642				

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10.

Declarer holds up once, but must then take his ♠A. Now he had better not surrender the lead! With no side entry to dummy, he must take both red finesses. The solution is to lead the ♦Q, and when East ducks, to play the ♦J under it. The ♦10 follows. When this holds, the ♥Q is led and East covers with his king. The ♦A drops the ♦K and the ♥J allows both remaining diamonds to be reached.

Vincent Labbé, *Le Bridgeur*.

Using a doorstep in defense

♠ 973	♠ KQ6	♠ 4
♥ A9654	♥ 87	♥ QJ3
♦ 2	♦ KQ1095	♦ A8764
♣ J972	♣ AKQ	♣ 10863

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AJ10852
♥ K102
♦ J3
♣ 54

Robert Berthe, *Le Bridgeur*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦2.

As soon as dummy hits the table, everyone knows the lead is a singleton. Should we give partner a ruff at once? If we do, we'll get only three tricks. East should use his doorstep and lead the ♥Q. If declarer refuses to cover, East can give his partner his diamond ruff. Alternatively, if declarer covers with the king, the ace will win and East's ♥J will be an entry for the delayed diamond ruff.

Creating an entry for a trump coup (ruff and ruff play)

♠ —	♠ 543	♠ QJ97
♥ 9743	♥ 862	♥ QJ10
♦ 107	♦ 86543	♦ J92
♣ AK96543	♣ 107	♣ J82

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AK10862
♥ AK5
♦ AKQ
♣ Q

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣A and ♣K.

Declarer ruffs with the ♠6, preserving the ♠2. The ♠A reveals the bad break. The five side-suit red honors are cashed and then declarer plays the ♥5. East takes this and plays the ♠Q, which is ducked, declarer playing the ♠8. East now plays his last club, ruffed with the ♠2 and overruffed with the ♠5; the lead is now in dummy to pick up East's trumps.

(See 'Trump coups', p. 217)

Punching dummy

	♠ QJ2	
	♥ KQJ1093	
	♦ 4	
	♣ 984	
♠ 954		♠ 108
♥ A2		♥ 87654
♦ QJ10		♦ K98653
♣ AQJ72		♣ —
	♠ AK763	
	♥ —	
	♦ A72	
	♣ K10653	

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦Q.

Declarer takes his ♦A and then crosses to the ♠Q to lead the ♥K. West wins the ace and must continue with a diamond to isolate all those nice master hearts by forcing dummy to ruff. West will ruff a heart and play diamonds again, killing the heart suit for good if dummy ruffs. If dummy discards instead, East can overtake the third diamond with the king. He can then continue the diamond attack and take out dummy's last trump.

Endplaying dummy

	♠ AK432	
	♥ AKQ10	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ K8	
♠ QJ1098		♠ 7
♥ 987		♥ J432
♦ 104		♦ A653
♣ 1053		♣ AQ42
	♠ 65	
	♥ 65	
	♦ KJ987	
	♣ J976	

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer holds up once and takes the second spade. The ♦Q is led from dummy and ducked. East takes the second diamond and plays the ♣A and the ♣2 to dummy's king. Now East will score his ♥J and the ♣Q, or else West will score his spades.

Cutting communications to avoid a ruff: playing back the suit led

♠ 3	♠ K85	♠ AQ9									
♥ 108762	♥ AQJ94	♥ 3									
♦ 1092	♦ 75	♦ AQJ843									
♣ J965	♣ AQ7	♣ 1043									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		
N		E									
W											
	S										
	♠ J107642										
	♥ K5										
	♦ K6										
	♣ K82										

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge Play*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ 10.

East puts in the ♦ J, which declarer wins with the king. If declarer isn't aware of the danger and plays a trump now, East will take the first round and switch to his singleton heart. Then he will win the next trump and lead a diamond to West's ♦ 9 for a heart ruff. Declarer should play a diamond himself immediately, cutting communications between the defenders' hands before they can use them.

(See 'Scissors Coup', p. 191)

Cutting communications to avoid a ruff: playing another suit

♠ AK104	♠ J753	♠ Q9862									
♥ K85	♥ 107643	♥ A92									
♦ 106	♦ 95	♦ J874									
♣ J983	♣ 54	♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		
N		E									
W											
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ J										
	♦ AKQ32										
	♣ AKQ10762										

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge Play*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠ A.

Declarer ruffs and plays the ♣ A, on which East discards. If declarer tries to ruff a diamond, West will ruff in front of dummy, play a heart to East and get another diamond ruff. Declarer should play a heart immediately. Neither West nor East can play another trump to remove dummy's last one. East performs, while West would give up a trick. Now West will be able to ruff only one diamond, and at the cost of his natural trump trick.

(See 'Scissors Coup', p. 191)

Cutting communications between the defenders

	♠ AQ7	
	♥ KJ4	
	♦ J42	
	♣ QJ63	
♠ 62		♠ K4
♥ 10876		♥ AQ95
♦ Q973		♦ A1086
♣ 1085		♣ 942
	♠ J109853	
	♥ 32	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AK7	

Victor Mollo and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

South plays 4♠ after East has opened 1NT (12-14); West leads the ♦3.

If dummy plays small, East should put in the ♦10. After winning the ♠K, he can reach the West hand with the ♦Q. Now West switches to a heart through dummy for down one. Declarer should play dummy's ♦J at Trick 1, effectively cutting the communications between the defenders' hands.

Cutting declarer's communications

	♠ J7	
	♥ 532	
	♦ A98643	
	♣ J8	
♠ 943		♠ 8
♥ K74		♥ J1098
♦ J5		♦ Q107
♣ KQ1064		♣ 97532
	♠ AKQ10652	
	♥ AQ6	
	♦ K2	
	♣ A	

Victor Mollo and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣K.

Declarer's challenge is to set up the diamonds and reach them to discard a heart when West has more trumps than dummy. Declarer takes the ♦K and ♦A and then ruffs the ♦3 with the ♠5; overruffing would shorten West in trumps. West is vigilant, however, and discards instead of overruffing in order to deny any later communication with dummy. With the heart finesse wrong, declarer has no recourse.

Deschappelles Coup

The goal of this coup is to create an entry into partner's hand by unblocking an honor. It was invented by Alexandre Deschappelles, a French whist player in the early 19th century. The coup is even more difficult at whist where all hands are hidden.

♠ AKJ3
 ♥ 532
 ♦ 7642
 ♣ AJ

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q765
 ♥ 9
 ♦ J1098
 ♣ K654

♠ 10984
 ♥ KQJ1076
 ♦ —
 ♣ Q32

♠ 2
 ♥ A84
 ♦ AKQ53
 ♣ 10987

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ K.

West looks to have no entry. However, when East gets in with a diamond, he plays the $\clubsuit K$ to promote West's $\clubsuit Q$ to an entry.

The Merrimac Coup

Merrimac Coup with a king

♠ 53
 ♥ 43
 ♦ KQJ1052
 ♣ A54

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 1092
 ♥ 10985
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J10862

♠ AQJ74
 ♥ AKJ2
 ♦ 764
 ♣ Q3

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠ K.

As soon as West sees dummy's diamond suit, he knows he should remove the side entry, scuttling the $\clubsuit K$, and then hold up the $\diamond A$ as many times as necessary.

Merrimac Coup with a queen

♠ 743
 ♥ A95
 ♦ J109653
 ♣ 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 1082
 ♥ K74
 ♦ 742
 ♣ J984

♠ AKQ
 ♥ J106
 ♦ K8
 ♣ AK1073

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠ 5.

The ♠3, the ♠10 and the ♠K fill out the first trick. Declarer then leads the ♦K. West takes the ace and can see the importance of removing the ♥A. However, if he leads the ♥2 to East's king, declarer will unblock the jack. On the second round of hearts, declarer will put in the ♥10. Now, whether West plays the ♥Q or the ♥2, the ♥A or the ♥9 will be a late entry to dummy. The effective Merrimac Coup is to play the ♥Q at Trick 3. If it is not taken with the ace, another heart will follow to the king and a third round will remove the ace. Now the diamonds are definitely dead.

Terence Reese, *Bridge for Ambitious Players*.

Merrimac Coup in a suit contract (endplaying dummy)

♠ Q102	♠ 9	♠ 3
♥ 2	♥ AKJ9875	♥ Q1064
♦ K754	♦ AQ1086	♦ 3
♣ A10632	♣ —	♣ KQJ9874
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AKJ87654	
	♥ 3	
	♦ J92	
	♣ 5	

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣A, ruffed with the ♠9.

Declarer cashes the ♥K in dummy and leads the ♥5, ruffed in hand and overruffed by West. The ♦K now puts dummy in and there is no safe exit card. The queen of trumps will score a trick.

Merrimac Coup in a suit contract

♠ 65	♠ AQJ1082	♠ K743
♥ 97	♥ Q63	♥ K102
♦ K82	♦ —	♦ AJ763
♣ QJ8643	♣ K952	♣ 10
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 9	
	♥ AJ854	
	♦ Q10954	
	♣ A7	

José Le Dentu and Robert Berthe, *Mesurez-vous aux Champions*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦2, ruffed with the ♥3.

Declarer plays the ♥Q from dummy. East covers and declarer ducks, retaining a trump in dummy as a watchdog against the diamonds. If East returns the ♣10, declarer will take his ♣A, draw trumps and play the ♠A and ♠Q, forcing out the ♠K. The ♣K will allow him to reach the established spades.

The line of communication in clubs cannot be cut, but the one in spades can. Returning the ♠3 at the third trick is a perfect Merrimac. As long as West controls the spade suit with a threatened ruff, East should withhold the king. It's not only high honors that can do the job!

(See 'Isolation play', p. 129)

Merrimac Coup while preserving control

	♠ 6	
	♥ 8642	
	♦ KQJ942	
	♣ K6	
♠ 532		♠ 108
♥ AK753		♥ QJ10
♦ 653		♦ A87
♣ AQ		♣ 107432
	♠ AKQJ974	
	♥ 9	
	♦ 10	
	♣ J985	

Andrew Diosy and Linda Lee, *You Have To See This*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K.

If West continues with a heart or spade, declarer will win in hand, draw trumps and play on diamonds while he can still get back to dummy with the ♣K. If West plays the ♣A and ♣Q, setting up the ♣J and leaving himself void in clubs, dummy's ♠6 will still be high enough to dispose of the ♣5, which is declarer's last loser. The right Merrimac Coup consists of leading the ♣Q, preserving control.

Elimination play

An elimination play is a technique that involves eliminating the adverse safe exit cards — closing the escape route — as a preliminary to a throw-in. A defender will be end-played into giving up a trick, either by playing into a tenace or giving up a ruff and sluff.

Elimination and exit in a key suit

	♠ 982	
	♥ Q10632	
	♦ 764	
	♣ 108	
♠ J1074		♠ 63
♥ 5		♥ 984
♦ KJ83		♦ 1052
♣ AK43		♣ 97652
	♠ AKQ5	
	♥ AKJ7	
	♦ AQ9	
	♣ QJ	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣A and ♣K and then plays a trump.

Declarer draws three rounds of trumps, cashes the top three spades and ruffs his fourth spade, completely eliminating the spade suit. Now he leads a diamond from dummy and covers whatever card East plays. West will have to lead up to the diamond tenace or give declarer a ruff and sluff. If West still had his fourth spade, he could have used it to exit safely from his hand.

Elimination by ducking

	♠ AQ54	
	♥ K63	
	♦ K7	
	♣ AJ76	
♠ J63		♠ K92
♥ QJ108		♥ 752
♦ 106		♦ J932
♣ 9532		♣ Q108
	♠ 1087	
	♥ A94	
	♦ AQ854	
	♣ K4	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer starts the elimination play right away, ducking the opening lead. Dummy's ♥K takes the second trick. Declarer cashes the ♦K, ♦A and ♦Q, as well as the ♥A (a Dentist's Coup, extracting East's last exit card), before throwing East in with the fourth diamond, simultaneously setting up the fifth diamond and getting a free black-suit finesse.

Elimination via a loser-on-loser play

	♠ J75	
	♥ J102	
	♦ A104	
	♣ AQJ10	
♠ 986432		♠ KQ10
♥ 74		♥ KQ9853
♦ Q532		♦ 987
♣ 3		♣ 8
	♠ A	
	♥ A6	
	♦ KJ6	
	♣ K976542	

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥7.

Dummy's ♥10 is covered with the queen and ace. Then declarer plays the ♠A, crosses to dummy with a trump and ruffs a spade. Back to dummy with another trump and now the ♠J is led: when East covers, declarer discards his ♥6. East can choose between giving up the diamond position or letting the ♥J score.

Partial elimination

	♠ 10742	
	♥ AK64	
	♦ A5	
	♣ 962	
♠ 6		♠ QJ9
♥ QJ102		♥ 983
♦ 8643		♦ K1072
♣ J875		♣ 1043
	♠ AK853	
	♥ 75	
	♦ QJ9	
	♣ AKQ	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer wins the ♥K and cashes the ace-king of trumps. Then he plays the ♥A, ruffs a heart and takes three rounds of clubs before giving up a trick to the ♠Q. East has no more hearts or clubs and must concede the diamond finesse.

Partial elimination

	♠ K5	
	♥ AK42	
	♦ A7652	
	♣ 76	
♠ A986432		♠ QJ7
♥ Q107		♥ J8653
♦ 4		♦ QJ109
♣ AJ		♣ Q
	♠ 10	
	♥ 9	
	♦ K83	
	♣ K10985432	

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♦4.

Declarer takes his ♦K, cashes the ♥A and ♥K, discarding the ♠10, and ruffs a heart. Now he leads the ♣K. West can take his two club tricks, but is then forced to set up the ♠K, on which declarer's last diamond will be discarded.

Elimination as a discovery play

	♠ A1092	
	♥ AJ4	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ K93	
♠ J86		♠ K
♥ 2		♥ Q985
♦ Q109863		♦ J52
♣ Q75		♣ J10864
	♠ Q7543	
	♥ K10763	
	♦ 7	
	♣ A2	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦10.

Declarer takes the first trick in dummy with the ♦K and cashes the ♠A, dropping the king. Eliminating the minors before throwing West in with a trump comes to mind. However, the South hand, at that point, will have no more trumps for a productive ruff and sluff. Nevertheless, declarer eliminates the minors, cashes the ♠Q and throws West in with the ♠J. West returns a diamond and East discards a club. The hand pattern is now known: West has only one heart. Declarer travels to the ♥A and finesses confidently against East's ♥Q.

The Dentist's Coup

	♠ KQ	
	♥ J102	
	♦ KJ93	
	♣ AK93	
♠ AJ1094		♠ 87652
♥ A986		♥ 4
♦ 7		♦ 8542
♣ 854		♣ Q72
	♠ 3	
	♥ KQ753	
	♦ AQ106	
	♣ J106	

South plays 5♥; West leads the ♠A.

West switches to his singleton diamond at Trick 2 and withholds his ♥A when declarer plays two rounds of trumps. If a third trump is played, West wins this and plays a club, putting declarer back on the table with no good continuation. Instead, therefore, declarer cashes the ♣AK, then discards a club on the ♠K. Then, and only then, does he play the third round of hearts. Declarer can now win any return in hand and draw the last trump.

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

The Dentist's Coup

	♠ Q832	
	♥ 432	
	♦ J76	
	♣ AK2	
♠ KJ5		♠ —
♥ J		♥ K109876
♦ A1054		♦ K9832
♣ J10975		♣ 64
	♠ A109764	
	♥ AQ5	
	♦ Q	
	♣ Q83	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥J.

Declarer wins the ♥Q and lays down the ace of trumps: bad news. If he plays a second trump, West will take it and lead a diamond to East's king. East can switch to the ♥K and declarer will lose two more tricks. Instead, declarer should take three rounds of clubs before playing a second spade. Now when East leads a heart, declarer covers; if West ruffs the ♥A, he will either have to set up the ♦J for a heart pitch or give declarer a ruff and sluff.

A Dentist's Coup in two suits

	♠ AQ	
	♥ 764	
	♦ A	
	♣ AKQ10873	
♠ K852		♠ 4
♥ J8		♥ AKQ10953
♦ QJ732		♦ 654
♣ J5		♣ 96
	♠ J109763	
	♥ 2	
	♦ K1098	
	♣ 42	

South plays 4♠ after competitive bidding, West leads the ♥J.

Declarer ruffs the second round of hearts, cashes the ♠A and leads the ♠Q off dummy, but West holds up. Declarer cannot afford to be stuck in dummy because the ♠8 will get promoted. If he cashes the ♦A only, West can discard a club when declarer ruffs a heart high in hand and the ♠8 will eventually score. If he cashes only two clubs, West can take the ♠K at the next opportunity and put declarer back in dummy with a diamond; again the ♠8 will score. Both minor suits must be cleared — one round of diamonds and two of clubs. The road back to hand is now open. Only then should the third heart be ruffed — with the ♠10, as West discards a diamond. The jack of trumps is taken with the king, but now West is helpless. Declarer can be put back in hand with West's last trump, but he will then exit with the ♦9. West will have to lead into the diamond tenace.

Elimination to get a free finesse

♠	6432									
♥	AQ10									
♦	A53									
♣	J104									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	AKJ975									
♥	J									
♦	KQ4									
♣	AK2									

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦J.

Declarer cashes the king and ace of trumps, discovering that West has queen third. If he cashes two more diamonds and puts West in with the third trump (preserving the communicating five), he will not know what to play on the heart return. He should cash the ♥A first. West will then have to give declarer either a free club finesse, a free ruffing finesse in hearts, or a ruff and sluff.

Defending against an elimination

♠	74	♠	Q1083	♠	6									
♥	AKQJ87	♥	962	♥	53									
♦	103	♦	KJ72	♦	Q654									
♣	QJ3	♣	82	♣	K109765									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>							N		W		E		S	
	N													
W		E												
	S													
♠	AKJ952													
♥	104													
♦	A98													
♣	A4													

Victor Mollo, *The Compleat Bridge Player*.

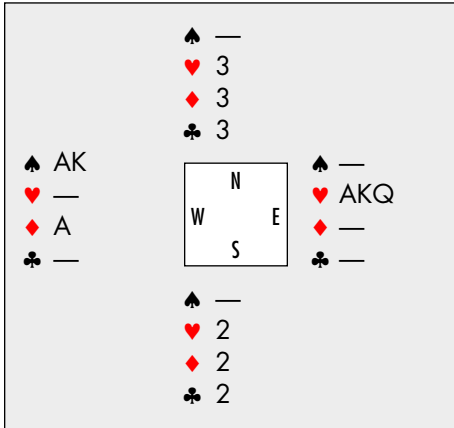
South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥A.

If West continues hearts, he will help declarer to eliminate the suit. Instead, West should immediately switch to the ♣Q, setting up a club trick while still in control of hearts and, very importantly, retaining an exit card in hearts. East-West thereby avoid a later throw-in in clubs, which would oblige them to break diamonds.

Throw-in play

Throwing a defender in (giving him the lead), often after his exit cards have been eliminated, is a very common tactic. The defender must then either surrender a trick via a finesse or a ruff and sluff, or else present declarer with a needed entry.

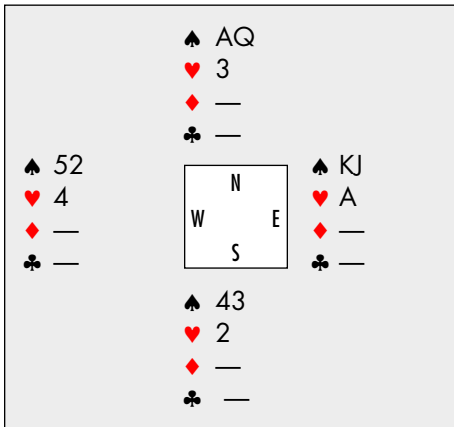
Throw-in for a ruff and sluff



Clubs are trumps.

When the ♥2 is played, East must win and give declarer a ruff and sluff. Playing the ♦2 has the same effect on West.

Throw-in to avoid a finesse



Notrump.

When declarer exits with the ♥2, East has to lead a spade into the A-Q.

Throw-in to avoid a finesse after a preliminary duck

	♠ K62	
	♥ Q1073	
	♦ 754	
	♣ KJ3	
♠ AQ10975		♠ J843
♥ —	N	♥ J5
♦ K103	W	♦ J982
♣ 10974	E	♣ Q85
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ AK98642	
	♦ AQ6	
	♣ A62	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 5♥ after West opens 2♠ and East-West compete to 4♠; West leads the ♣10.

The danger hand is East, who could play a diamond through declarer. The plan to throw West in requires that declarer keep East off play by ducking the opening lead in both hands (East would give up a club trick if he were to overtake the ♣10). Declarer can win the club continuation, draw trumps and ruff two small spades while eliminating clubs. Now he can play the ♠K, throwing West in to lead into the diamond tenace or give up a ruff and sluff.

Choice of throw-ins

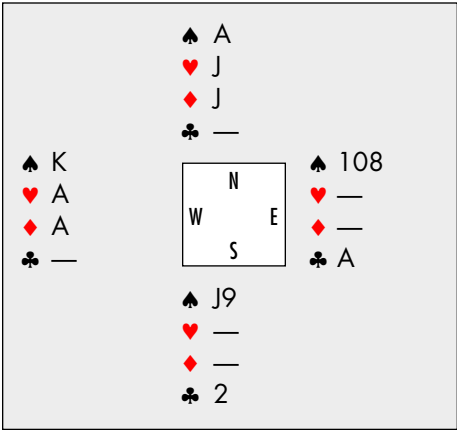
	♠ A	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ 2		♠ —
♥ K	N	♥ AJ
♦ —	W	♦ —
♣ —	E	♣ —
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ Q6	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Notrump.

When the ♥6 is played, either West takes the trick and gives declarer the ♠A, or East overtakes and sets up the ♥Q.

(See 'Winkle', p. 339)

Simultaneous throw-in with a squeeze

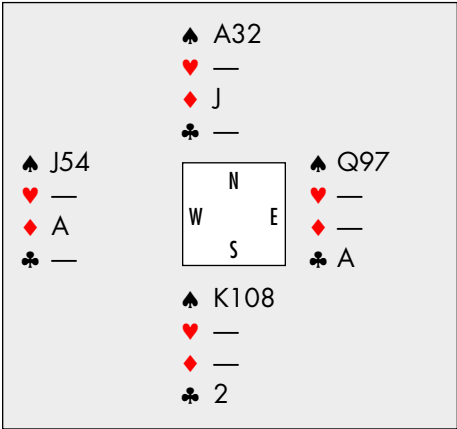


Jimmy Tait, *The Devil's Coup*.

Notrump.

South leads his losing ♣2 and West is not really squeezed. His ♠K is not a winner, so he discards it. However, now the ♠A can be thrown from dummy and East is end-played in spades.

Simultaneous throw-in with a squeeze

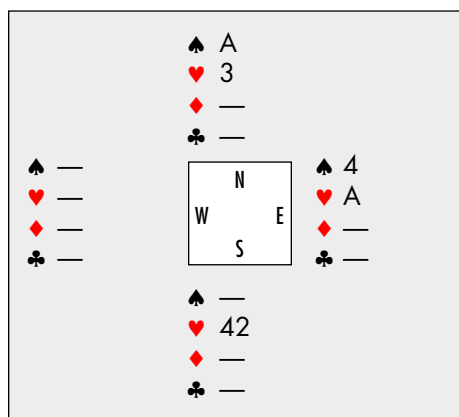


Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

Notrump.

South plays his losing ♣2 and West is not really squeezed. He can discard a spade. However, after the ♦J is thrown from dummy, East's forced spade return gives declarer three tricks.

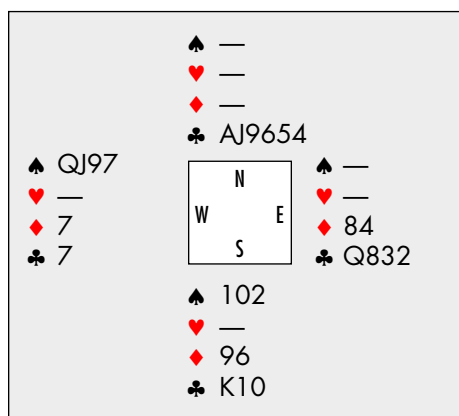
Stepping-stone throw-in



Notrump.

The basic position: when the ♥2 is led, East has to give declarer access to the North hand in spades.

Stepping-stone throw-in

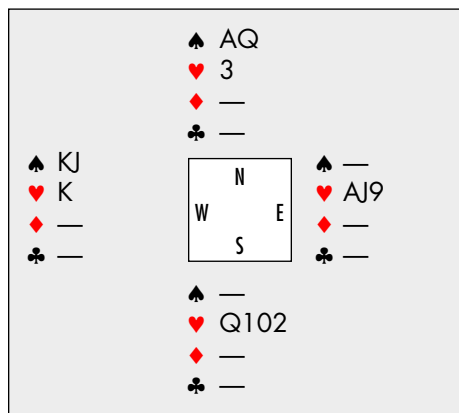


Notrump; South needs five tricks.

Declarer runs the ♣10, but East refuses to take it. Declarer should now cash the ♦9. If East unblocks the ♦8, South can cash the ♦6, play the ♣K and overtake it with the ♣A. Now the ♣J is led and declarer makes one of the last two tricks. If East keeps his ♦8, declarer cashes his ♣K and throws East in with the diamond to lead into the club tenace. Had declarer cashed his ♣K before playing the ♦9, East would have discarded the ♦8 on it, and two tricks would have been lost in spades.

Walter Wyman, *The Bridge World*, November 1998.

Double stepping-stone throw-in



Notrump.

When the ♥2 is played, either West wins and gives declarer two spade tricks, or East overtakes and plays into the heart tenace.

Pietro Forquet.

Double stepping-stone throw-in

immaterial		
♠ KJ4		♠ 32
♥ K		♥ A10
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ AQ	
	♥ J2	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Notrump.

When the ♥2 is played, either West wins and concedes two tricks in spades, or East overtakes, setting up a heart to go with the ♠A.

Extended stepping-stone throw-in

	♠ Q2	
	♥ K93	
	♦ 2	
	♣ —	
♠ —		♠ AJ109
♥ A108		♥ J
♦ A		♦ 3
♣ 43		♣ —
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ K	
	♥ Q2	
	♦ —	
	♣ AK2	

Clubs are trumps.

When the ♥Q is played, West must duck, or else a later finesse will give declarer two entries with the ♥K and the ♥9. Declarer overtakes his ♥Q with the ♥K and ruffs the ♦2. West's trumps are then drawn and declarer exits with the ♠K, East serving as a stepping stone to the ♠Q.

José Le Dentu.

Alternative throw-in

	♠ A6	
	♥ AQ	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ KJ10		♠ —
♥ —		♥ KJ10
♦ ?		♦ ?
♣ —		♣ —
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 2	
	♣ —	

Notrump.

When the ♦2 is played, declarer should visualize the remaining adverse cards to figure out who will win this trick. If it is West, he should discard a heart from dummy; if it is East, he should discard a spade.

Don Kersey, *The Bridge World*, December 1987.

Alternative throw-in

	♠ AKJ	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ 2	
	♣ —	
♠ 87		♠ Q54
♥ K5		♥ Q2
♦ K10		♦ 3
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 32	
	♥ 43	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ —	

Notrump.

When the ♥3 is played, if West puts in the ♥5, declarer can take dummy's ♥A and cash the ♠AK. Now West is thrown in with a heart to give declarer two diamond tricks. If West puts up the ♥K on the first trick, declarer will win with the ♥A, cash the ♠A and the ♦A, and then throw East in with a heart to give up two spade tricks.

Non-material throw-in

	♠ 1086	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ AQ5	
	♣ KQJ73	
♠ 4		♠ K52
♥ 10852		♥ Q7643
♦ 96		♦ KJ8
♣ 986542		♣ A10
	♠ AQJ973	
	♥ K9	
	♦ 107432	
	♣ —	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦9.

Dummy's ♦Q is taken with the king and East is on lead. A club or diamond return loses immediately and playing a spade or a heart gives declarer an extra entry to dummy. The endplay does not produce an immediate trick (hence it is 'non-material'), but the entry that is created allows declarer to draw trumps and set up the clubs.

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Jettison throw-in

	♠ —	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ A	
♠ A		♠ —
♥ —		♥ KQ5
♦ —		♦ —
♣ Q10		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ KJ	

Notrump.

South leads the ♠2, discarding the ♣A. West's return gives declarer two club tricks.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Repeated throw-in

♠ A
♥ KJ10
♦ KJ10
♣ —

immaterial

W

N
E
S

immaterial

♠ 2
♥ AQ2
♦ AQ2
♣ —

Notrump. This position produces two tricks.

When the ♠2 is played, West is endplayed into leading into the heart and diamond tenaces. Whichever he chooses, he is thrown in again in the same suit to concede a free finesse in the other suit.

Throw-in in a trump contract

♠ K43
♥ —
♦ —
♣ 3

immaterial

W

N
E
S

♠ AQ
♥ A2
♦ —
♣ —

♠ 2
♥ KQ
♦ —
♣ 2

Clubs are trumps.

When the ♠2 is played to dummy's ♠3, East has no safe return. He must give up a trick in either spades or hearts.

Double throw-in in a trump contract

♠ AJ10
♥ —
♦ A
♣ —

♠ 3
♥ Q2
♦ —
♣ 3

immaterial

W

N
E
S

♠ KQ
♥ KJ
♦ —
♣ —

♠ 2
♥ A3
♦ —
♣ 2

Clubs are trumps.

The ♠2 is played to the ♠3. If West wins it, he has to concede a ruff and sluff, while if East wins it, he will have to lead away from the ♥K.

Triple throw-in

	♠ 95432	
	♥ 5432	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ 54	
♠ Q76		♠ —
♥ KJ9876	N	♥ —
♦ —	W E	♦ KJ10987652
♣ KJ98	S	♣ 7632
	♠ AKJ108	
	♥ AQ10	
	♦ 43	
	♣ AQ10	

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

South plays 5♠ after a 5♦ bid by East. West, with no diamonds to lead, leads the ♥9 to declarer's ♥10.

Declarer cashes the ace and king of trumps and throws West in with the ♠Q. A second heart goes to the queen and the ♥A is cashed. Now declarer crosses to the ♦A and leads the fourth heart off dummy, discarding the ♦4 from hand for the third throw-in. West can choose between giving up a ruff and sluff or leading into the club tenace.

Double throw-in in three suits

	♠ J54	
	♥ J3	
	♦ 4	
	♣ K8	
♠ Q962		♠ K83
♥ —	N	♥ Q9
♦ Q1087	W E	♦ J96
♣ —	S	♣ —
	♠ A107	
	♥ 6	
	♦ —	
	♣ J962	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

Clubs are trumps. These cards remain.

The ♦4 is led from dummy and declarer discards his heart. If East wins the trick, a heart return sets up the ♥J; a diamond gives declarer a ruff and sluff, and a spade switch also gives up a trick. If West wins, he has no hearts to play; a diamond gives the same ruff and sluff, and a spade still gives up a trick.

The Lemming Coup

	♠ 542	
	♥ 1095	
	♦ 1086	
	♣ 10764	
♠ Q		♠ K75
♥ Q643	N	♥ AJ72
♦ Q752	W	♦ AJ4
♣ AK53	E	♣ J92
	S	
	♠ AJ10986	
	♥ K8	
	♦ K93	
	♣ Q8	

Victor Mollo, *The Compleat Bridge Player*.

South plays 2♠ doubled; West cashes the ♣AK and then switches to the ♠Q.

Declarer takes this trick and plays another trump; East wins the king and plays a third round. In hand once more, declarer plays a red card; the defense wins economically and plays the ♣J, which is ruffed. In hand yet again, declarer can take only five tricks in all! Like lemmings, South's cards commit suicide *en masse*.

Strip squeeze and throw-in

	♠ J83	
	♥ KQ103	
	♦ J76	
	♣ K95	
♠ KQ105		♠ 94
♥ 98	N	♥ 7542
♦ K1082	W	♦ Q9543
♣ 873	E	♣ 82
	S	
	♠ A762	
	♥ AJ6	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQJ104	

Phillip and Robert King, *The King's Tales*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♣8.

Declarer plays five rounds of trumps and then four rounds of hearts, reducing West to three spades and a diamond. Only then is the ♦A cashed and a small spade led. West, on lead with the ♠K, must lead away from the ♠Q.

Defending against a throw-in: unblocking

	♠ 543	
	♥ AQ	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ 1098		♠ QJ7
♥ 109		♥ KJ
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ AK2	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Notrump.

When declarer cashes the ♠AK, East should discard the ♠QJ so West can take the third round of spades in order to avoid the heart endplay.

Defending against a throw-in: unblocking

	♠ 5	
	♥ AKQ943	
	♦ A643	
	♣ 64	
♠ AQ97642		♠ —
♥ 102		♥ 8765
♦ 1052		♦ KQJ987
♣ 5		♣ KJ2
	♠ KJ1083	
	♥ J	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ109873	

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥10.

Declarer takes the first trick in dummy with the ♥A and leads a trump to the queen. Now he cashes the ♣A and throws East in with a club to lead a red suit to dummy. East has to put in the ♣J on the first round of the suit and then jettison his ♣K under the ace, preserving his precious ♣2. Now declarer can't reach dummy and will eventually lose three spade tricks.

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

Defending against a throw-in: reducing trump length

	♠ J	
	♥ K63	
	♦ KQJ4	
	♣ 87653	
♠ Q6		♠ 853
♥ Q97		♥ A108
♦ 86		♦ 1097532
♣ AKQ942		♣ 10
	♠ AK109742	
	♥ J542	
	♦ A	
	♣ J	

The Bridge World, September 1986.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣A.

Declarer ruffs the second club with the ♠4 and then cashes the ♠A, the ♠K and the ♦A. Now East is thrown in with the carefully preserved ♠2 and must give declarer the dummy. To avoid this, East has to ruff in on the second club, in effect ‘discarding’ a trump. Now declarer cannot throw East in and he will eventually have to lose three hearts.

Defending against a throw-in: unblocking and ducking

	♠ 876	
	♥ K9732	
	♦ KQ8	
	♣ 73	
♠ 94		♠ KQJ105
♥ 1084		♥ QJ
♦ J96542		♦ 7
♣ Q5		♣ K8642
	♠ A32	
	♥ A65	
	♦ A103	
	♣ AJ109	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠9.

East overtakes with the ♠K and continues with the ♠Q to declarer’s ace. Crossing to dummy with a diamond, declarer takes a losing club finesse. West returns a diamond to dummy and a second club finesse is successful. Declarer cashes his ♦A, as East discards a spade honor. Now declarer takes the ♥A and ♥K and leads the ♠8. If East covers this, he will have to give declarer two club tricks at the end; however, when East plays the ♠5, West can take the last three tricks with red-suit winners.

(See ‘Blocking and unblocking plays’, p. 60)

Defending against a throw-in: the Crocodile Coup

♠ KQJ863
 ♥ —
 ♦ Q87
 ♣ 9762

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 54
 ♥ J109876
 ♦ 94
 ♣ AQ8

♠ 10972
 ♥ 4
 ♦ AJ10652
 ♣ K10

♠ A
 ♥ AKQ532
 ♦ K3
 ♣ J543

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ J.

Declarer wins and plays a club to the ♣8, ♣9 and ♣10. East returns the ♦J to the king. Declarer cashes the ♠A and the ♥K (discarding a club from dummy) and exits with the ♣J. West must open up his jaws and play the ♣A to avoid East being left on lead. Result: eight tricks for the defense (three clubs and five diamonds) instead of only four.

Defending against a throw-in: keeping an exit card

♠ 10743
 ♥ Q764
 ♦ J85
 ♣ Q6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AQ
 ♥ KJ82
 ♦ 94
 ♣ AK1075

♠ —
 ♥ 953
 ♦ 107632
 ♣ J9832

♠ KJ98652
 ♥ A10
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ 4

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣A.

East plays the ♣2, indicating an odd number of clubs, and West concludes he has five, because declarer would not have bid 4♠ with three losing clubs. It follows that when West is thrown in with a trump, after the diamonds are eliminated, he is going to need an exit card. Thus West must not play his ♣K yet, and should exit with a diamond now. The ♣K will serve later to avoid giving declarer a heart trick or a ruff and sluff in clubs.

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

Battle for and against a throw-in

♠ 109872	♠ 65	♠ QJ4									
♥ J7	♥ A82	♥ Q965									
♦ 72	♦ KJ983	♦ AQ65									
♣ J985	♣ 764	♣ Q10									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AK3										
	♥ K1043										
	♦ 104										
	♣ AK32										

Hugh Kelsey, *Bridge Wizardry*.

In a six-table duplicate game, each South plays 3NT on the ♠10 lead after East opened the bidding with 1♦. The start is always identical: East plays the ♠J and declarer ducks. He wins the ♠Q continuation with the ♠A and the ♦10 holds the next trick. After this, the play at each of the six tables follows a different line.

Table 1) Declarer plays the ♦4 to the ♦8 and ♦Q. East knocks out the ♠K and declarer scores two spades, three hearts, a diamond and two clubs for one down.

Table 2) Declarer doesn't play diamonds. Instead, he takes the ♥K and ♥A and leads the ♥2 towards his ♥10. East wins the ♥Q and knocks out the ♠K. Declarer cashes two clubs and the ♥10 before playing diamonds, throwing East in to lead up to the ♦K. Declarer scores a second diamond, making his contract.

Table 3) When East wins the ♥Q, he takes his ♦A before knocking out the ♠K. He also wisely unblocks his ♣Q under the ace. Again, declarer will score only one diamond, for one down.

Table 4) When the ♦10 wins, declarer plays the ♥3 to dummy's ♥8 and East's ♥9. Now East cannot cash his ♦A, because the ♥A is still in dummy. He knocks out the ♠K, but declarer takes three heart tricks with the aid of the finesse, cashes the ♣A and ♣K, and exits with the ♦4. East must allow the ♦K to score, so declarer makes a second diamond trick: contract made.

Table 5) At the fifth table, declarer also plays the ♥3, but West rises with his jack. Dummy ducks and West exits with a diamond to the queen. Now East plays the ♥Q, a [Merrimac Coup](#), and declarer goes down as he gets but a single diamond trick.

Table 6) At the last table, West also rises with his ♥J. However, declarer wins with the ace and cashes two other hearts with the aid of a finesse. Now he takes the ♠K, the ♣A and the ♣K and throws East in, this time with a heart. East will once more have to concede the ♦K: contract made.

Suit establishment

This is the primary maneuver at notrump for both declarer and the defenders, who often battle hard to set up their long suits. Side-suit establishment can also be of prime importance in trump contracts to dispose of losers in another suit, as well as to serve as a substitute for trumps. Frequently, the establishment of a side suit has priority in the play.

Long-suit establishment

♠ QJ1073	♠ A6	♠ 8542									
♥ J98	♥ 43	♥ 10765									
♦ A3	♦ QJ98	♦ 542									
♣ A65	♣ QJ743	♣ 92									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K9										
	♥ AKQ2										
	♦ K1076										
	♣ K108										

Louis Watson, *Watson on the Play of the Hand at Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer wins the first trick with the ♠K to retain an entry to dummy and starts to set up clubs, his longest suit, beginning with the king to avoid blocking the suit. Had he played on diamonds first, he would have needed to score a club trick as well, but would not have had time to do so before the spades were ready to run.

Establishment by overtaking

♠	KQ62									
♥	K									
♦	KJ64									
♣	AJ104									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	A43									
♥	A10987									
♦	A8									
♣	652									

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10.

The most probable way to secure nine tricks is to set up the heart suit. However, entries to the South hand are in short supply. Declarer wins the ♠K, plays the ♥K, overtakes with the ace, and then leads the ♥10. The two other aces in hand will suffice to set up and reach the last two hearts.

Giving up on a side suit

	♠ 76	
	♥ KQ85	
	♦ AK75	
	♣ 984	
♠ QJ10983		♠ 542
♥ 96		♥ J10432
♦ 1093		♦ J62
♣ AK		♣ 53
	♠ AK	
	♥ A7	
	♦ Q84	
	♣ QJ10762	

Louis Watson, *Watson on the Play of the Hand at Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer can see he has no time to set up the clubs, as the opponents' spades will be ready to run first. There is no option except to hope for a 3-3 diamond break.

Side-suit establishment for discards

	♠ K732	
	♥ Q853	
	♦ 43	
	♣ K54	
♠ J108		♠ 9
♥ A976		♥ K42
♦ KQJ6		♦ 10985
♣ 92		♣ QJ1063
	♠ AQ654	
	♥ J10	
	♦ A72	
	♣ A87	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer needs to dispose of his third club. He wins the first trick with the ♦A, draws trumps in three rounds and leads the ♥J. The ♥Q will be set up before the second club stopper is removed.

Urgent side-suit establishment on defense

	♠ Q8	
	♥ KJ7	
	♦ QJ4	
	♣ AK964	
♠ J1095		♠ A432
♥ 84		♥ 962
♦ A10632		♦ K87
♣ Q5		♣ J102
	♠ K76	
	♥ AQ1053	
	♦ 95	
	♣ 873	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠J.

The defense has to set up a fourth trick before declarer establishes a diamond honor for a club discard. East should win the ♠A at Trick 1 and play back the ♣2. When declarer plays a diamond, West should rise with his ace and continue with the ♣5 to set up the ♣J, while the ♦K is still around. Declarer refrained from playing dummy's ♠Q on the opening lead to tempt East to duck, after which declarer would win the establishment race. East has to be wide awake at Trick 1.

Establishment by loser-on-loser play

	♠ 9643	
	♥ K985	
	♦ 63	
	♣ AQJ	
♠ KJ5		♠ 107
♥ J		♥ 3
♦ KJ10872		♦ 954
♣ K108		♣ 9765432
	♠ AQ82	
	♥ AQ107642	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ —	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♥J.

West opened the bidding with 1♦, so the diamond and spade finesses are certainly losing. Declarer must try to set up a spade in dummy. He should win the ♥K, play the ♣A, discarding a spade, and then play the ♣Q discarding another spade. West will win and return the ♣10 to the ♣J, declarer discarding the ♠Q. Then he can cash the ♠A. The trump entries to dummy allow him to set up and reach the fourth spade, on which he can discard the ♦Q.

Waiting move

	♠ AK74	
	♥ Q106	
	♦ J83	
	♣ AK5	
♠ 952		♠ Q106
♥ J8		♥ A5
♦ K1042		♦ A76
♣ 10984		♣ Q7632
	♠ J83	
	♥ K97432	
	♦ Q95	
	♣ J	

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣10.

Declarer wins dummy's ♣A, leads the ♥6 towards the king, which holds, and then plays the ♥2 to the ♥J, ♥Q and ♥A. East returns a club. Since it is too early to decide what to discard, declarer ruffs. He plays the ♠A and ♠K, but the ♠Q doesn't fall. Only now does declarer take a pitch on the ♣K: the ♠J. He ruffs the ♠4 and will discard a diamond on the established ♠7. If it turns out someone has queen fourth of spades, he still has a chance to guess the ♦10.

(See 'Morton's Fork', p. 122)

Positional establishment

	♠ 32	
	♥ Q54	
	♦ AQJ5	
	♣ A982	
♠ QJ1098		♠ 765
♥ A98		♥ 763
♦ 73		♦ K864
♣ Q54		♣ J76
	♠ AK4	
	♥ KJ102	
	♦ 1092	
	♣ K103	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Clearly declarer should hold up on the first round of spades, but he is forced to take the second. He must establish both hearts and diamonds. He ought to start with the hearts, however, since they represent the only possible entry for West. The diamond finesse will later be taken into East, who is harmless, because by that time he will have no more spades.

Establishment attempt followed by a throw-in

♠ 1083	♠ AQJ	♠ K6542									
♥ 84	♥ QJ2	♥ 5									
♦ AJ2	♦ 863	♦ Q1075									
♣ K10753	♣ AQ42	♣ J96									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 97										
	♥ AK109763										
	♦ K94										
	♣ 8										

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 4♥; West leads a trump.

If West has the ♦A, as here, there is a danger that declarer will lose the ♠K and three diamonds, so the club finesse is too risky. It is possible, however, that the ♣K can be ruffed out in three rounds. Declarer should win the first trick in hand, play the ♣A and then ruff a club. A second trump to dummy is followed by another club ruff. If the ♣K doesn't fall, as in the above layout, he can play the ♠A, followed by the ♣Q, on which he can throw his last spade. West is now on lead: he can play a spade (a free finesse of the king), a diamond away from the ace, or a club for a ruff and sluff.

(See 'Elimination play', p. 76 and 'Throw-in play', p. 81)

Which suit to establish

♠ Q1097	♠ 42	♠ J6									
♥ 10	♥ K842	♥ J95									
♦ 9872	♦ J4	♦ A10653									
♣ Q962	♣ AK854	♣ J103									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AK853										
	♥ AQ763										
	♦ KQ										
	♣ 7										

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦9.

East takes his ace and continues a diamond to declarer's king. Should we tackle spades or clubs? There is a chance of an overruff in spades, a very serious danger on the layout above. Therefore, declarer should play a club to the ace, ruff a club, and then cash the ace and queen of trumps. Trumps are 3-1, so he can cash the ♥K and then take the ♣K to see how the suit is splitting. Clubs are 4-3, so he can finally ruff the ♣5. If clubs turned out to be 5-2, declarer must hope the spades are 3-3, keeping the final club ruff as an entry to the established spades.

Establishment with a stepping stone

♠ 7543	♠ 862	
♥ Q952	♥ 8743	
♦ 8	♦ 42	
♣ AQ75	♣ KJ83	
		♠ —
		♥ J106
		♦ KQJ107653
		♣ 64
		♠ AKQJ109
		♥ AK
		♦ A9
		♣ 1092

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

South plays 6♠ after East has opened the bidding with 3♦; West leads the ♦8.

Declarer wins the ♦A and must draw four rounds of trumps. Then he cashes the ♥A and ♥K and leads the ♣2 to the ♣8. After the ♥8 is ruffed (elimination), the ♣10 is played to the jack and the ♥7 is ruffed (elimination completed). Finally, the ♣9 is played and West cannot prevent declarer from scoring a club trick.

Defensive suit establishment with a Crocodile Coup

♠ K	♠ AQ82	
♥ A2	♥ J863	
♦ 1054	♦ Q93	
♣ KJ109654	♣ A7	
		♠ 76543
		♥ 10954
		♦ K76
		♣ Q
		♠ J109
		♥ KQ7
		♦ AJ82
		♣ 832

South plays 3NT.

If West leads the ♣J to the ♣7 and the ♣Q, East cannot play one back. From there, declarer will have time to set up two hearts, four spades, two diamonds and a club. However, if West correctly leads the ♣K, inviting partner to unblock his queen or dropping it when it is singleton in any hand, his lone heart entry will suffice to put the contract down.

Ducking play

To duck is to allow the opponents to take a trick, either in order to set up a suit or to preserve a control or an entry. The technique is similar to the 'hold up', which tends to sever adverse communications, but the method is different. A 'duck' is a maneuver in one's own suit, while one 'holds up' in a suit played by the opposing side.

Duck to preserve communications

	♣ AQ654	
♣ 7	<div></div>	♣ J1098
	♣ K32	

Without a side entry to dummy, it is necessary to cash the king and then play a low card from both hands in order to set up and reach this pretty suit. It would be equally necessary if West held four clubs, even though in that case declarer would not know about the singleton when he played to the second trick from dummy.

Trump duck to preserve control

	♠ Q2	
	♥ A1053	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ9432	
♠ A1087	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	♠ J93
♥ Q9		♥ KJ8
♦ Q643		♦ AK1087
♣ 1087		♣ 65
	♠ K654	
	♥ 7642	
	♦ J952	
	♣ K	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦4.

When trump control is precarious, a duck in the trump suit becomes mandatory. The opening lead is ruffed in dummy and the ♥3 is led. Declarer can then ruff the next diamond in dummy and cash the ♣K and the ♥A before leading out his good clubs.

Trump duck to preserve control

	♠ A	
	♥ Q103	
	♦ Q9764	
	♣ K762	
♠ KJ965		♠ Q832
♥ KJ872		♥ 94
♦ 108		♦ J53
♣ J		♣ 10984
	♠ 1074	
	♥ A65	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ AQ53	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Divine Intervention*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠5.

Even when trumps look robust, a duck could be necessary to protect against a bad split. Declarer wins the first trick in dummy and ducks a round of trumps. Now two spades can be peacefully ruffed in dummy while drawing East's trumps.

(See 'Duck to retain a watchdog', p. 103)

Duck for lack of communication

	♠ 76	
	♥ 865	
	♦ A87432	
	♣ 52	
♠ 1043		♠ J982
♥ Q107432		♥ K9
♦ J		♦ Q1065
♣ 1086		♣ AQ9
	♠ AKQ5	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ K9	
	♣ KJ743	

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Declarer Play at Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥4.

Declarer takes the second heart and has no way to set up and reach the diamonds. He must fall back on clubs, but he has only one entry to dummy. He therefore starts by leading out the ♣J to the queen. Dummy can be reached later with the ♦A. Now leading a club towards the king establishes the suit.

Double and triple duck

♣ KQJ10	♣ A9872	♣ —
	♣ 6543	

In order to set up and reach the clubs, declarer can play for a 3-1 split and duck twice. When the suit breaks 4-0, three ducks are needed.

Duck as a safety play

♠ A	♠
♥ QJ108	♥
♦ AKJ105	♦
♣ 743	♣
	♠
	♥
	♦
	♣ J9865
	♠
	♥
	♦
	♣
	♠
	♥
	♦
	♣

South plays 6♣; West leads a spade to dummy's ace.

You could think about finessing against the jack of trumps as a safety play, but the true safety play is to duck a round of clubs completely. This protects against East holding five trumps. Later, declarer can safely ruff a spade in dummy and finesse in clubs.

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Duck for suit establishment

♠ K1084	♠ A7	♠ J2
♥ J107	♥ A52	♥ Q9643
♦ J7	♦ AK8543	♦ Q1092
♣ 10842	♣ A5	♣ 96
	♠	♠
	♥	♥
	♦	♦
	♣	♣
	♠	♠
	♥	♥
	♦	♦
	♣	♣

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥J.

To protect himself against both trumps and diamonds being 4-2, declarer must first duck a diamond and then ruff one later to set them up. Declarer can start by drawing trumps if he wishes.

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

Trump duck to preserve control

	♠ AKQ65	
	♥ A103	
	♦ 64	
	♣ A83	
♠ 94		♠ J1082
♥ 9862		♥ 74
♦ QJ10		♦ 9753
♣ K1064		♣ J97
	♠ 73	
	♥ KQJ5	
	♦ AK82	
	♣ Q52	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦Q.

Trumps are in short supply and there is some danger if both majors break 4-2. An immediate spade duck is needed, after which declarer can ruff a diamond, draw trumps and enjoy the good spades.

Duck to retain a watchdog

	♠ 82	
	♥ A765	
	♦ KQ10942	
	♣ 8	
♠ 103		♠ QJ9
♥ KQJ		♥ 108432
♦ 8653		♦ 7
♣ KQJ6		♣ 9542
	♠ AK7654	
	♥ 9	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ A1073	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣K.

As soon as the ♣A is taken, the suit is wide open! Declarer has to retain a trump in dummy, a 'watchdog'. An immediate spade duck is the answer, since there is always a trump loser anyway.

Hold up play

The hold up is a defensive duck, a refusal to take an adverse card, in order to cut communications or preserve a stopper. The hold up is used in trump contracts as well as at notrump.

Hold up with two stoppers

	♠ Q92	
	♥ J1083	
	♦ A72	
	♣ K86	
♠ J5		♠ 107643
♥ 95		♥ A762
♦ K9863		♦ J4
♣ A1093		♣ 42
	♠ AK8	
	♥ KQ4	
	♦ Q105	
	♣ QJ75	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦ 6.

The aces are missing in both suits that need to be established. The opponents have the benefit of the opening lead, giving them a time advantage. Declarer must not take the first trick, in spite of his double stopper. In fact, two diamond stoppers will not be enough if he guesses wrong and plays on hearts instead of clubs. After the hold up, East returns a second diamond, but now declarer can go after either suit with no risk of going wrong. If West has both aces, there is no chance anyway unless East has only one diamond — in which case declarer has to win the first round. No one ever said bridge was an easy game!

Hold up to set up a ruff

	♠ QJ8	
	♥ 742	
	♦ A65	
	♣ 10872	
♠ 94		♠ K1073
♥ 83		♥ J95
♦ J108742		♦ Q9
♣ Q54		♣ AKJ6
	♠ A652	
	♥ AKQ106	
	♦ K3	
	♣ 93	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠ 9.

Declarer is going to need a spade ruff in dummy. The spade trick must be lost before two rounds of trumps are taken or else East can play a third round, eliminating the ruff. If the ♠Q is played, declarer can duck when East covers with the king. However, if East does not put up his king, the timing is destroyed and West will score his ♥8. Duck the ♠9 right now, and everything works fine, as West is short in both spades and hearts!

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

(See 'Guillemard's Maneuver', p. 205)

Hold up to allow discards in another suit

	♠ AK4	
	♥ 76	
	♦ AJ962	
	♣ KJ8	
♠ QJ10953		♠ 872
♥ AQJ943		♥ 1082
♦ 8		♦ KQ105
♣ —		♣ 753
	♠ 6	
	♥ K5	
	♦ 743	
	♣ AQ109642	

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠Q.

To protect the ♥K and allow a later heart discard, declarer holds up the ♠A at Trick 1. Then he discards two diamonds on the ♠A and ♠K and sets up a diamond by ruffing.

Hold up to prepare an elimination

	♠ J762	
	♥ A5	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ K984	
♠ Q84		♠ 5
♥ KQJ32		♥ 10874
♦ 652		♦ A987
♣ 106		♣ QJ73
	♠ AK1093	
	♥ 96	
	♦ 1043	
	♣ A52	

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K.

If declarer takes the first trick in dummy, the contract will go down. If he holds up, he will be able to eliminate the red suits and play two rounds of clubs before throwing West in with the third trump. West must then concede a ruff and sluff.

Hold up to cut communication, avoiding a future ruff

♠ KQ1092	♠ A5	♠ J743
♥ 7	♥ 653	♥ J1098
♦ K83	♦ J7654	♦ Q92
♣ J862	♣ A54	♣ 109
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 86	
	♥ AKQ42	
	♦ A10	
	♣ KQ73	

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 4♥, West leads the ♠K.

If dummy's ♠A is taken immediately, the contract will go down. After drawing two rounds of trumps, declarer will play the ♣K and ♣A and then lead a club from dummy. Alas, East will ruff, play a spade over to West and get a second club ruff. If declarer plays a third round of trumps, he will lose control. However, after the hold up of the ♠A at Trick 1, East cannot put West back in and will never score his second ruff.

Hold up to keep control

♠ Q8754	♠ J109	♠ 632
♥ 4	♥ 532	♥ KQ9876
♦ 874	♦ A	♦ K2
♣ 10864	♣ QJ9752	♣ AK
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AK	
	♥ AJ10	
	♦ QJ109653	
	♣ 3	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥4.

East plays the ♥Q; watch what happens if declarer wins the ace. He cashes the ♦A, comes back to hand with the ♠A and plays another diamond. East wins the ♦K and cashes the ♣A and ♣K. Declarer cannot afford to let a heart go from the J-10, nor can he discard the ♠K, so he must discard a good diamond. East then switches to a spade and, after taking his diamonds, declarer will lose a heart and a spade. He should let East's ♥Q hold the first trick, preserving a direct A-J tenace over East rather than a secondary J-10 holding.

Hold up to keep the danger hand out

	♠ 74	
	♥ AKJ3	
	♦ KJ3	
	♣ AK73	
♠ AJ9652		♠ Q103
♥ 82		♥ 5
♦ Q9		♦ A876542
♣ J95		♣ Q4
	♠ K8	
	♥ Q109764	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 10862	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦ Q.

If East gets the lead, a spade return may well prove fatal. The solution is to play low from dummy on the opening lead. If East goes up with the ace to lead a spade through, the diamonds will provide two club discards. If East plays low, so that the ♦ Q holds, the ♠ K is safe and a later ruffing finesse will set up the ♦ J for a spade discard.

Hold up to cut communications

	♠ 108	
	♥ 6	
	♦ AJ95	
	♣ KQ7632	
♠ Q762		♠ J953
♥ K10985		♥ A32
♦ 872		♦ K6
♣ J		♣ 10854
	♠ AK5	
	♥ QJ74	
	♦ Q1043	
	♣ A9	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ 10.

East takes the ♥ A and returns the ♥ 3. Declarer can afford to hold up because the diamond finesse will be taken into the safe hand, and this is the winning play. However, declarer might be tempted to put up the ♥ Q (which West will duck), hoping to score five or six club tricks without giving East the lead. He next leads the ♣ 9 from hand and ducks West's ♣ J, thus protecting the ♥ J. In fact, this is a mirage, because West can switch to diamonds after the ♣ J holds. Declarer is forced to finesse because of the blockage in clubs. Now East can win and play a third heart for two down.

Defensive hold up to retain an entry

	♠ K5	
	♥ Q1065	
	♦ Q1076	
	♣ K96	
♠ Q10873		♠ J94
♥ A84		♥ 932
♦ 93		♦ A42
♣ 843		♣ QJ72
	♠ A62	
	♥ KJ7	
	♦ KJ85	
	♣ A105	

Terence Reese, *Bridge for Ambitious Players*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠7.

Declarer holds up on the first spade and takes the ♠K at Trick 2. If he plays on diamonds first, he will go down. East will win his ace and play a third round of spades while West still has the ♥A. If declarer decides to play on hearts, West should duck his ace smoothly. Declarer may believe East has the ♥A and switch to diamonds, going back to the preceding scenario. In fact, a good defender in the East seat would have gone up with the ♥A if he had it. By inference, declarer should deduce that West has the ♥A and continue to play on hearts.

Defensive hold up to retain an entry for a ruff

	♠ J984	
	♥ J953	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ KJ3	
♠ K53		♠ 2
♥ 82		♥ A1064
♦ A10742		♦ J986
♣ 964		♣ 10875
	♠ AQ1076	
	♥ KQ7	
	♦ 53	
	♣ AQ2	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥8.

East, with no side entry, holds up his ♥A on the lead, while encouraging with the ♥10. West will have a second heart to play when he gets in with the king of trumps and he can then receive his ruff.

Defensive hold up to isolate a suit

	♠ A	
	♥ A54	
	♦ 9543	
	♣ J10987	
♠ J1098		♠ 76543
♥ 8		♥ QJ109
♦ 10876		♦ KQJ
♣ KQ54		♣ 6
	♠ KQ2	
	♥ K7632	
	♦ A2	
	♣ A32	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠J.

The ♠A wins and the ♣J is led: West must hold up to prevent declarer from setting up the suit. If he wins this trick, the contract will succeed, as the defenders' diamonds are blocked.

Defensive hold up with courage

	♠ J6	
	♥ K75	
	♦ 84	
	♣ KJ10743	
♠ 973		♠ Q1052
♥ J83		♥ Q962
♦ J973		♦ K102
♣ A95		♣ Q6
	♠ AK84	
	♥ A104	
	♦ AQ65	
	♣ 82	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦3.

Declarer wins and plays the ♣2 to the ♣10 in dummy. East should let it hold as smoothly as if he had the ace or only small clubs. Declarer will certainly repeat the club finesse, after which the suit can be set up but not reached due to the lack of an entry.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Defensive hold up to keep control

	♠ A43	
	♥ K65	
	♦ 4	
	♣ AJ10763	
♠ 762		♠ 985
♥ QJ104		♥ A983
♦ A852		♦ 93
♣ 94		♣ KQ82
	♠ KQJ10	
	♥ 72	
	♦ KQJ1076	
	♣ 5	

South plays 4♠, West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer has to ruff the third heart. Looking to set up his secondary suit, declarer plays the ♦K. This is ducked by West in spite of dummy's singleton, as is the ♥Q. The third round of diamonds can be ruffed by East, who plays another heart. The contract goes down because declarer can never use his side suit.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

When *not* to hold up in defense

♠ 652	♠ KJ108	♠ AQ4									
♥ K873	♥ J65	♥ Q92									
♦ 8	♦ QJ3	♦ 109642									
♣ 87432	♣ Q109	♣ A6									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 973										
	♥ A104										
	♦ AK75										
	♣ KJ5										

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Defense at Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ 3.

Since declarer opened a strong notrump, West can have no more than the ♥ K. Therefore, holding the ♥ Q back to cover the jack can be of no use. On the contrary, East must play his ♥ Q now to force the ace and later lead the ♥ 9 back when he gets in with a spade. West, for his part, should hold up the ♥ K on this trick to preserve communication.

The Bath Coup

This is a hold up where a card led by the opponents is ducked in a position that prevents an immediate continuation of the suit. The play dates back to the days of whist and is probably named for the British spa town of Bath where the game was a popular pastime.

Simple Bath Coup

♣ KQ1098	immaterial		immaterial
	♣ AJ2		

When declarer holds up on the ♣K lead, West must either try to find an entry to his partner's hand, or give up a trick if he wants to set up his suit.

Triple Bath Coup

	♠ 87		
	♥ 875		
	♦ 32		
	♣ A87542		
♠ KQ1095		♠ 643	
♥ KQ104		♥ 962	
♦ KQ107		♦ 9865	
♣ —		♣ Q63	
	♠ AJ2		
	♥ AJ3		
	♦ AJ4		
	♣ KJ109		

South plays 3NT.

Declarer should hold up on each of West's three kings. West is then obliged to lead into one of declarer's A-J tenaces, after which he ducks a club to the ♣Q to unblock the suit.

George Coffin, *Endplays at Bridge*.

Defensive duck

Defensive duck

♠ J9432
♥ A7
♦ J5
♣ K1054

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A1075
♥ KJ6
♦ 93
♣ A732

♠ 86
♥ 108542
♦ Q10864
♣ 9

♠ KQ
♥ Q93
♦ AK72
♣ QJ86

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ 4.

When declarer plays the ♥7 from dummy, East should put in the ♥J, not the ♥K. If declarer wins with the queen, East will later lead the ♥K to remove dummy's ace and the path to partner's heart suit will be cleared. Not knowing the exact lie of the cards, it is difficult for declarer to escape; he must either go up with dummy's ace at Trick 1 or refuse to take East's jack.

(See 'Blocking and unblocking plays, p. 60')

Palace Coup

♠ 1063
♥ A73
♦ 532
♣ KJ93

N
W E
S

♠ AK842
♥ 98
♦ Q106
♣ 865

♠ Q7
♥ KQ104
♦ AKJ7
♣ Q107

José Le Dentu, *Les Donnes Extraordinaires*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠ 5.

If East takes this trick, the spades are blocked, even when West gains the lead with the ♣A. Indeed, declarer will score no spade tricks, but the defenders will score only three. In fact, here East can take the first spade, but only if he gives up the second. It would still be the wrong play if West had only two spades, so the best play is to duck the first spade lead completely.

Defensive duck to keep idle cards to discard

	♠ J864	
	♥ AK1053	
	♦ 8	
	♣ 943	
♠ 10752		♠ A93
♥ —		♥ J9862
♦ Q109543		♦ AJ72
♣ 1086		♣ 2
	♠ KQ	
	♥ Q74	
	♦ K6	
	♣ AKQJ75	

Terence Reese, *Bridge for Ambitious Players*.

South plays 5NT after an aborted slam try; West leads the ♦ 10.

If East takes his ♦ A and plays a diamond back, he will be squeezed on the last club. On the contrary, he should play the ♦ 7 or the ♦ J to the first trick, conceding a trick to the king at once. East can later discard his ♦ A on a club, retaining four hearts and the communication with West.

(See 'Refusing to rectify the count', p. 294)

Defensive duck to create an entry

	♠ AQ7	
	♥ KJ4	
	♦ J42	
	♣ QJ63	
♠ 62		♠ K4
♥ 10876		♥ AQ95
♦ Q973		♦ A1086
♣ 1085		♣ 942
	♠ J109853	
	♥ 32	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AK7	

Victor Mollo and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ 7.

If East plays the ♦ A now, the defense cannot get West on lead to play a heart through before declarer discards one of his hearts on the fourth club. East should play the ♦ 10 at Trick 1. Then, when he gets in with the ♠ K, he underleads his ♦ A to reach West for a heart switch. Declarer could have avoided this issue by simply playing dummy's ♦ J at Trick 1.

(See 'Playing to create or cut off an entry', p. 66)

Defensive duck by declarer

	♠ K853	
	♥ 1074	
	♦ K1082	
	♣ 65	
♠ J6		♠ Q1092
♥ Q962		♥ J85
♦ 63		♦ AJ754
♣ J10987		♣ 4
	♠ A74	
	♥ AK3	
	♦ Q9	
	♣ AKQ32	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♣J.

Happy with the lead, declarer ducks it, but is disappointed when East shows out on the second round. Now he needs two diamond tricks. If he plays the queen, East will hold up and declarer will be short an entry to set up and reach the suit. The correct line is to start with the ♦9. If East takes his jack, the queen can later be overtaken with the king and two tricks are secured. If East holds up, the queen is played at once, establishing a second diamond trick.

Duck by declarer to create an entry

	♠ 53	
	♥ K106	
	♦ J74	
	♣ K6542	
♠ A6		♠ 842
♥ 732		♥ AJ84
♦ Q983		♦ 1062
♣ J1097		♣ Q83
	♠ KQJ1097	
	♥ Q95	
	♦ AK5	
	♣ A	

Freddie North, *Aunt Agatha Plays Tournament Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣J.

How do we reach the ♣K to discard a diamond? A heart to the ten loses to the jack and East will not take his ace when we try the ♥Q later. Leading the ♥Q immediately produces the same result. Only the play of the ♥9 forces East to take his jack or lose a heart trick. Then the queen can be overtaken with the king, setting up an entry with the ♥10 either immediately or later.

Avoidance play

This technique is aimed at keeping a dangerous opponent off play. He may be the danger hand because he has winners to cash, or because he can lead through a vulnerable card, or because he can give his partner a ruff or shorten declarer's trumps. The main tactics include the hold up, the deference play, [Morton's Fork](#), rising with an honor, the [Scissors Coup](#) and finessing into the safe hand.

Avoidance by finessing

♣ Q10

 ♣ AK432

South is declarer in notrump. He wants to set up this club suit, but he cannot let the danger hand get the lead. If it is West, South should finesse the ♣10. If East is the danger hand, declarer needs to play off the high honors, hoping for a 3-3 break or for East's jack to be doubleton.

Avoidance by finessing the right card

♣ AJ92

 ♣ K1043

South is declarer in notrump. Depending on who is the dangerous opponent, the finesse against the ♣Q can be taken either way. We cannot know if the finesse will succeed, but we do know which opponent we can lose it to with no risk of damage!

Avoidance by ducking to protect an honor

	♠ QJ3	
	♥ 842	
	♦ A3	
	♣ K9642	
♠ 97		♠ 108
♥ AQJ95		♥ 107
♦ KQJ5		♦ 1098642
♣ 103		♣ QJ8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AK6542
♥ K63
♦ 7
♣ A75

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

The danger is that East can win a club trick and lead through the ♥K. Withhold the ♦A on the first trick! Then you can discard a club on the ♦A later. Now the clubs can be set up while keeping East off play.

Avoidance by refusing to cover to protect an honor

♠ AQ2	♠ J74	♠ 6									
♥ Q53	♥ A2	♥ J10987									
♦ J97	♦ A654	♦ Q103									
♣ J1098	♣ KQ54	♣ A762									
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W		E									
	S										
	♠ K109853										
	♥ K64										
	♦ K82										
	♣ 3										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣J.

If dummy covers, East will take his ♣A and switch to a spade. The defense can play three rounds of trumps, stopping the heart ruff. Avoid this by simply refusing to cover the lead: if East overtakes, there is no need to ruff a heart. If East does not take his ♣A at Trick 1, a later ruffing finesse will establish the ♣Q for a diamond discard.

Avoidance by leading high to protect an honor

♠ 1098	♠ K654	♠ AQJ32									
♥ 962	♥ 873	♥ J4									
♦ 542	♦ 963	♦ 1087									
♣ Q1082	♣ J93	♣ A65									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 7										
	♥ AKQ105										
	♦ AKQJ										
	♣ K74										

South plays 4♥ after a 1♠ opening by East; West leads the ♠10.

The opening lead is ducked in dummy and declarer ruffs the spade continuation in hand. Then he takes three rounds of hearts and three rounds of diamonds, leaving him with just one trump. If he now leads the ♣4 towards dummy, West will take his queen and switch to a spade, for one down. The key is to lead out the ♣K from hand; since East has the ace, when he wins, he cannot attack spades without setting up the king. Eventually, the ♣J will be declarer's tenth trick.

Andrew Diosy and Linda Lee, *You Have To See This*.

Belladonna's avoidance play

♠ K4	♠ J9	♠ 2									
♥ Q1087	♥ K4	♥ A965									
♦ K95	♦ J10876	♦ Q432									
♣ KQ93	♣ A764	♣ J1082									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AQ1087653										
	♥ J32										
	♦ A										
	♣ 5										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦5.

The danger hand is East, who could play trumps through before a heart can be ruffed in dummy. After winning the ♦A, declarer should cross to dummy with the ♣A and lead the ♥4. Either East will take his ace and only one heart will be lost, or West will win his queen and, since trumps cannot be attacked from his side, a heart will be ruffed later.

Play attributed to Giorgio Belladonna.

Avoid being shortened

	♠ 4	
	♥ Q7653	
	♦ K732	
	♣ A53	
♠ A3		♠ 8762
♥ 982		♥ AKJ104
♦ 10984		♦ J6
♣ 8742		♣ K6
	♠ KQJ1095	
	♥ —	
	♦ AQ5	
	♣ QJ109	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥9.

Declarer ruffs the opening lead. The danger is that West will get the lead with a trump and play another heart through, so that declarer is shortened before the clubs are ready to run. The winning play is to lead a club immediately and then refuse to ruff the ♥A, discarding a club winner instead. Now the ♥Q in dummy protects against the force.

Avoid an opponent playing trumps

	♠ J8764	
	♥ 64	
	♦ K64	
	♣ Q98	
♠ KQ52		♠ 109
♥ K1053		♥ J92
♦ 8		♦ 10752
♣ KJ72		♣ A1065
	♠ A3	
	♥ AQ87	
	♦ AQJ93	
	♣ 43	

South plays 3♦; West leads a trump.

The danger is that East will get the lead and play another trump, preventing a heart ruff in dummy. If declarer leads a club from hand, West will surely take his king, fearing a doubleton ace in the closed hand. When West leads back the ♣J, dummy does not cover and now East cannot take his ace without establishing the queen. The third club is ruffed by declarer. Now he leads the ♥Q from hand and can later ruff his two losing hearts in dummy.

Avoid an opponent giving his partner a ruff

	♠ 43	
	♥ Q654	
	♦ A72	
	♣ K952	
♠ K97		♠ 8
♥ A		♥ 10987
♦ Q1098		♦ KJ54
♣ AQ1094		♣ J873
	♠ AQJ10652	
	♥ KJ32	
	♦ 63	
	♣ —	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥A, followed by the ♦8.

The danger is that East will get the lead and give West a heart ruff. The avoidance play consists of leading the ♣K from dummy and discarding a diamond, severing the opponents' communications. It is, in fact, a [Scissors Coup](#).

Avoiding a trump promotion

	♠ K10532	
	♥ 3	
	♦ AK53	
	♣ KJ3	
♠ J8		♠ AQ976
♥ Q984		♥ 7
♦ Q9642		♦ J8
♣ A4		♣ Q10985
	♠ 4	
	♥ AKJ10652	
	♦ 107	
	♣ 762	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣A, followed by the ♣4.

The danger is that East will get the lead and play a third club, promoting West's ♥9. The avoidance play consists of playing the ♣K and then three rounds of diamonds, discarding the ♠4, severing the opponents' communications. This is another [Scissors Coup](#).

Avoid a trump promotion

	♠ KQ1098	
	♥ Q754	
	♦ K6	
	♣ 54	
♠ 54		♠ J76
♥ AK10		♥ 2
♦ 1098743		♦ QJ52
♣ J3		♣ AQ876
	♠ A32	
	♥ J9863	
	♦ A	
	♣ K1092	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠5.

The danger is that East will get the lead and play a third round of spades, promoting West's ♥10. The avoidance play consists of winning the ♠A, cashing the ♦A and then playing a heart towards dummy. West will take his king and play a second round of spades, which dummy wins. Now the ♦K allows declarer to discard his last spade. A club from dummy goes to East's ace, but declarer can ruff the third spade with the ♥J, stopping the trump promotion.

Preventing a signal

	♠ A73	
	♥ A64	
	♦ KQ42	
	♣ A86	
♠ Q942		♠ 10965
♥ 10853		♥ QJ
♦ J1098		♦ 53
♣ 7		♣ Q10952
	♠ KJ	
	♥ K972	
	♦ A76	
	♣ KJ43	

The Bridge World, May 1987

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♦ J.

Dummy wins the first trick with the ♦ K and follows up with the ♣ A, which collects the ♣ 2, the ♣ 3 and the ♣ 7. When declarer then calls for the ♣ 8 from dummy, East puts up the ♣ Q, which loses to declarer's king. West can infer that East's unnecessary high card is signaling that he has spades, so he can then discard a spade himself. If he were to discard a heart instead, declarer could set up the fourth heart and later double squeeze his opponents to secure the contract. To avoid this signal, declarer should try the club finesse at Trick 2 and then play a club to the ace. At this point, West has not yet seen any signal from East and will probably discard a heart rather than a spade, thus allowing declarer to make the contract.

Forquet's avoidance play

	♠ Q84	
	♥ K63	
	♦ A763	
	♣ 652	
♠ J63		♠ 5
♥ 7		♥ QJ1092
♦ KQ98		♦ J1042
♣ AQJ97		♣ K83
	♠ AK10972	
	♥ A854	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 104	

South plays 4♠ after a club bid by West; West leads the ♥ 7.

The only way to secure ten tricks is to ruff a heart in dummy without letting the defense ruff the ace or king. If declarer plays clubs, attempting a [Scissors Coup](#) to cut communications, East will get the lead twice and give West two heart ruffs, felling dummy's king. The avoidance play consists of going to dummy with the ♦ A and playing the ♣ 2 towards the ♣ 10. Now East can get the lead just once in clubs and can only give his partner one ruff. The ♥ K will score and West will have spent a trump on thin air. His remaining trumps can be drawn, keeping one in dummy to ruff the fourth heart as well.

Avoiding the avoidance: the Emperor's Coup

♠ KJ9876	♠ 54	♠ Q3									
♥ 32	♥ AQ75	♥ J10984									
♦ J32	♦ 987	♦ A									
♣ 75	♣ K1093	♣ QJ864									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A102										
	♥ K6										
	♦ KQ10654										
	♣ A2										

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 3NT; West leads a spade.

Declarer ducks East's ♠Q and, not knowing the exact spade layout, ducks again when East continues the suit. West wins and plays the ♠J, suit preference for diamonds. East should discard his ♦A (an [Emperor's Coup](#))! The ♦J is promoted to an entry for the good spades.

Avoiding the avoidance: the 'deference' play

♣ J106	♣ A9854	
	<div></div>	♣ Q7
	♣ K32	

West is the danger hand.

If South leads the king, East will unblock his queen. If South leads a small one, West should go up with his jack: North must then take the trick and East can again unblock his queen. The solution is to lead from the North hand first, ducking in 'deference' to the queen if she appears. The French term for this play, *baiser* (literally 'a kiss'), indicates that we are giving precedence to a high card, when it is, in fact, a kiss of death.

Double deference

♣ Q87	♣ AK32	
	<div></div>	♣ J109
	♣ 654	

If we cannot afford to have East get the lead due to danger in another suit, we must tackle clubs by leading from the South hand and ducking the queen when it is played. If the queen is not played on the first round, return to the South hand and lead towards dummy again. Bowing to a king or queen is certainly common, but any card can be the unconsenting victim of this technique.

Deferring to the jack

♠ 75

♥ J6

♦ AQ7652

♣ AK6

♠ KJ863

♥ K2

♦ 10984

♣ 83

N

W E

S

♠ A94

♥ A1093

♦ K3

♣ Q542

♠ Q102

♥ Q8754

♦ J

♣ J1097

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠6.

Declarer wins the third spade and now West is the danger hand. If declarer starts on diamonds by playing the king, he will go down. If he leads the ♦3 from hand, he will not know what to do when West puts in the ♦10. The simple solution is to cross to dummy with a club and lead the ♦2. When East plays the jack, it is happily ducked.

Morton's Fork

We have seen how avoidance plays can be useful in notrump as well as trump contracts. Morton's Fork is a closely related technique, but it depends on timing. It was first described by Milton Work, and is named for Cardinal Morton, Chancellor to Henry II of England. Morton claimed that a man who lived ostentatiously could obviously afford to pay the king's taxes, while a man who lived frugally must be saving a lot and could still afford to pay the taxes. In other words, the Fork involves a choice between two unpleasant alternatives — a true Hobson's choice!

The basic maneuver

	♠ 75	
	♥ K3	
	♦ AK642	
	♣ K972	
♠ 9432		♠ QJ1086
♥ 10874		♥ A96
♦ J103		♦ Q9
♣ 105		♣ QJ8
	♠ AK	
	♥ QJ52	
	♦ 875	
	♣ A643	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠4.

Declarer takes the ♠K and needs to score a heart trick before setting up his diamonds. He crosses to dummy with the ♦A and leads the ♥3: East cannot go up with his ace without giving declarer three heart tricks. After scoring the ♥Q, declarer reverts to diamonds, ducking a round, and makes his contract easily. The only real difficulty is guessing who has the ♥A: if it is West, declarer must lead a small heart towards the king.

Simple Morton's Fork

	♠ K	
	♥ 75	
	♦ KJ76532	
	♣ A82	
♠		♠
♥		♥
♦ A8		♦ 1094
♣		♣
	♠ A643	
	♥ A432	
	♦ Q	
	♣ K654	

South plays 3NT after a 1♥ bid by West.

West leads the ♠Q, taken with the king, and dummy's side entry is gone. Declarer now has to hope for a doubleton ♦A, as in the above layout. Even then, playing a diamond to the queen does not work — the defender will simply withhold his ace. Likewise, leading the ♦K is no better: the ace will win and the ♦10 will still stop the suit. However, coming to hand with the ♣K to lead the ♦Q blackmails West. If he takes his ace, it is the end of the party. If he holds up, the queen is overtaken with the king, and a small diamond to the now singleton ace sets up the suit.

Double Morton's Fork

	♠ 76	
	♥ 953	
	♦ KQ762	
	♣ 864	
♠ KJ1085		♠ 9432
♥ KJ		♥ Q10874
♦ A98		♦ J10
♣ Q73		♣ 95
	♠ AQ	
	♥ A62	
	♦ 543	
	♣ AKJ102	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠J.

Declarer wins the ♠Q and leads the ♦3. West cannot rise with his ace since that sets up four diamond tricks. After the ♦K wins, declarer comes back to his hand with the ♣K and plays another diamond. When the queen wins, he now reverts to clubs.

Triple Morton's Fork

	♠ KQ92	
	♥ Q1062	
	♦ K2	
	♣ 432	
♠ 875		♠ A63
♥ K9753		♥ A8
♦ Q1087		♦ 9653
♣ 9		♣ J1075
	♠ J104	
	♥ J4	
	♦ AJ4	
	♣ AKQ86	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter 3 Sans Atout*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥5 to East's ace.

Seeing dummy, East abandons hearts and plays a diamond. Declarer wins this with dummy's king to protect his tenace, tests the clubs and stops when West discards on the second one. Now he leads the ♥J (first Fork), which is ducked, followed by the ♠J and the ♠10, which are both ducked (second and third Forks). He then reverts to setting up the clubs.

Morton's Fork in a trump contract

♠ —	♠ A										
♥ KQ65	♥ 72										
♦ AJ10	♦ Q43										
♣ —	♣ 3										
	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ A43										
	♦ K2										
	♣ 72										

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads the ♦ 2. If West plays his ace, the ♦ Q and ♦ K will both score. If he doesn't go up with his ace, the ♦ K can be discarded on the ♠ A.

Morton's Fork in two suits

♠ 1084	♠ QJ52	♠ A976									
♥ 108762	♥ Q	♥ K543									
♦ 8	♦ AJ104	♦ 7652									
♣ AJ87	♣ Q654	♣ 9									
	<table> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K3										
	♥ AJ9										
	♦ KQ93										
	♣ K1032										

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ 6.

The queen, king and ace of hearts make up the first trick. East has just become the danger hand in terms of leading a heart through. Declarer goes to dummy by overtaking the ♦ K with the ace in order to lead the ♠ 2. East cannot go up with his ace, so the ♠ K wins. Declarer travels back to dummy with a diamond for a second Fork, this time in clubs. If East has the ace, he cannot afford to win it, while if West has it, no return can hurt declarer at this stage. We can now return to establishing spades.

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter 3 Sans Atout*.

Morton's Fork in a trump contract

	♠ KJ64	
	♥ A53	
	♦ KQ54	
	♣ 103	
♠ —		♠ 95
♥ KQJ10642	N	♥ 987
♦ A72	W	♦ 10986
♣ KJ8	E	♣ Q954
	S	
	♠ AQ108732	
	♥ —	
	♦ J3	
	♣ A762	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥K.

It is too early to win dummy's ♥A! Declarer ruffs and plays a small diamond from hand. West is in a dilemma! If he takes his ♦A, three discards are available for declarer's clubs. If he does not take it, he will never get it — the ♦J will be discarded on the ♥A and two clubs will be ruffed in dummy.

Defensive Morton's Fork in the trump suit

	♠ 74	
	♥ 853	
	♦ KQJ109	
	♣ K72	
♠ K83		♠ Q5
♥ J10976	N	♥ A4
♦ 832	W	♦ A765
♣ 109	E	♣ J8643
	S	
	♠ AJ10962	
	♥ KQ2	
	♦ 4	
	♣ AQ5	

Robert Berthe, *Le Bridgeur*, January 2005.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥J.

East takes his ace and returns the ♥4 to declarer's king. Now the ♦4 is led to the king and ace. At this point, if East plays a club, declarer will win in dummy, discard his ♥Q on the ♦Q and take a trump finesse. Instead, East should return his ♠5. Now, either declarer takes his ace and the defense will score two trumps, or he puts in the ♠J, in which case West will win and give East a heart ruff.

Morton's Fork with a throw-in

	♠ AKJ73	
	♥ K632	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ Q5	
♠ 8		♠ 42
♥ A9		♥ 10875
♦ AKJ83		♦ 754
♣ K10742		♣ J983
	♠ Q10965	
	♥ QJ4	
	♦ 962	
	♣ A6	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦A and continues with the ♦K and the ♦J.

Declarer ruffs the third diamond in dummy and draws trumps. If he plays the ♥Q next, West will win with the ace and play another heart: a club will eventually be lost. Instead, declarer should lead the ♥4 towards the king. If West takes his ace, the ♥K will be available for a club discard. Alternatively, West can take the second heart, but he has no exit card. He must concede either a club trick or a ruff and sluff.

Morton's Fork to prepare a ruff and sluff

	♠ A432	
	♥ K43	
	♦ 42	
	♣ 10953	
♠ J9876		♠ 105
♥ 9		♥ AJ1087
♦ AKQ975		♦ J1086
♣ 8		♣ 76
	♠ KQ	
	♥ Q652	
	♦ 3	
	♣ AKQJ42	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♦A.

The diamond continuation is ruffed with the ♣J. Now declarer cashes the ♣A, followed by the ♠K and ♠Q, and crosses to the ♠10. The ♥3 is led and East cannot go up with his ace, so the ♥Q wins. Declarer enters dummy with the ♣9 and plays the ♠A and the ♠2, discarding two hearts from hand. West is now on lead and must give declarer a ruff and sluff, on which he discards his last heart, thereby losing none.

Defending against Morton's Fork (a waiting move)

	♠ QJ62	
	♥ 1097	
	♦ QJ10	
	♣ K105	
♠ 10954		♠ A83
♥ 432		♥ 6
♦ 8642		♦ AK9753
♣ 82		♣ QJ9
	♠ K7	
	♥ AKQJ85	
	♦ —	
	♣ A7643	

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦6.

If East plays the ♦K, declarer ruffs, crosses to dummy in trumps and leads the ♠2. East cannot go up with his ace without giving declarer three club discards (two on spades and one on a diamond after a ruffing finesse). If East doesn't take his ♠A, the ruffing finesse in diamonds sets up a discard for declarer's last spade. However, if East does not cover the ♦10 at Trick 1, declarer will not know what to discard and the timing of the play will be destroyed.

Overcoming the waiting move

	♠ KQ3	
	♥ QJ62	
	♦ Q109	
	♣ A43	
♠ 9742		♠ AJ10865
♥ 753		♥ A1098
♦ 532		♦ 4
♣ QJ7		♣ 105
	♠ —	
	♥ K4	
	♦ AKJ876	
	♣ K9862	

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

South plays 6♦; West leads the ♠2.

If declarer puts up dummy's king and East covers, declarer can ruff, draw trumps and play the ♥2 towards the king. East has our familiar dilemma: either he will lose his ♥A or he will set up three discards for the losing clubs. Instead, East should use the waiting move from the last example and refuse to play the ♠A at Trick 1. However, declarer can have the last word by playing the ♠3 from dummy instead of an honor! He ruffs, draws two rounds of trumps ending in dummy and leads the ♥2. East can take it or not, as he pleases. Dummy is re-entered with a third round of trumps and now the ♠K forces out the ♠A at the right time.

Isolation Play

This is a sort of 'reverse hold up' play. It consists of playing a suit belonging to an opponent, whose choice is to continue the suit, thereby establishing a trick for the other side, or to abandon it, losing potential winners. The technique is also used to kill a long suit, usually in dummy.

Isolation play as declarer

	♠ Q6532	
	♥ A4	
	♦ Q65	
	♣ A73	
♠ 94		♠ AKJ87
♥ K97		♥ 852
♦ 9832		♦ J10
♣ J865		♣ 942
	♠ 10	
	♥ QJ1063	
	♦ AK74	
	♣ KQ10	

Jeffrey Isralsky, *The Bridge World*, March 1986.

South plays 3NT, doubled by East; West leads the ♠9, dummy's suit.

East takes Trick 1 with the ♠J and returns the ♦J. Declarer wins in hand and takes a successful heart finesse. However, if he concedes the ♥K now, he will lose a heart and four spades. The solution is to cross to dummy's ♣A and play a spade! The cut-off play works, because either East sets up the ♠Q or he abandons the spades and will not score any more tricks in the suit. It is then time to go after hearts.

Isolation and squeeze

	♠ K7632	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 9743	
♠ 54		♠ AQJ8
♥ QJ1098		♥ 7
♦ 53		♦ K109874
♣ J865		♣ 102
	♠ 109	
	♥ 6432	
	♦ AQJ6	
	♣ AKQ	

Jeffrey Isralsky, *The Bridge World*, March 1986.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer wins in dummy and takes the diamond finesse. He then starts the isolation play by running the ♠10 to East. Declarer wins the club return in hand and cashes a second club before running the ♠9. East cannot cash his ♠A, as that is simply giving up. Instead, he switches to a diamond, giving away a free finesse... but declarer holds up, putting in the ♦6. East still cannot cash his ♠A, so he plays another diamond to the queen. The ♦A now squeezes West in hearts and clubs.

Isolation on defense

	♠ 43	
	♥ AKQJ764	
	♦ 643	
	♣ 2	
♠ A		♠ 62
♥ 85		♥ 109
♦ AQ87		♦ J102
♣ AK9654		♣ QJ10873
	♠ KQJ109875	
	♥ 32	
	♦ K95	
	♣ —	

South plays 4♠.

The isolation play is best known in this type of situation, where it is used to cut communications between declarer and the dummy. West must lead a heart and play another when he gets in with the ♠A while East still has a trump to stop the heart juggernaut.

Partial isolation

	♠ QJ732	
	♥ J102	
	♦ AQ8	
	♣ KJ	
♠ 84		♠ K10965
♥ Q873		♥ A5
♦ 104		♦ 965
♣ A7642		♣ 853
	♠ A	
	♥ K964	
	♦ KJ732	
	♣ Q109	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♣4.

Declarer wins the first trick in dummy with the ♣K, plays to the ♠A, crosses back to the ♦Q and leads the ♠Q, setting up his ninth trick. Italy's Benito Garozzo, sitting East, won with the ♠K and simply played back a diamond, tangling declarer's communications. If declarer takes his ♠J, he will have no time to benefit from the future establishment of a club trick. East will get in with the ♥A and cash spade winners. If declarer does not cash his ♠J, it is lost forever.

Bermuda Bowl, Rio de Janeiro, 1979.

Isolation play to prepare a squeeze

	♠ KQ76	
	♥ 1042	
	♦ AQ96	
	♣ 74	
♠ 1052		♠ J943
♥ AK853		♥ J7
♦ 72		♦ K84
♣ J85		♣ 10932
	♠ A8	
	♥ Q96	
	♦ J1053	
	♣ AKQ6	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥5.

East's ♥J loses to declarer's queen. If declarer tries the diamond finesse, he loses this trick and four heart tricks as well. Instead, he should play back another heart. Either West will cash them all and squeeze his partner or he will cash only three and the contract will still come home.

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Changing tack

Changing tack as declarer

♠ 8542
♥ 9763
♦ 105
♣ A106

♠ KQ1096
♥ Q5
♦ J83
♣ 752

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J3
♥ J1082
♦ K72
♣ Q984

♠ A7
♥ AK4
♦ AQ964
♣ KJ3

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠ K.

East unblocks the ♠J and declarer decides to hold up, but he must take the second spade. In order to attempt a double deference to the ♦K, declarer needs two club entries to dummy. He leads the ♣J, but East refuses to take it! With only one entry to dummy, declarer cashes the ♦A, unblocking the ♦10 to prepare for one deference play, but East imperially unblocks his ♦K. Now declarer changes tack and sets a new course. He cashes his top two hearts and the ♣K and then goes to dummy with a club and... plays a spade. West is endplayed in diamonds.

Changing tack on defense

♠ AKJ865
 ♥ J6
 ♦ 94
 ♣ J73

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 1073
 ♥ AQ3
 ♦ AJ108
 ♣ K104

♠ Q92
 ♥ 754
 ♦ 632
 ♣ Q862

♠ 4
 ♥ K10982
 ♦ KQ75
 ♣ A95

South plays 3NT; West leads the $\clubsuit 2$.

Dummy's ♣J is covered with the king; declarer holds up, and does so again on East's ♣10 continuation. East can see that if he continues to play clubs, he will be squeezed on the run of the spades. He changes tack and plays a spade himself! By doing so, he preserves the ♣4 for a discard and declarer will be squeezed first, because he cannot cash his ♣A before running spades.

Keeping the right card

Keeping an apparently useless, or idle, card for a discard can be of prime importance to a successful defense.

Keep a card for a later force

	♠ A62	
	♥ AJ63	
	♦ Q92	
	♣ K74	
♠ Q74		♠ KJ95
♥ KQ105		♥ 9
♦ 87		♦ 1054
♣ 10852		♣ QJ953
	♠ 1083	
	♥ 9742	
	♦ AKJ63	
	♣ A	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣8.

This is how the play went at a table of world champions: the ♣A, the ♥2 to the ace, the ♣7, ruffed, and a heart towards dummy. West took his queen, while East discarded a useless club. West played a club to dummy's king and declarer continued with the ♦2 to the ace and another heart to West's king.

Ed Manfield, *The Bridge World*, February 1980.

	♠ A62	
	♥ J	
	♦ Q9	
	♣ —	
♠ Q74		♠ KJ9
♥ 10		♥ —
♦ 7		♦ 105
♣ 10		♣ Q
	♠ 108	
	♥ —	
	♦ KJ63	
	♣ —	

The position was now (on the left):

West played another club and dummy discarded a spade. Now the club prematurely discarded by East was missing — there was no card to force dummy to ruff and promote West's trump. East was forced to put declarer back in dummy to draw the last trump and score the rest.

Keep a winning card to avoid a squeeze

	♠ KQ972	
	♥ KQ7	
	♦ 932	
	♣ 65	
♠ 83		♠ 64
♥ J9532		♥ 104
♦ J7		♦ Q10654
♣ A743		♣ Q1092
	♠ AJ105	
	♥ A86	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ KJ8	

Ed Manfield, *The Bridge World*, February 1980.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥3.

The ♥A wins and five rounds of spades follow. If West discards a club and two useless hearts, declarer will cash dummy's top two hearts. East must discard a second club and now declarer will play a club to the jack and ace. Not only does West have no more hearts to cash, but East has been squeezed in the minors: declarer scores either three diamonds or two clubs, depending on East's discard.

Keep a winning card to cash it

	♠ AK4	
	♥ A105	
	♦ AJ63	
	♣ AJ4	
♠ J973		♠ 10
♥ 742		♥ K86
♦ Q102		♦ K9874
♣ K83		♣ Q975
	♠ Q8652	
	♥ QJ93	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 1062	

Ed Manfield, *The Bridge World*, February 1980.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦2.

Declarer wins the ♦A and ruffs a diamond. The ♥Q goes to the king and East returns a trump to the queen. Declarer plays the ♠K and East discards the useless ♦4. Another diamond ruff in hand is followed by three rounds of hearts, the last one ruffed by West and overruffed in dummy. Now the ♦J is led to East's ♦K, ruffed by declarer and overruffed by West. In the three-card ending, each hand has only clubs. West leads the ♣3; East wins the queen, but must play one back, bitterly regretting his earlier diamond discard.

Keeping the right card in a squeeze position
(throw losers, keep winners)

	♠ K4	
	♥ 8742	
	♦ K93	
	♣ Q876	
♠ 865		♠ 93
♥ AK93		♥ 105
♦ Q1075		♦ J842
♣ 43		♣ KJ1095
	♠ AQJ1072	
	♥ QJ6	
	♦ A6	
	♣ A2	

Patrick Jourdain, *The Bridge World*, July 1981.

	♠ —	
	♥ 8	
	♦ K93	
	♣ Q8	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ 9		♥ —
♦ Q1075		♦ J84
♣ 4		♣ KJ10
	♠ 107	
	♥ —	
	♦ A6	
	♣ A2	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥A.

East ruffs the third round of hearts and returns a trump. Declarer draws three rounds. When declarer continues with another spade, West keeps his ♥9 and all of his diamonds, discarding the ‘useless’ ♣3.

This is the position (on the left):

Now on the ♠10, everyone discards a club. Declarer cashes the ♣A and the last trump and West must discard diamonds. East has one easy club discard and then he is squeezed. He lets go the ♣J and declarer comes home with the ♦K, the ♦A and the good ♣2. West had to discard all of his diamonds and keep his two small clubs! A delicious deal.

Keeping a loser as declarer (throw winners, keep losers)

	♠ KQJ	
	♥ Q953	
	♦ 65432	
	♣ 3	
♠ A10975		♠ 86
♥ A2		♥ 74
♦ A		♦ 10987
♣ K9754		♣ J10862
	♠ 432	
	♥ KJ1086	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ AQ	

Patrick Jourdain, *The Bridge World*, December 1999.

South plays 3♥; West leads the ♦A, then the ♠A and the ♠5.

If declarer plays a trump now, West will win it. A spade ruff and a diamond ruff will then put the contract down. However, if declarer plays the ♣A and ♣Q, discarding the master spade from dummy, he makes his contract.

(See ‘Scissors Coup’, p. 191)

Keeping a loser as declarer (throw winners, keep losers)

♠ AKJ109
 ♥ J32
 ♦ 1032
 ♣ 43

♠ —
 ♥ 74
 ♦ K9876
 ♣ KQJ1076

♠ Q876543
 ♥ 109865
 ♦ —
 ♣ 5

♠ 2
 ♥ AKQ
 ♦ AQJ54
 ♣ A982

N
W E
S

Patrick Jourdain, *The Bridge World*, December 1999.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣5 to East's announced minor two-suiter.

Declarer wins the ♣A and then plays the ♥A and ♥K, followed by the ♠A and ♠K discarding the ♥Q. West wins his ♠Q next, but is forced to serve as a stepping stone to dummy. When dummy's winning heart and spades are cashed, declarer discards two clubs and a diamond, while East comes down to a singleton ♣K (the second position on the left):

immaterial

N	
W	E
	S

♠ 9
 ♥ —
 ♦ 1032
 ♣ 4

♠ —
 ♥ —
 ♦ K987
 ♣ K

♠ —
 ♥ —
 ♦ AQJ5
 ♣ 9

At this point, the ♠9 is led from dummy; East discards the ♣K and declarer has to lose a diamond trick. If declarer had kept his ♣2 instead of the ♣9, he could have discarded the ♦5, played a diamond to the queen and returned to dummy with the ♣4 for a second diamond finesse.

Keeping a loser on defense (throw winners, keep losers)

♠ J85
♥ J874
♦ Q10873
♣ A

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 94
♥ 109
♦ A2
♣ 9875432

♠ 1062
♥ AK653
♦ J
♣ KQJ6

Patrick Jourdain, *The Bridge World*, December 1999.

South plays 3♥; West leads the three top spades.

If East discards a club, declarer's only remaining loser is a diamond. However, if East discards his $\spadesuit A$, West can cash the $\spadesuit K$ and lead another diamond for East to ruff, promoting the $\heartsuit Q$.

(See 'Uppercut', p. 207)

	♠ AJ3	
	♥ 852	
	♦ J7	
	♣ K10984	
♠ Q876		♠ —
♥ KJ94		♥ AQ73
♦ 2		♦ Q10643
♣ J753		♣ AQ62
	♠ K109542	
	♥ 106	
	♦ AK985	
	♣ —	

The Bridge World, February 1983.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ 2.

The ♦ J, the ♦ Q and the ♦ A make up the first trick. The ♠ 10 holds and is followed by the ♠ J and the ♠ A. What are East's three discards on the trumps? If he discards two clubs and a heart, he will be endplayed in diamonds for ten tricks — just try it! However, if East discards a club and two hearts, among them the queen and later the ace, he can exit from his hand with the ♥ 3 and declarer will have to give him a second diamond trick.

Sacrifice

Deliberately giving up a trick to gain several could be a good bargain!

Sacrificing to gain entry to dummy

	♠ Q862										
	♥ 75										
	♦ AK42										
	♣ 543										
♠ J5		♠ K1097									
♥ 84		♥ 3									
♦ J976		♦ Q10853									
♣ QJ1092		♣ 876									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A43										
	♥ AKQJ10962										
	♦ —										
	♣ AK										

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣Q.

Declarer wins and should play the ♥6 to gain access to dummy. He will be able to discard two spades on the diamond honors and West can do nothing about it. If he refuses to take his ♥8, then the ♥7 is an entry. If dummy's hearts were ♥54, however, then refusing to take the ♥6 with the ♥8 would deny declarer access to dummy; that would be a defensive sacrifice.

Sacrificing a trump to gain an entry to dummy

	♠ 1075										
	♥ 932										
	♦ QJ1085										
	♣ 76										
♠ J63		♠ 9842									
♥ —		♥ KQJ1087									
♦ AK76432		♦ 9									
♣ J103		♣ 54									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKQ										
	♥ A654										
	♦ —										
	♣ AKQ982										

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer ruffs with the ♣8. The bidding indicated that West had length in diamonds and East in hearts. Declarer draws two rounds of trumps and cashes the ♠A, ♠K and ♠Q. He then throws West in with the carefully preserved ♣2 (even if West unblocks the ♣J and ♣10!) to act as a stepping stone to dummy's diamonds.

Sacrificing a trump to keep control (Coffin Coup)

	♠ KQJ	
	♥ A	
	♦ 75432	
	♣ AKQ7	
♠ 10964		♠ 8
♥ 6		♥ 987543
♦ AKQ1096		♦ J8
♣ 64		♣ J1098
	♠ A7532	
	♥ KQJ102	
	♦ —	
	♣ 532	

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer ruffs, cashes two rounds of trumps and discovers the bad break. He unblocks the ♥A and cashes the ♣AKQ, but West doesn't ruff. The jack of trumps is overtaken with the ace, setting up the adverse ♠10. Now the hearts are ready to run.

(See 'Trump pick-up', p. 197)

Defensive sacrifice to avoid a throw-in

	♠ AK52	
	♥ AKQ9	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ AK5	
♠ QJ98		♠ 107
♥ 432		♥ J1075
♦ Q3		♦ 108754
♣ J987		♣ 42
	♠ 643	
	♥ 86	
	♦ K962	
	♣ Q1063	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥2.

Declarer plays three rounds of clubs, finishing in hand, but the jack does not fall. The diamond finesse succeeds and then the queen drops under the ace. Declarer cashes the ♠AK and the ♥KQ, but East discards the ♥J and ♥10. This sets up the ♥9, but avoids having to give declarer two diamond tricks.

Grosvenor Gambit

This psychological gambit, attributed to the fictional Philip Grosvenor, was described by Frederick Turner in *The Bridge World* in 1973. It is a play that gives an opponent a chance to achieve an impossible result, but he is unlikely to realize he has been offered the chance. The idea is to unsettle and disrupt an opponent when he realizes he has been tricked, even though the final result is often the normal one. This coup can be used in many situations.

Not taking a ruff

♠ 2	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ A	♥ 2	♥ 4									
♦ —	♦ —	♦ KQ									
♣ J8	♣ AK10	♣ Q									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 10										
	♥ —										
	♦ —										
	♣ 632										

South plays a club contract.

West gets in and leads a spade. Dummy discards the losing ♥2... but East does not ruff! On lead with the ♠10, declarer plays a trump and West puts in the ♣8. Declarer knows one opponent is kidding him — if East has no trumps, West should have inserted an honor. Thinking it is more strange not to ruff than not to split trump honors, declarer puts in dummy's ♣10, and the ♣Q scores anyway. Argh! This is more annoying than losing the 'normal' ruff, even if it comes to the same thing.

What do you think North's and South's reactions would be? How will they feel as they play the next deal?

Not inserting a card

♣ J1062	♣ K973	♣ —
	<div></div>	
	♣ AQ854	

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads a small club from hand and West... plays the ♣2. Naturally, declarer puts up dummy's king, and loses a trump anyway. He may be close to a heart attack when East doesn't follow!

Not setting up a card for a discard

	♠ 10954	
	♥ 1076	
	♦ A9652	
	♣ 3	
♠ KJ3		♠ 862
♥ J2		♥ Q84
♦ Q74		♦ K103
♣ QJ972		♣ K1085
	♠ AQ7	
	♥ AK953	
	♦ J8	
	♣ A64	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣2.

The defense can be the victim of a Grosvenor as well when it is executed by a declarer who deliberately puts his contract in danger. After the ♣A and a club ruff, declarer takes a losing spade finesse. West, afraid to play diamonds, leads another club, which dummy ruffs. Two rounds of trumps follow. Now playing ace and another spade will secure a discard for the diamond loser. Instead, however, declarer plays a third round of trumps. East wins this, and believing South originally had

♠ A Q 7 ♥ A K 9 5 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ A 6 4

he dares not touch diamonds. He plays another club and only now does declarer play a spade!

Not holding up a stopper

	♠ J4	
	♥ 105	
	♦ J3	
	♣ KQ109752	
♠ A10865		♠ 973
♥ 73		♥ QJ42
♦ Q876		♦ 10952
♣ 84		♣ AJ
	♠ KQ2	
	♥ AK986	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ 63	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠6.

Normally declarer takes the spade in hand and plays a club towards the king; East holds up his ♣A to kill the suit. Then declarer leads the ♥10 off dummy and will make his contract. However, this particular East takes the ♣A immediately and plays another spade. Of course, declarer tries to finesse against the ♣J — with less than happy results. He goes three down!

Playing on your reputation

	♠ KJ	
	♥ K84	
	♦ K753	
	♣ KJ92	
♠ Q3		♠ 107
♥ 10762		♥ J95
♦ J98		♦ Q1062
♣ 8753		♣ AQ106
	♠ A986542	
	♥ AQ3	
	♦ A4	
	♣ 4	

Frederick Turner, *The Bridge World*, 1973.

South plays 6♠ doubled by East; West leads a club.

East wins the ♣K with the ace and tries to cash his queen, which declarer ruffs. Declarer then plays a trump to the king, followed by the ♠J, on which East plays the ♠10. If South is familiar with East and suspects a Grosvenor (playing the ten from Q-10), he might, just might, be tempted to finesse. This would certainly make the front page of all the bridge magazines. No luck this time!

Discarding a potential trick and scoring it all the same

A Grosvenor can also be used to defeat a cold contract.

	♠ A4	
	♥ A52	
	♦ AKQ83	
	♣ J75	
♠ 876		♠ J102
♥ 109		♥ J863
♦ 106542		♦ J7
♣ 962		♣ AQ104
	♠ KQ953	
	♥ KQ74	
	♦ 9	
	♣ K83	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥10.

Declarer must decide if he can afford to test hearts before playing a club towards his king. He wins the ♥K and plays another to the ace, under which East plays the ♥J — a Grosvenor aimed at persuading declarer that West has the long hearts. Declarer is suspicious when East follows on the third round of hearts, but he plays the ♥Q, going down when he later plays a club towards his king. East takes his ♣A and cashes his good ♥8.

Joke

Sometimes a Grosvenor can be intended purely as a joke.

♣ K2	♣ QJ53		♣ 104
	♣ A9876		

A witty West leads the ♣2 in a club contract. Declarer, concerned that East may have a singleton ♣K, plays low from dummy, and the ♣10 forces his ace. West's king still scores!

Bluff

♣ Q87	♣ K10532		♣ J6
	♣ A94		

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

East is the danger hand. When the ♣2 is led from dummy, East can rise with his ♣J as if he had Q-J-x. Declarer will possibly abandon this promising suit to search for fortune elsewhere, when in fact East had made him a one-trick gift. Such an investment could well bring a healthy return.

Deceptive plays

This is an inexhaustible topic if ever there was one, covered in depth by Hugh Kelsey (*Deceptive Plays in Bridge*), José Le Dentu (*Bridge à la Une*) and Paul Féline (*Tromperie et Tricherie au Bridge*). Let's give some examples — legal ones, of course: deception is lawful; cheating is not. These cunning plays are available to declarer and defenders alike. Other trickeries are more larcenous, from deliberate hesitation all the way up to the infamous [Alcatraz Coup](#), and will justly be punished by the director.

Diverting a defender to another suit

	♠ Q1043	
	♥ J642	
	♦ KQ432	
	♣ —	
♠ 987		♠ K62
♥ K985		♥ A73
♦ A87		♦ J10965
♣ Q94		♣ 52
	♠ AJ5	
	♥ Q10	
	♦ —	
	♣ AKJ108763	

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♦A.

Declarer can count four losers. Instead of ruffing, declarer discards the ♠J! West will surely play a spade now, and the newly created entry to dummy will allow declarer to discard two losing hearts on the diamonds. He can then ruff a heart, cash the ♣A and lead the ♣J from his hand. West might think his partner has the singleton king and withhold his queen, in which case he loses her. That's an overtrick, instead of two down! A good deal of imagination was necessary to think of this coup.

Discarding a card that will be ruffed

	♠ J862	
	♥ 654	
	♦ AK1097	
	♣ 2	
♠ 4		♠ AQ10975
♥ 98732		♥ KQJ
♦ 854		♦ QJ6
♣ 7543		♣ 9
	♠ K3	
	♥ A10	
	♦ 32	
	♣ AKQJ1086	

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠4.

Declarer realizes that the lead is a singleton and discards his ♠K under the ace. East switches to the ♥K, taken with the ace. Declarer runs all of his clubs, keeping dummy's diamonds and discarding all of the spades. East feels squeezed and consequently discards his last spade — now the ♠3 squeezes him for real!

Persuading a defender to continue a well-guarded suit

	♠ Q8	
	♥ K1073	
	♦ K109542	
	♣ 4	
♠ AJ54		♠ K1073
♥ Q85		♥ J942
♦ A		♦ 7
♣ 109765		♣ Q832
	♠ 962	
	♥ A6	
	♦ QJ863	
	♣ AKJ	

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♣10.

The spades are wide open and will certainly be attacked as soon as the defense get the lead with the ♦A. East puts in the ♣Q and declarer plays his jack! Declarer takes the club continuation with the ace and sets up his diamonds. West will surely play another club rather than a spade.

Persuading a defender to continue a well-guarded suit

The theme is the same, but the goal is different.

	♠ K74	
	♥ A987	
	♦ A9743	
	♣ Q	
♠ QJ103		♠ 9865
♥ 4		♥ 53
♦ J106		♦ Q8
♣ 108652		♣ A9743
	♠ A2	
	♥ KQJ1062	
	♦ K52	
	♣ KJ	

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠Q.

There is a loser in each minor. Declarer holds up at Trick 1 and West continues the suit! Declarer can now draw trumps, discard a diamond on the ♠K and then set up the diamonds to discard his two club losers.

Kempson's Coup

♠ 93	♠ AK1074	♠ QJ62
♥ 108752	♥ AQ3	♥ K96
♦ K72	♦ J6	♦ AQ103
♣ 763	♣ KQ4	♣ 92

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 85
♥ J4
♦ 9854
♣ AJ1085

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥5.

The diamonds are wide open and will certainly be attacked as soon as the defense gets the lead with the ♥K... unless declarer puts the ♥Q on the lead, instead of letting it run to the jack.

Encouraging a defender with a false signal

♠ AJ63
♥ 752
♦ AK5
♣ K86

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q10942
♥ Q63
♦ Q43
♣ A2

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K.

Since the spade finesse is going into the wrong hand to protect the ♥Q, declarer should encourage West to continue hearts. For example, if East plays the ♥4 (using standard signals), declarer should play the ♥6, not the ♥3, to encourage West to continue, because he may believe the ♥4 is the beginning of an echo from ♥Q43. This is the kind of small doubt that can be planted profitably in an opponent's mind.

Persuading a defender to give count

	♠ KQ72	
	♥ J8	
	♦ 9743	
	♣ 874	
♠ J84		♠ 1095
♥ 10764		♥ Q9532
♦ K		♦ J85
♣ J10963		♣ Q2
	♠ A63	
	♥ AK	
	♦ AQ1062	
	♣ AK5	

Pierre Saporta, *Bridge Magique, Bridge Logique*.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣J.

Declarer cannot test the spades, because he might need the entries to take two finesses in diamonds. However, if he plays a spade to the king at the second trick, the defenders will probably both give count, since they don't yet know who has the ace. Declarer can then cash the ♠A (just to ascertain that the suit is not 5-1); with four spade tricks assured, he should now safely play the diamonds by playing the ace first. Bingo!

Preventing the defenders from getting a count

	♠ 103	
	♥ 1062	
	♦ KQJ74	
	♣ 864	
♠ 986		♠ QJ72
♥ Q74		♥ J983
♦ 1085		♦ A93
♣ Q1073		♣ 95
	♠ AK54	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ 62	
	♣ AKJ2	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *All You Need To Know About Play*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♣3.

Two tricks are needed from diamonds. If declarer starts with the ♦2, West's ♦5 will give an immediate count and East will duck his ace once. However, if declarer starts with the ♦6, then West's ♦5 cannot be read as easily. He could have ♦52, in which case East must duck another high diamond from dummy. Again, a little doubt that can gain a lot.

Persuading the defenders to play trumps (the phantom ruff)

♠	A10						
♥	K3						
♦	753						
♣	976432						
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr> </table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
♠	53						
♥	AJ10965						
♦	AK2						
♣	A5						

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer has only one problem: finding the queen of trumps. He takes his ♠A and immediately plays the ♠10, as if looking for a spade ruff. The defender who wins this trick will be tempted to play a trump; if he doesn't play one, however, there is a strong chance that he has the ♥Q.

Persuading a defender to ruff

♠	KJ63						
♥	Q74						
♦	A5						
♣	A763						
♠	Q7						
♥	AK109862						
♦	4						
♣	1098						
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr> </table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
♠	84						
♥	J3						
♦	109862						
♣	QJ42						
♠	A10952						
♥	5						
♦	KQJ73						
♣	K5						

Pierre Saporta, *Bridge Magique, Bridge Logique*.

South plays 6♠; West (who has bid hearts) leads the ♥A and ♥K.

Declarer ruffs and could be tempted to finesse East for the ♠Q, since he is known to be short in hearts. However, if declarer crosses to dummy with the ♠K and leads the now good ♥Q, East has to be wide awake and refuse to ruff, since he would never do so holding the ♠Q. If East doesn't ruff, he probably has queen third and it is time to finesse.

Persuading a defender to overruff, giving access to dummy

	♠ K65432	
	♥ 82	
	♦ J10	
	♣ 543	
♠ J9		♠ Q108
♥ 1074		♥ 63
♦ Q986		♦ K7543
♣ QJ109		♣ 876
	♠ A7	
	♥ AKQJ95	
	♦ A2	
	♣ AK2	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♣Q to the ace.

Only the spade suit can be used to discard the losers in the minors, but dummy has only one possible entry, the ♥8. Declarer plays the ♠AK and ruffs a spade with the ♥9, trying to get West to overruff with the ♥10. If he does, declarer will draw trumps with the ♥A and the ♥8, finishing in dummy to run the spades.

Persuading a defender not to cover

	♠ Q106	
	♥ KJ4	
	♦ AJ1032	
	♣ Q6	
♠ A973		♠ K8542
♥ 1085		♥ 6
♦ 97		♦ K865
♣ J1074		♣ 985
	♠ J	
	♥ AQ9732	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ AK32	

Pierre Saporta, *Bridge Logique, Bridge Magique*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♥5.

Declarer wins the ♥K. Should he rely on the diamond finesse alone or hope to discard a diamond on a spade? When he leads the ♠6 from dummy at the second trick, it is almost impossible for East to play the king unless he has both honors (given the lead, he surely has at least one of them). The ♠10 can be set up later via a ruffing finesse and the losing diamond will be discarded. This technique would be the only one available if declarer was also missing the ♦Q.

Letting the defense lose its way

	♠ AQ94	
	♥ K876	
	♦ K5	
	♣ 543	
♠ 1082		♠ K763
♥ A5		♥ 42
♦ A76		♦ Q109832
♣ Q8762		♣ 10
	♠ J5	
	♥ QJ1093	
	♦ J4	
	♣ AKJ9	

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

South plays 4♥; West has bid clubs and leads the ♣2.

Declarer understands that East has a singleton club, so he wins the first trick with the ♣K to hide the ♣J. Now he leads the ♥J for a fake finesse and West does not play his ace. However, he must on the second round. West plays a second club, taken with the jack, to his surprise. Declarer now leads the ♦J; West ducks his ace and the king wins. Now comes the ♠A and the ♠4 from dummy, but East does not play his king. Later, the lead of the ♠Q from dummy will pin the ♠10 and set up a diamond discard. Four trickeries on the same deal!

Persuading a defender to cash out

	♠ 98	
	♥ Q76	
	♦ 32	
	♣ K87654	
♠ AKQ10		♠ 5432
♥ 10542		♥ KJ3
♦ Q76		♦ J954
♣ Q2		♣ 103
	♠ J76	
	♥ A98	
	♦ AK108	
	♣ AJ9	

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠K.

When West continues with the ♠Q, declarer follows with the ♠J to encourage a spade continuation rather than a heart switch. On the fourth spade, he discards the ♣J, unblocking the suit.

Persuading a defender to hold up

	♠ 72	
	♥ Q76	
	♦ 953	
	♣ QJ1085	
♠ A10863		♠ Q94
♥ J842		♥ A93
♦ J7		♦ Q10862
♣ 63		♣ 42
	♠ KJ5	
	♥ K105	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ AK97	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠6.

Declarer wins East's ♠Q with the king and cashes the ♣AK. One heart trick is needed before the spade avalanche. By leading the ♥K, declarer can pretend he has no more clubs and is trying to create an entry to dummy. East might well hold up his ace: time to cash three more clubs.

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

Persuading a defender not to attack another suit

	♠ K8753	
	♥ K104	
	♦ Q65	
	♣ A10	
♠ —		♠ 104
♥ AJ862		♥ Q953
♦ J10972		♦ K843
♣ 754		♣ K62
	♠ AQJ962	
	♥ 7	
	♦ A	
	♣ QJ983	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦J.

Should the club finesse lose, declarer wants the defense to continue diamonds rather than cash the ♥A. Therefore, he plays dummy's ♦Q on the ♦J lead to persuade East that he has a second diamond to lose.

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

Persuading declarer to play a losing suit: Al Capone's Coup

	♠ A86	
	♥ KJ7	
	♦ KQ4	
	♣ Q876	
♠ J107		♠ 432
♥ 9862		♥ 1054
♦ 98762		♦ 53
♣ 3		♣ AKJ42
	♠ KQ95	
	♥ AQ3	
	♦ AJ10	
	♣ 1095	

South plays 4NT; West leads ♦9.

Looking for his tenth trick, declarer ran the ♣10. East (Pierre Albarran) ducked! Declarer, now with dreams of an overtrick, played another club — crash! One down!

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

Persuading declarer to misplace the honors

♣ J3	♣ Q72	♣ A96
	♣ K10854	

Declarer leads the ♣4 to his queen and East holds up his ace. Declarer will most probably finesse the ten on the way back.

Persuading declarer to reject a winning finesse

♠ AQ4	♠ 1086	♠ 532
♥ 97	♥ Q10642	♥ J
♦ QJ108	♦ 743	♦ K962
♣ K972	♣ AQ	♣ J10654
	♠ KJ97	
	♥ AK853	
	♦ A5	
	♣ 83	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦Q.

Declarer wins the ♦A, takes the ace and queen of trumps and runs the ♠8. If West wins with the queen, declarer will certainly take the winning club finesse. If West wins this trick with the ♠A, however, and plays back a club, declarer will rise with the ♣A to take the 'proven' spade finesse. Down he will go.

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

Persuading declarer to take a losing finesse rather than a winning one: Machiavelli's Coup.

♠ KQ10876	♠ 43	♠ J95
♥ 64	♥ AQ1098	♥ KJ5
♦ 753	♦ Q106	♦ J984
♣ 52	♣ QJ10	♣ K76
	♠ A2	
	♥ 732	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ A9843	

South plays 3NT after West has overcalled spades; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer wins with the ace and crosses to dummy with the ♥A for a club finesse. Note that if East throws the ♥K under the ace, declarer will probably trust to a heart finesse rather than the club finesse. After East wins the ♥J, the spade avalanche will put the contract two down, instead of plus one.

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

Persuading declarer to feel secure

	♠ A5	
	♥ 742	
	♦ J642	
	♣ Q853	
♠ KJ9743		♠ 1082
♥ Q8		♥ 95
♦ K1075		♦ 93
♣ 2		♣ AJ10964
	♠ Q6	
	♥ AKJ1063	
	♦ AQ8	
	♣ K7	

South plays 4♥ after West has bid spades and East clubs; West leads the ♣2.

West leads the ♣2 to the ace and ruffs the club return with the ♥Q; now he plays back the ♠3. Declarer, believing West is now void of trumps, wins the ♠A and tries to cash the ♣Q, aiming to discard his losing spade. West ruffs with the ♥8 and cashes his ♠K — curtains!

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Persuading declarer to feel secure

	♠ K7	
	♥ Q104	
	♦ K107642	
	♣ AJ	
♠ J6542		♠ Q98
♥ 986		♥ J3
♦ 3		♦ AQJ85
♣ 9432		♣ 875
	♠ A103	
	♥ AK752	
	♦ 9	
	♣ KQ106	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦3.

East wins with the ace (not the jack) and returns the ♦8. Declarer ruffs low and is duly overruffed.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Persuading declarer to feel secure

	♠ 108	
	♥ 8752	
	♦ K6	
	♣ AQJ83	
♠ QJ64		♠ 32
♥ AKQ1064		♥ 9
♦ 95		♦ 8742
♣ 4		♣ K109752
	♠ AK975	
	♥ J3	
	♦ AQJ103	
	♣ 6	

South plays 4♠ doubled; West leads three top hearts.

Declarer ruffs and cashes the ♠AK, playing for one off; however, West plays his ♠J under the king, a sort of [Grosvenor](#). Declarer now believes it is safe to draw a third round of trumps and loses control when West forces him in hearts. The defense eventually scores two trumps and four hearts.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Persuading declarer to misread the distribution

♠ Q95
 ♥ A
 ♦ K75
 ♣ AQ10752

♠ 762
 ♥ 108753
 ♦ Q962
 ♣ 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K4
 ♥ J962
 ♦ 10843
 ♣ K86

♠ AJ1083
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ J94

Terence Reese and David Bird, *Bridge — Tricks of the Trade*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣3.

Declarer plays dummy's ♣A and East discards the king. Concerned about East's potential club ruff, declarer plays the ace and another trump. Now East takes his ♠K and gives *his partner* a club ruff!

Persuading declarer to ruff high

♠ 63
 ♥ AKJ742
 ♦ 6
 ♣ AJ84

♠ 942
 ♥ Q105
 ♦ Q82
 ♣ 10972

♠ AKQ107
 ♥ 983
 ♦ J9743
 ♣ —

♠ J85
 ♥ 6
 ♦ AK105
 ♣ KQ653

N
W
E
S

South plays $5\clubsuit$; West leads the $\spadesuit AK$.

East fakes an echo in spades to get dummy to ruff high. East then scores a trump trick to defeat the contract.

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

Persuading declarer to miscount a suit

	♠ KJ103	
	♥ Q5	
	♦ A1073	
	♣ 852	
♠ AQ6		♠ 752
♥ J106		♥ K98432
♦ J982		♦ 4
♣ 643		♣ K97
	♠ 984	
	♥ A7	
	♦ KQ65	
	♣ AQJ10	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥J.

The ♥Q, the ♥K and the ♥7 make up the first trick, but declarer must take the second round. Next he plays the ♦K and the ♦Q, on which West plays the jack. This costs nothing, and invites declarer to conclude that diamonds are 2-3 and that he can have three diamond entries to dummy to capture a potential king fourth of clubs on his right. Declarer overtakes the ♦Q with the ♦A, East discarding a club, and declarer sees he has been taken for a ride. Too late! Now there are no more than three tricks in diamonds.

Pretending to be squeezed

	♠ J105	
	♥ 964	
	♦ AQ109	
	♣ J75	
♠ K843		♠ 2
♥ 853		♥ Q72
♦ KJ5		♦ 64
♣ AK6		♣ Q1098432
	♠ AQ976	
	♥ AKJ10	
	♦ 8732	
	♣ —	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣A.

Declarer ruffs, goes to dummy with the ♦Q and runs the ♠J, which holds. Next the ♠5 goes to the queen and king. The ♣K and ♣Q follow, declarer discarding two diamonds to keep trump control. On the fourth club, which dummy can ruff, West ruffs instead of discarding a heart, just as he would if he were trying to keep the ♥Q and two diamonds. Declarer overruffs in dummy and, rather than trying the heart finesse, runs the trumps, trying to squeeze West in the red suits. Unlucky!

Alcatraz Coup

As promised in the introduction to this section, here is the infamous Alcatraz Coup!

♠	—						
♥	—						
♦	—						
♣	AJ10						
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr> </table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
♠	—						
♥	—						
♦	2						
♣	K2						

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

Declarer leads the ♣J from dummy. If East covers, declarer wins the king. If East plays a small club, declarer discards his diamond; if West also follows small, he corrects his revoke by playing his ♣2. If West produces the ♣Q, declarer corrects the revoke by playing the ♣K. Of course, the director will give East-West relief and penalize South.

There is another version of the Alcatraz Coup that can only occur in a money game where honors count. The queen of trumps is missing; there are no clues to its whereabouts, and the finesse can be taken either way. Declarer announces '100 for honors'. If someone protests, the queen is located. However, if a defender calmly writes 100 points on his scorepad whilst looking at the queen, the declarer will take the finesse the wrong way! Trickster tricked!

The Cigarette Coup

♠	9873						
♥	J						
♦	AKQ						
♣	AQ874						
♠	KJ10						
♥	10987						
♦	432						
♣	J102						
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr> </table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
♠	A652						
♥	AKQ6						
♦	J9						
♣	K65						
♠	Q4						
♥	5432						
♦	108765						
♣	93						

Victor Mollo, *Bridge in the Menagerie*.

Another coup of the same kind. The Hideous Hog, partnering the Rueful Rabbit at rubber bridge, plays the beautiful contract of 7♦(!) instead of 7NT. West leads the ♥10. Declarer wins in dummy, plays a spade to the ace and discards dummy's remaining spades on his three heart winners. Now he needs to get three clubs through with no ruff. He therefore takes a pretend finesse against the ♣K, playing the ♣5 to the queen. However, he must prevent West from reaching for the trick, as then the bluff would be exposed. The Hog therefore offers West a cigarette whilst simultaneously trying the 'finesse'. The ♣A and the ♣4 follow, and East (who thinks West has the ♣K) doesn't ruff. The five last tricks are made on a crossruff.

The Ethics Committee will be studying the case!

Creating confusion so something good might happen

	♠ A10754	
	♥ 764	
	♦ 1083	
	♣ 84	
♠ J986		♠ 2
♥ Q2		♥ J10983
♦ 97542		♦ AJ
♣ 95		♣ AK763
	♠ KQ3	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ KQ6	
	♣ QJ102	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥ Q.

Declarer holds up once and then takes the ♥ A. There is no time to set up a club winner, so he will need two tricks from diamonds. Declarer cashes the ♠ K and the ♠ Q; West, knowing his jack is lost anyway, plays it on this trick. Declarer now thinks two dummy entries are available in spades, which will still score five tricks. He overtakes the queen with the ace, but East discards, destroying a contract which was due to succeed because the ♦ J was coming down. A case of giving declarer enough rope to hang himself.

The Coca-Cola Coup

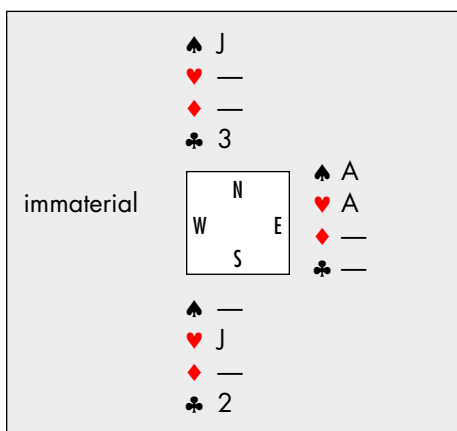
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ 2
♦ —		♦ —
♣ 54		♣ K
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 32	

Conversely, sometimes declarer can get inside the head of a defender. Lee Hazen arrived at this point in a deal. When he played the ♣ 2 towards dummy, he paused to reflect. As he did so, East suddenly ordered a Coca-Cola from a passing waiter. ‘Why should East show such nonchalance? I know West has two clubs and East only one — he must have the singleton king.’ And so it was. Bingo!

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*.

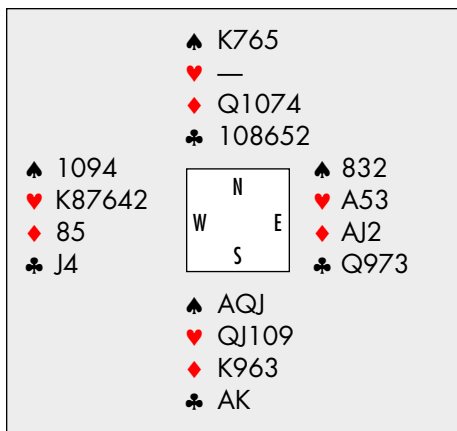
Shell game

The traditional shell game involves a triad of shells, one of which conceals a penny. After showing its location, the trickster then proceeds to slide the shells around in such a complicated manner that by the time they come to a stop, the observer is helpless to point out the location of the hidden penny. Likewise, in a bridge deal, an opponent may lose track of the real situation, i.e. which hand is going to get the lead and therefore what card to keep. Preliminary unblocking and overtaking maneuvers may help to create more confusion, like the movements of the shells.



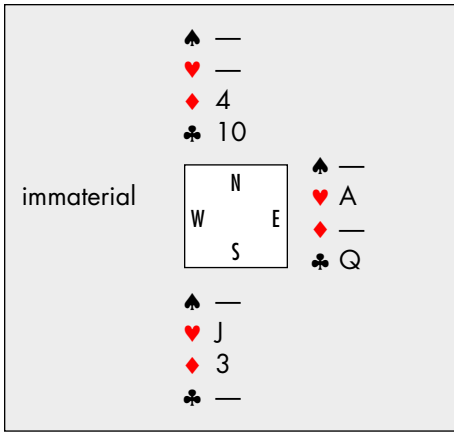
When the ♣3 is played, East might not remember which small club is in the closed hand. He could well discard the wrong ace.

The shell game



South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10 because declarer has shown hearts in response to a Stayman inquiry.

Declarer wins the ♠A and leads the ♥9, which is ducked all around. He then plays the ♦6 to the ten, but the jack wins and East plays another spade to the queen. Declarer leads the ♦K to East's ace, playing the ♦7 from dummy, and East switches to a club to the ace. The ♥Q goes to West's king and he continues with the ♣J.



Declarer wins this, lays down his ♠J, plays the ♦9 to the queen and cashes the ♠K for a heart discard, reaching this position:

When the ♦4 is played. East may discard his good ♣Q if he thinks this trick will be won in the closed hand, giving up an over-trick.

SECTION 3

TECHNIQUES SPECIFIC TO TRUMP CONTRACTS

Trumps are the soul of the game!



Ruffs and underuffs

Playing with a trump suit brings an additional possibility for both sides: the power of ruffing, where any small trump beats even an ace in a side suit. A ruff in the short (trump) hand, which must also be short in another suit, allows declarer to 'lengthen' his trumps, increasing the number of tricks via ruffs. An equal distribution of trumps between the two hands (4-4 being more productive than 5-3) permits trump lengthening in either hand, while losers can be discarded on another long suit (the 5-3 side-suit fit). A ruff in the long trump hand is usually less productive (but see '[Dummy reversal](#)', p. 172). When planning ruffs, you must avoid or try to reduce the risk of an overruff by removing all adverse trumps when possible: by playing some rounds of trumps for partial removal, by ruffing high, or finally by transferring the ruff to another shorter suit (see '[Transferring a ruff](#)', p. 70).

Making two extra tricks

♠	32									
♥	3									
♦	32									
♣	Q103									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠										
♥	A42									
♦										
♣	AKJ54									

Clubs are trumps.

The ♥A and a heart ruff, a club back to hand, followed by another heart ruff, permits declarer to score all the tricks. A two-trick lengthening.

High crossruff

♠ A7	♠ J9										
♥ 9876	♥ KQ2										
♦ K9864	♦ AQJ32										
♣ J8	♣ K65										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 6542										
	♥ AJ1054										
	♦ 10										
	♣ Q97										
	♠ KQ1083										
	♥ 3										
	♦ 75										
	♣ A10432										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥9 to the king and ace.

East returns the ♦10 to dummy's jack. Declarer cashes the ♥Q, discarding his second diamond, and then plays the ♣K, the ♣A and a third club. East wins and plays another heart, which is ruffed. Declarer now leads the ♣10, which is a winner, and ruffs it. He ruffs a diamond back to hand and finally ruffs his last club, losing only the ♠A in the ending.

High crossruff with overruffs

immaterial		♠ —	♠ —
		♥ 432	♥ —
		♦ —	♦ —
		♣ KQ	♣ J9743
		♠ 32	
		♥ —	
		♦ —	
		♣ A108	

Victor Mollo, *Bridge in the Menagerie*.

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer ruffs spades in dummy and ruffs hearts back to hand. East must underuff twice and declarer takes East's other trumps by overruffing on the heart leads.

Ruffing while retaining control

		♠ A642	♠ KJ875
		♥ K52	♥ J98
		♦ 108	♦ J
		♣ 8652	♣ J943
		♠ 9	
		♥ AQ7643	
		♦ AK63	
		♣ AK	

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦ 5.

Declarer wins the opening lead and cashes the ♥A. Guessing the diamond position, he realizes he should go to dummy with the ♠A and lead a diamond through East. East doesn't ruff. Declarer must then ruff a diamond with the ♥K, come back to hand with a club and ruff his last diamond. At this point, he is not afraid of the coming overruff, because it will be with the master trump.

Not drawing all the trumps

		♠ K2	♠ J876
		♥ A432	♥ KJ9
		♦ A32	♦ 876
		♣ K432	♣ J98
		♠ A543	
		♥ 8765	
		♦ K4	
		♣ A65	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦ Q.

Declarer wins the ♦K and ducks a trump (first round). He takes the second diamond with the ace and cashes the ♥A (second round). The ♠K, the ♠A and a spade ruff follow, then the ♣A and another spade ruff. Even if East could overruff, it would be with his natural trump trick.

Avoiding an early ruff

	♠ 64	
	♥ J953	
	♦ KJ62	
	♣ AK3	
♠ KQ105		♠ J983
♥ Q104		♥ 8
♦ 10754		♦ 93
♣ 74		♣ J109652
	♠ A72	
	♥ AK762	
	♦ AQ8	
	♣ Q8	

Robert Berthe, *Pas à Pas*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer wins the ♠A and takes two rounds of trumps, but the queen does not fall. He needs to discard two spades on the minor suits before West can ruff in. It is natural to play clubs first, since they are shorter. However, since declarer needs West to have at least three diamonds, it costs nothing to play on that suit first. When West turns out to have four diamonds, one spade can be safely disposed of before clubs are played — just as well on this layout, where West's club ruff will now come too late.

Ruffing high

	♠ K9	
	♥ A10762	
	♦ K962	
	♣ 53	
♠ 73		♠ J54
♥ KQ9		♥ J543
♦ J73		♦ Q854
♣ QJ986		♣ 74
	♠ AQ10862	
	♥ 8	
	♦ A10	
	♣ AK102	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥K.

The twelfth trick will come from a club ruff. Declarer should play the ♣AK and then ruff a club with the ♠K to avoid an overruff that would be followed by a fatal second trump. Returning to hand with the ♦A, declarer ruffs the ♣10 with the ♠9 — this gets overruffed, but no harm is done now.

Ruffing high twice

	♠ Q98432	
	♥ K5	
	♦ Q63	
	♣ 83	
♠ AJ105		♠ K76
♥ A2		♥ 43
♦ J109		♦ AK874
♣ J964		♣ 1052
	♠ —	
	♥ QJ109876	
	♦ 52	
	♣ AKQ7	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦J.

The ♦J holds and the ♦10 is taken with the king; East continues with the ♦A, which is ruffed. Declarer cashes two top clubs and then ruffs the ♣7 with the ♥K. If declarer plays a trump now, West will take his ace and give East a club ruff. Instead, declarer should come back to hand by ruffing a spade and then ruff his ♣Q with the mighty five of trumps.

Crossruffing — which hand to start with?

♠ KQ2	♠ 97653	♠ J1084
♥ 87	♥ K9652	♥ Q3
♦ Q542	♦ 63	♦ 1097
♣ KJ54	♣ A	♣ 10986
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A	
	♥ AJ104	
	♦ AKJ8	
	♣ Q732	

Mario Cicchelli, *Lo squeeze*.

South plays 7♥; West leads the ♠K

A crossruff can give declarer all thirteen tricks. To achieve that, four spades must be ruffed in the closed hand, two diamonds and three clubs in dummy. Since dummy has more ruffs to make, declarer should start there to avoid an overruff. It is also critical to cash the side honors rapidly. The correct order of play is therefore the ♠A, the ♦AK, diamond ruff (the first ruff), the ♣A, spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, club ruff. Finally, a diamond and a spade are ruffed with the ace and king of trumps, East and West desperately undertruffing twice.

Cashing side winners before the crossruff

♠ 2	♠ QJ76	♠ 543
♥ J987	♥ K654	♥ Q102
♦ KQ53	♦ 4	♦ J109
♣ Q1087	♣ A643	♣ KJ92
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AK1098	
	♥ A3	
	♦ A8762	
	♣ 5	

South plays 7♠; West leads the ♦K to the ace.

Before lengthening the trumps with a crossruff, it is necessary to cash all the side winners that are not needed as entries. So, first play the ♦A, the ♣A, the ♥K and the ♥A. Then take the rest with a crossruff. Without this preliminary play, East will eventually score a trump by ruffing one of the side winners.

Not cashing side winners before the crossruff

	♠ 873	
	♥ —	
	♦ QJ9642	
	♣ AJ53	
♠ 5		♠ J42
♥ 987	N	♥ AK6542
♦ K53	W	♦ A1087
♣ KQ10874	E	♣ —
	S	
	♠ AKQ1096	
	♥ QJ103	
	♦ —	
	♣ 962	

Played in La Grande Motte, December 2004.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥7 after East bid the suit.

If declarer attempts to cash his ♣A after ruffing the opening lead in dummy, he will lose his tenth trick. This time, it is more prudent to execute the red-suit crossruff and then to draw three rounds of trumps before cashing the ♣A. Declarer can see three six-card suits; someone could easily have six clubs, and two voids could announce a third one. Beware: anything and everything can happen at bridge!

Taking a discard before the crossruff

	♠ K7	
	♥ AK1072	
	♦ 63	
	♣ QJ104	
♠ A843		♠ QJ10652
♥ 6	N	♥ QJ9843
♦ Q1087	W	♦ 4
♣ 8762	E	♣ —
	S	
	♠ 9	
	♥ 5	
	♦ AKJ952	
	♣ AK953	

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠A.

Declarer takes the spade continuation with the king. What should he discard from hand? If he throws a diamond, plays the ♣Q and the ♦AK, and then ruffs a diamond, he must attempt to come back to hand with a heart ruff... and West will overruff. Declarer should discard his ♥5, so he can quietly ruff the ♥2 on the first round of the suit without having to cash the ace first.

Underruffing to avoid being in hand

	♦ 2	
	♣ —	
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ KQ10
	♦ —	
	♣ AJ9	

A diamond is led from dummy and East ruffs with the ♣K. Declarer must underruff to score two tricks.

(See ‘Trump coups’, p. 217)

Underruffing

	♠ 10742	
	♥ 7654	
	♦ 3	
	♣ AK83	
♠ QJ93		♠ —
♥ AKJ8		♥ Q93
♦ QJ2		♦ 108765
♣ 104		♣ J9652
	♠ AK865	
	♥ 102	
	♦ AK94	
	♣ Q7	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter la Manche à la Couleur*.

South plays 4♠, doubled by West; West leads the ♥K.

Declarer ruffs the third round of hearts and it is obvious that West has all the missing trumps. Declarer plays a club to the ace, ruffs the fourth heart, cashes the ♦AK and ruffs a diamond. Now he cashes the ♣K, ignoring the queen, and ruffs a club with the ace of trumps. West is forced to under-ruff and now comes declarer's last diamond. West ruffs with the jack and dummy underruffs. West must then play trumps into the North-South tenace.

Protecting the ruff

	♠ 62	
	♥ 75	
	♦ Q10752	
	♣ J975	
♠ K84		♠ 10
♥ AQ82		♥ J1063
♦ 643		♦ KJ98
♣ Q106		♣ 8432
	♠ AQJ9753	
	♥ K94	
	♦ A	
	♣ AK	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦4 to East's ♦8 and the ♦A.

The only way to make ten tricks is to score a heart ruff. To protect this ruff, declarer must start with the ♥K, because 50% of the time West will hold the ace. If trumps are 2-2, West will not be able to lead trumps. Here, West can play trumps once, after winning the ♥A, but not twice if he gets the lead again with the ♥Q. If East wins the second heart, he will have no trumps left. In both cases, the heart ruff is secured.

Protecting the ruff or an honor

	♠ K854	
	♥ AJ832	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ 52	
♠ Q96		♠ AJ107
♥ KQ1074		♥ 96
♦ A853		♦ —
♣ 10		♣ KJ87643
	♠ 32	
	♥ 5	
	♦ KJ97642	
	♣ AQ9	

After a 3♣ bid by East, South plays 3♦; West leads the ♣10.

Declarer wins the ♣Q and wants either to ruff a club in dummy or to score his ♣A. If he tries to cash his ♣A at once, West will ruff and play two rounds of diamonds to remove dummy's trumps. The only solution is to lead the ♣9 to the second trick. If East leads a third club for a ruff, West must either let the ♣A hold or ruff with the ♦A, in which case declarer will score seven diamond tricks. This is a nice safety play.

Ruffing to set up an elimination

	♠ 1052	
	♥ K109654	
	♦ 84	
	♣ Q9	
♠ K76		♠ J
♥ AQ7		♥ J832
♦ Q1072		♦ J93
♣ AJ7		♣ 108432
	♠ AQ9843	
	♥ —	
	♦ AK65	
	♣ K65	

South plays 4♠ after West has opened 1NT; West leads the ♠7.

Declarer takes the ♠J with the queen. He should now play a club (Morton's Fork), eliminate the hearts and ruff diamonds. The play is: the ♣5 to the queen, heart ruff, the ♦AK, diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff and a third heart ruff. Finally, play the ♠A and a spade to throw West in to lead away from the ♣A.

Ruffing losers quickly

	♠ Q93	
	♥ K543	
	♦ 10987	
	♣ K4	
♠ K7		♠ 654
♥ QJ109		♥ 876
♦ Q43		♦ KJ65
♣ 9865		♣ AJ10
	♠ AJ1082	
	♥ A2	
	♦ A2	
	♣ Q732	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer must take care of his losing clubs right away. He wins the ♥K and leads the ♣K, taken with the ace. The trump return is won with the ace (don't even think about finessing!). Now declarer plays the ♣Q, ruffs a club with the ♠9, comes back to the ♥A and ruffs his last club with the ♠Q.

Avoiding an adverse ruff

	♠ 963	
	♥ 8764	
	♦ 852	
	♣ Q103	
♠ 874		♠ 52
♥ 53		♥ QJ1092
♦ 1097643		♦ QJ
♣ 74		♣ AKJ9
	♠ AKQJ10	
	♥ AK	
	♦ AK	
	♣ 8652	

South plays 4♠ (instead of the quiet 3NT) after East's opening 1♥ bid; West leads the ♥5.

Declarer sees he should play to ruff a club in dummy. He plays a club immediately; East wins and returns a trump. If declarer persists with clubs, West will discard his heart on the third round and score a heart ruff. Declarer needs to cash his ♥A before continuing clubs.

The Bridge World, June 1988.

Create a ruffing chance in defense

	♠ AQ5	
	♥ J62	
	♦ A953	
	♣ K105	
♠ KJ9642		♠ 3
♥ 98		♥ A53
♦ K1087		♦ QJ42
♣ 9		♣ A8643
	♠ 1087	
	♥ KQ1074	
	♦ 6	
	♣ QJ72	

Bermuda Bowl Final, Estoril 2005,
USA-Italy.

South plays 4♥; West leads his singleton club.

East takes his ♣A and should not give his partner an immediate ruff. Assured of trump control with his ace, East must first set up his own spade ruff, despite dummy's tenace. He will then rise on the first round of hearts, give West his club ruff and get a spade ruff in return for down one.

The Rule of 9

This rule was described by Bertrand Romanet in *Bridge Total*. Add the number of cards held in a suit between declarer and dummy to the number of the round of the suit which will be ruffed. If the total is 10 or more, an overruff is likely; if it is 9, there is some risk of an overruff; if it is 8 or less, an overruff is unlikely. Romanet defines 'short ruffs' as those totaling 9 or less, while 'long ruffs' come to 10 or more. (So for example with seven cards between the two hands, any ruff from the third round of the suit onward is a long ruff.)

	♠ Q102	
	♥ 6543	
	♦ 32	
	♣ A1032	
	♠ AKJ93	
	♥ A2	
	♦ AK654	
	♣ 2	

South plays 6♠; West leads a club to dummy's ace.

Declarer cashes the ♦AK and ruffs a diamond high with the ♠10, because this is already a long ruff ($7+3 = 10$). He comes back to the ♥A and ruffs the ♦5 with the ♠Q. He draws trumps and cashes the last good diamond.

The power of trumps

A curiosity!

♠ K7
 ♥ 432
 ♦ AK107654
 ♣ 2

♠ QJ98
 ♥ 876
 ♦ J9
 ♣ J1065

♠ 65432
 ♥ J109
 ♦ Q8
 ♣ 987

♠ A10
 ♥ AKQ5
 ♦ 32
 ♣ AKQ43

N
 W E
 S

South plays 6♠ in the 2-2 'fit' (instead of 7NT which has sixteen tricks!); West leads the ♥J.

Declarer can take three hearts, two diamonds, three clubs and score his four trumps with a crossruff, making the ♠ 10 *en passant*.

Transferring a ruff

When ruffing a suit risks being overruffed (Rule of 9), it might be necessary to discard in another suit (loser on loser) to set up a less dangerous ruff.

Transferring a ruff

	♠ 10873	
	♥ A652	
	♦ KJ6	
	♣ 53	
♠ 6		♠ J94
♥ J9		♥ Q10743
♦ 9752		♦ Q108
♣ AKQJ62		♣ 104
	♠ AKQ52	
	♥ K8	
	♦ A43	
	♣ 987	

South plays 4♠; West leads three top clubs.

Even if declarer ruffs the third club with the ♠10, he will be overruffed and lose the ♦Q as well. Instead, he discards a diamond from dummy and East does likewise. Now declarer can quietly ruff a diamond after drawing three rounds of trumps.

Transferring a ruff with suit establishment

	♠ K32	
	♥ K5	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ Q109542	
♠ 87		♠ 654
♥ Q1073		♥ 82
♦ 10962		♦ KJ753
♣ K73		♣ J86
	♠ AQJ109	
	♥ AJ964	
	♦ 84	
	♣ A	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦10.

Of course, West could be underleading the ♦K to talk declarer out of the winning finesse, but there is another option: setting up the hearts. Declarer wins the ♦A, plays the ♥K and ♥A, and then ruffs the ♥4 with the ♠K. He returns to the ♣A and leads the ♥6, discarding the ♦Q on West's ♥Q. The ♦4 can now be ruffed quietly, with no risk of an overruff.

(See 'Loser-on-loser play', p. 184)

♠ A6
♥ J10874
♦ 94
♣ 8432

♠ 8753
♥ AK
♦ Q6
♣ QJ975

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 92
♥ 92
♦ KJ108732
♣ 107

♠ KQJ104
♥ Q653
♦ A5
♣ AK

Andrew Diosy and Linda Lee, *You Have To See This*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦ 9.

Dummy's \spadesuit Q is covered and declarer wins the ace. He cannot play trumps at once due to the diamond loser. Declarer cashes the \clubsuit AK and then crosses to the \heartsuit A to try for a pitch on the \clubsuit Q. If East ruffs, declarer overruffs, goes back to the \heartsuit K and leads the \clubsuit J; again East ruffs and declarer overruffs. He has not been able to take a pitch from the closed hand, but now he can throw dummy's diamond on the \heartsuit Q, since East has no more trumps. East should not have ruffed in on the \clubsuit Q. He should have discarded his second heart instead, transferring his own ruff. Declarer would still get his diamond pitch, but now West can win the first spade and give his partner a heart ruff.

Dummy reversal

This technique involves making extra tricks out of the long trump hand, usually declarer's. Though quite simple in principle, it is often overlooked by a declarer too busy counting dummy's potential ruffs.

Double dummy reversal

	♠ AKQ4	
	♥ 43	
	♦ A32	
	♣ A543	
♠ —		♠ 10982
♥ KQJ98		♥ 10765
♦ J1076		♦ 98
♣ 10987		♣ QJ6
	♠ J7653	
	♥ A2	
	♦ KQ54	
	♣ K2	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥K to the ace.

The ♠A reveals the bad break. However, ruffing two clubs in the closed hand is enough to lengthen the trumps by one trick. Total: 4 trumps in dummy + 2 ruffs + 6 other tricks.

Triple dummy reversal

	♠ QJ9	
	♥ A42	
	♦ 432	
	♣ A432	
♠ 87		♠ 654
♥ J1098		♥ Q76
♦ J1098		♦ 76
♣ K107		♣ QJ965
	♠ AK1032	
	♥ K53	
	♦ AKQ5	
	♣ 8	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥J to the king.

Declarer plays the ♣A and ruffs a club high. Now comes a trump to the ♠9 and a second club ruffed high, a spade to the jack and the last club ruffed high. The ♥A, preserved at Trick 1, is an entry to dummy to draw the last trump. Total: 3 trumps in dummy + 3 ruffs + 6 other tricks.

Quintuple dummy reversal

	♠ AK3	
	♥ 98	
	♦ 97652	
	♣ AK6	
♠ 98		♠ Q1052
♥ J765		♥ 42
♦ AK3		♦ QJ1084
♣ Q1097		♣ 43
	♠ J764	
	♥ AKQ103	
	♦ —	
	♣ J852	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A, ruffed by declarer.

The four black-suit entries to dummy permit ruffing five diamonds in the closed hand, after which the ♥98 will score a trick against the jack. Declarer must not draw even a single round of trumps before taking the ruffs. This line will succeed even if diamonds are 6-2, as long as the short hand does not also have a doubleton in a black suit (unless declarer guesses to use both entries in that suit right away). Total: 1 trump in dummy + 5 ruffs + 4 other tricks.

A non-material dummy reversal

	♠ 9643	
	♥ Q106	
	♦ 652	
	♣ AJ8	
♠ KQJ1075		♠ 2
♥ 94		♥ K87532
♦ J9		♦ 10873
♣ 753		♣ 62
	♠ A8	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ KQ1094	

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠K to the ace.

Declarer returns a spade and West switches to a trump, won with dummy's ♣8. The ♥Q scores the next trick and then declarer ruffs a spade, goes back to dummy with a trump and ruffs the last spade. He cashes the ♥A ([Vienna Coup](#)) and plays his last trump to dummy's ace, squeezing East in the red suits. The dummy reversal itself brought no additional tricks, but it served to adjust the trump distribution so that the last round could be won in dummy, permitting the squeeze to work.

Assisted dummy reversal

	♠ K109	
	♥ 9642	
	♦ Q73	
	♣ Q72	
♠ 842		♠ 76
♥ QJ1073		♥ K85
♦ A104		♦ KJ96
♣ 94		♣ J1086
	♠ AQJ53	
	♥ A	
	♦ 852	
	♣ AK53	

Victor Mollo and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥ Q.

Declarer can score ten tricks by ruffing three hearts in hand, but he is one dummy entry short for this line of play. If he exits with a diamond at Trick 2, however, I bet East will return a heart, making up for the missing entry.

Defending against the dummy reversal

	♠ AQ5	
	♥ J82	
	♦ 10752	
	♣ Q106	
♠ 92		♠ 764
♥ A106		♥ K943
♦ QJ96		♦ AK43
♣ 8742		♣ 95
	♠ KJ1083	
	♥ Q75	
	♦ 8	
	♣ AKJ3	

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Defense at Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ Q.

West's ♦ Q holds the trick, telling him that declarer does not have the king and probably not the ace either. It might be dangerous to continue with a diamond and help declarer to realize a dummy reversal. Since the defense has no intention of playing hearts, the best continuation is a trump.

Ruff and sluff (ruff and discard)

This play allows declarer to ruff in one hand whilst discarding a loser from the other hand. It is often considered by the defenders to be the worst of all concessions. Sometimes, however, it can be a lesser evil, or even a very good play.

Ruff and sluff

	♠ AQ62	
	♥ A43	
	♦ A2	
	♣ A1043	
♠ 7		♠ J1098
♥ KQJ10987	N	♥ 6
♦ Q983	W	♦ KJ10654
♣ 5	S	♣ 76
	♠ K543	
	♥ 52	
	♦ 7	
	♣ KQJ982	

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥K to the ace.

Declarer draws trumps and when West shows out on the second spade, he eliminates diamonds by ruffing. Now he plays four rounds of spades, throwing East in and forcing him to concede a ruff and sluff. The losing heart evaporates.

Giving a ruff and sluff to set up a suit

	♠ K1093	
	♥ AK73	
	♦ KJ7	
	♣ A9	
♠ 87		♠ AQ6
♥ 1052	N	♥ 64
♦ 8543	W	♦ A109
♣ J1053	S	♣ KQ862
	♠ J542	
	♥ QJ98	
	♦ Q62	
	♣ 74	

South plays 3♥ on the unfortunate lead of the ♣J.

Declarer wins the ♣A, draws trumps in three rounds and then plays the ♠2 to the ♠9 and the ♠Q. The only winning return for the defense is to play clubs, twice, giving a ruff and sluff, but forcing declarer to ruff. East plays another club after taking the ♠A, removing the last trump while the ♦A is still a defensive asset. East will finish by cashing a painfully established club.

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

Free ruff and sluff

	♠ Q1064	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ A2	
	♣ K864	
♠ 83		♠ 75
♥ QJ1083		♥ 76
♦ K105		♦ Q987643
♣ Q93		♣ 102
	♠ AKJ92	
	♥ 942	
	♦ J	
	♣ AJ75	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *All You Need to Know About Play*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer wins and draws two rounds of trumps. He then eliminates the diamonds by ruffing and plays ace and another heart. West is on lead and must play a red suit, conceding a ruff and sluff, because one club discard is not enough for the declarer. On the other hand, a club return would be fatal.

Advantageous ruff and sluff

	♠ J82	
	♥ AK95	
	♦ A1097	
	♣ A8	
♠ 95		♠ A10764
♥ 864		♥ 102
♦ 53		♦ KQ6
♣ 1097654		♣ KQ3
	♠ KQ3	
	♥ QJ73	
	♦ J842	
	♣ J2	

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠9.

East wins the ace and plays a spade back. To prevent a spade ruff, declarer draws three rounds of trumps and then cashes his spade winner. Now he plays ace and another club, which goes to the king. East knows the count of the hands and instead of returning a diamond, a fatal move, he plays a black suit, conceding a ruff and discard. He will do it again when on lead with the ♦Q and will eventually score his ♦K.

Tempting ruff and sluff

	♠ A98	
	♥ QJ76	
	♦ K82	
	♣ 982	
♠ 6		♠ Q542
♥ 105432	W	♥ K8
♦ Q963	E	♦ 754
♣ J54	S	♣ AKQ3
	♠ KJ1073	
	♥ A9	
	♦ AJ10	
	♣ 1076	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 4♠ after East has opened 1♣; West leads a club.

Three rounds of clubs are cashed and East should play a fourth round to try to get declarer to take a red-suit discard from hand while ruffing in dummy, protecting his ♠Q. Any other return is immediately fatal. Declarer should ruff with the ♠10 in hand, refusing the poisoned gift, although then he still needs to find the ♦Q.

Refusing a ruff and sluff to set up a crossruff

	♠ 65	
	♥ 65	
	♦ —	
	♣ A2	
♠ —		
♥ —	W	immaterial
♦ J109876	E	
♣ —	S	
	♠ 43	
	♥ 43	
	♦ —	
	♣ K3	

Clubs are trumps.

When West plays the ♦J, conceding a ruff and sluff, declarer discards a spade from dummy and a heart from his hand. The second round of diamonds allows him to repeat the maneuver and realize the last four tricks on a crossruff, taking two extra tricks.

Double ruff and discard with a sacrifice

♠ J9873
♥ K
♦ 872
♣ A842

♠ 6
♥ 32
♦ KQJ109
♣ KQJ109

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 54
♥ QJ10987654
♦ 5
♣ 5

♠ AKQ102
♥ A
♦ A643
♣ 763

Chris Ackerley, *The Bridging of Troy*.

South plays 4♠ after East's bid of 4♥; West leads a heart.

Declarer takes the heart lead, cashes the ♠A, playing the ♠7 from dummy, and lays down the ♣A and the ♦A. Now comes the ♠2 to dummy's ♠3 and East's ♠4! East is obliged to give a double discard, allowing declarer to discard two clubs from hand and two diamonds from dummy before starting the final crossruff.

Triple ruff and sluff

	♠ J9432	
	♥ —	
	♦ A432	
	♣ 5432	
♠ 108	<div></div>	♠ K7
♥ KQJ10987654		♥ 2
♦ —		♦ KQJ1098
♣ Q		♣ KJ109
	♠ AQ65	
	♥ A3	
	♦ 765	
	♣ A876	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

South plays 4♠ after West bids 4♥; West leads the ♥K.

This is a true curiosity. Declarer ruffs in dummy and discards the ♥A! Now he draws trumps with the help of a finesse, cashes the ♣A and throws West in with a heart, discarding a diamond from dummy. West, perforce, must lead hearts; dummy discards two diamonds and declarer two clubs. Now dummy ruffs the next heart as declarer pitches his last club. East by now is down to three clubs and three diamonds and must also find a discard; declarer sets up an extra trick by ruffing in whichever suit East discards.

(See Section 7, ‘Trump Squeezes’)

Jettison a high card to allow a throw-in for ruffs and sluffs

Another deal of the same kind.

	♠ A9532	
	♥ K3	
	♦ A43	
	♣ K86	
♠ 10		♠ 64
♥ QJ10987654		♥ —
♦ J		♦ KQ10987
♣ 109		♣ QJ543
	♠ KQJ87	
	♥ A2	
	♦ 652	
	♣ A72	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥Q.

East ruffs dummy's ♥K — what card should declarer play from hand? In fact, he must jettison the ace and keep the two, the saving card! After cashing the ♦A, two trumps and the ♣AK, he throws West in with the ♥2 and benefits from a double ruff and sluff.

Defending against ruffs

As we have seen, declarer has good techniques available, but the defenders are not without resources either.

Attacking declarer's ruffs (trump hold up)

	♠ 32	
	♥ 42	
	♦ —	
	♣ 9654	
♠ A		♠ KQJ
♥ J1098		♥ K73
♦ —		♦ —
♣ A87		♣ 102
	♠ —	
	♥ AQ65	
	♦ —	
	♣ KQJ3	

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer plays a heart to the queen and leads the ♣K. West should hold up the ♣A, after which only one heart can be ruffed in dummy. Declarer needs to remove East's ♣10, but when he plays a second trump, West will win and play a third round.

Underruffing to maintain side-suit length

	♠ 95	
	♥ 72	
	♦ AK1096	
	♣ J1094	
♠ 1064		♠ QJ73
♥ AKJ954		♥ 103
♦ 42		♦ QJ83
♣ Q7		♣ 652
	♠ AK82	
	♥ Q86	
	♦ 75	
	♣ AK83	

South plays 5♣; West plays three rounds of hearts.

When declarer ruffs with the ♣J, East should underruff to maintain his spade and diamond length (see 'Waiting move', p. 182). The lack of an overruff marks the position of the ♣Q: declarer draws two rounds of trumps, but he cannot then establish an extra trick in either spades or diamonds.

Underruffing to avoid being thrown in

♠ —

♥ —

♦ 86542

♣ —

♠ Q

♥ —

♦ —

♣ J432

N

W E

S

♠ A1098

♥ —

♦ 7

♣ —

♠ K

♥ —

♦ —

♣ AKQ10

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer ruffs a diamond with the ♣A, West should underruff to keep a spade; the defense can then score two tricks. Otherwise, he would have to ruff the spade exit and play a club into the trump tenace.

Removing the ruffs

♠ KJ95

♥ 64

♦ 7

♣ J86432

♠ —

♥ KJ985

♦ J10862

♣ AQ5

N

W E

S

♠ Q106

♥ Q1032

♦ K54

♣ K109

♠ A87432

♥ A7

♦ AQ93

♣ 7

South plays 5♠ after East-West competed in hearts to the five-level; West leads a heart.

Declarer wins the ♥A and plays a small spade, discovering the bad break. A diamond finesse wins and the ♦A provides a heart discard. Now declarer exits with a club to East's ♣9. East must underlead his ♠Q, a sacrifice that removes one of the three ruffs in dummy. If declarer tries to ruff twice in dummy, East will still make his ♠Q. If declarer favors drawing trumps instead, he will score, in the end, only one ruff in dummy.

Waiting move

The waiting move was described by Terence Reese in *The Expert Game*. We have seen examples earlier in the book — in the sections on [Morton's Fork](#), suit establishment and defending against ruffs — but the technique has a more general application. It is very much used in chess, and more rarely seen at bridge where, since it involves a ruff, it comes up only in trump contracts.

Waiting for information

	♠ AK53	
	♥ AQ108	
	♦ 94	
	♣ Q63	
♠ J		♠ Q1097
♥ 74		♥ 95
♦ K10863		♦ J752
♣ AK974		♣ 1082
	♠ 8642	
	♥ KJ632	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ J5	

South plays 4♥ after West has shown length in the minors; West leads the ♣A.

West continues with the ♣K and the ♣4. If declarer discards his losing diamond, he will lose two spades. Instead, he must discard a spade, hoping to set up the fourth spade in dummy so as to discard his diamond later. When the spades turn out to split badly when he cashes the ace and king, declarer can then change his tack and play the ♦A and ♦Q, throwing West in to give him a ruff and sluff.

Waiting to execute a counter-attack

	♠ Q107532	
	♥ K94	
	♦ A93	
	♣ A	
♠ KJ		♠ —
♥ Q107		♥ 532
♦ Q108		♦ 742
♣ QJ1064		♣ K987532
	♠ A9864	
	♥ AJ86	
	♦ KJ65	
	♣ —	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣Q.

Declarer can work out that a red-suit discard will be of no use, so he ruffs his own ♣A. Now the ace and another spade throws West in, forcing him to concede a free finesse or a ruff and discard. Whichever he chooses, declarer can set up one red suit for a discard in the other.

Waiting to set up a squeeze

	♠ AJ4	
	♥ KQ74	
	♦ AK84	
	♣ J2	
♠ KQ10973		♠ 8652
♥ 92		♥ 6
♦ 7		♦ 10953
♣ A1085		♣ Q976
	♠ —	
	♥ AJ10853	
	♦ QJ62	
	♣ K43	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer should withhold his ♠A to preserve a tenace — a kind of [Bath Coup](#). He ruffs the spade and plays off all of his trumps and four diamonds, finishing in dummy. West is squeezed: he must bare his ♣A and is now thrown in with it, giving declarer the last two spades.

Loser-on-loser play

This technique is nicely described in *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* from which our first few examples are drawn. The technique consists of discarding one losing card on a loser in another suit. It is mainly used in trump contracts. (See also 'Winner-on-loser play', p.189)

Loser-on-loser play to allow a safe ruff — transferring a ruff

	♠ 765										
	♥ AJ432										
	♦ 43										
	♣ A32										
♠ 42		♠ 83									
♥ Q9		♥ K10876									
♦ KQJ987		♦ A5									
♣ Q106	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♣ J987
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKQJ109										
	♥ 5										
	♦ 1062										
	♣ K54										

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

East overtakes with the ♦A and the defense continues with a third round. Obviously, the danger is that East will overruff dummy. Instead of ruffing the third diamond, declarer discards a club, a loser-on-loser play that transfers the ruff. He can later quietly ruff the third round of clubs.

(See 'Transferring a ruff', p. 170)

Loser-on-loser play to create a safe entry

	♠ 6542	
	♥ A4	
	♦ 54	
	♣ A9653	
♠ AK10		♠ QJ98
♥ Q8		♥ J53
♦ Q10763		♦ J98
♣ KJ10		♣ Q87

South plays 3♥; West leads the ♠A, the ♠K and the ♠10.

Declarer ruffs and plays three rounds of diamonds, the last one ruffed in dummy. He then plays the ♥A. If he plays the ace and another club now, East wins it and plays a spade; now the ♥Q and ♥J will both score. Instead, declarer should play the ♣A and then lead the ♠6, on which he can discard his last club. Only one trump will now be lost.

Loser-on-loser play to prevent a trump promotion

♠ —
♥ AKQ3
♦ 106542
♣ J765

♠ J3
♥ J54
♦ KQJ3
♣ K1043

N

W

E

S

♠ A542
♥ 10876
♦ 98
♣ A98

♠ KQ109876
♥ 92
♦ A7
♣ Q2

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer wins and plays three rounds of hearts to discard his diamond loser. However, he must play the fourth heart immediately, discarding a losing club; otherwise, the defense will score two clubs and two trumps.

Loser-on-loser play to keep the danger hand off lead

♠ KJ
♥ AK3
♦ A7632
♣ J103

♠ A653
♥ —
♦ J1098
♣ AKQ76

N

W

E

S

♠ 7
♥ J1098765
♦ KQ
♣ 854

♠ Q109842
♥ Q42
♦ 54
♣ 92

South plays 3♠; West leads the ♣K.

West continues with the ♣A and ♣Q. Instead of ruffing, declarer should discard his losing diamond. This prevents East from getting the lead in diamonds to give West a heart ruff.

(See ‘Avoidance play’, p. 115)

Loser-on-loser play to set up a trick

♠ 543
♥ KQ2
♦ 8753
♣ QJ4

♠ AKJ
♥ —
♦ A4
♣ AK1098732

N

W

E

S

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer wins the ♦A, plays two rounds of clubs ending in dummy and leads the ♥K. If it is covered, declarer ruffs; otherwise, he discards a diamond. Either way, the losing spade will be discarded on the ♥Q.

Loser-on-loser play to establish a suit safely

♠ 10	♠ KQJ	♠ 98
♥ AK1076	♥ J94	♥ Q853
♦ 109	♦ A8765	♦ QJ3
♣ AQ976	♣ 84	♣ J1053
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ A765432	
	♥ 2	
	♦ K42	
	♣ K2	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K and switches to a trump.

Declarer wants to protect his ♣K, so he wins the ♠K and leads the ♥J; East covers and declarer ruffs. He goes back to dummy and tries the ♥9; when East cannot cover, declarer discards the ♦2. He can then set up his diamonds without letting East gain the lead.

Loser-on-loser play to avoid being forced

♠ AKQJ	♠ 1043	
♥ AKQJ	♥ 432	
♦	♦ 654	
♣	♣ Q1076	
	W N E	immaterial
	S	
	♠ AKQJ	
	♥ 5	
	♦ A73	
	♣ AKJ94	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥A and ♥K.

Declarer cannot afford to be forced, so he discards a diamond from hand and then another diamond on the third round of hearts. Dummy's ♠10 will protect against a fourth round of hearts.

(See 'Duck to retain a watchdog', p. 103)

Loser-on-loser play to execute a throw-in

♠ A9	♠ KJ865	♠ 2
♥ KQ109	♥ A2	♥ J87653
♦ J1087	♦ 43	♦ 652
♣ AQ8	♣ 7632	♣ J109
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ Q10743	
	♥ 4	
	♦ AKQ9	
	♣ K54	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K.

Declarer wins the ♥A and ruffs a heart before playing trumps. West wins the first round and exits with a trump. Declarer cashes three rounds of diamonds, but the jack fails to appear. Instead of ruffing his losing diamond, he gives it to West, discarding a club from dummy: West must give him a trick with the ♣K.

Loser-on-loser play to leave an opponent on lead

	♠ 109653	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ A75	
	♣ A65	
♠ J87		♠ —
♥ KQ107652	N	♥ 98
♦ J10	W	♦ Q9864
♣ 4	S	♣ KQJ987
	♠ AKQ42	
	♥ 43	
	♦ K32	
	♣ 1032	

South plays 4♠ after West opened 3♥; West leads the ♥K.

Declarer wins the ♥A and draws three rounds of trumps. Placing West with seven hearts from the bidding, declarer now cashes two rounds of diamonds and the ♣A. He exits with the ♥J. On the next heart, declarer discards a diamond from one hand and a club from the other. Now the fourth round of hearts concedes a ruff and discard.

Loser-on-loser play to rectify the count

	♠ AK3	
	♥ 8654	
	♦ Q32	
	♣ 543	
♠ Q1076		♠ J98
♥ 7	N	♥ 3
♦ AK109764	W	♦ J85
♣ 6	S	♣ QJ10982
	♠ 542	
	♥ AKQJ1092	
	♦ —	
	♣ AK7	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer refuses to ruff the first diamond and instead discards a spade to rectify the count. Now a double squeeze materializes.

Loser-on-loser play to avoid a trump promotion

	♠ 10652	
	♥ AQJ4	
	♦ 4	
	♣ J763	
♠ AJ		♠ K7
♥ K852	N	♥ 963
♦ 10975	W	♦ Q863
♣ AQ10	S	♣ 8542
	♠ Q9843	
	♥ 107	
	♦ AKJ2	
	♣ K9	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦10.

Declarer takes East's ♦Q with the king and runs the ♥10. A second finesse follows and a club is thrown on the ♥A. If declarer leads a trump now, West will win, cash his ♣A and play a fourth round of hearts, allowing the defense's trumps to score separately. Declarer should play a fourth round of hearts himself, discarding his last club.

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

Loser-on-loser to obtain a free finesse

♠ QJ10	♠ K32	♠ 9
♥ Q108	♥ A53	♥ 976
♦ K97532	♦ AQ	♦ 10864
♣ 10	♣ KQ643	♣ J9875
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A87654	
	♥ KJ42	
	♦ J	
	♣ A2	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer takes the ♠K and ♠A. He then plays the ♣A and leads a club towards the dummy, West discarding. At this stage, the best continuation is the ♣Q, discarding the ♦J from hand. If West ruffs in, he will have to concede a free finesse in one of the red suits. Keeping the ♦J risks making a losing choice of finesses if East has both red-suit honors.

Which loser to discard?

♠ 1042	♠ 65	♠ J9
♥ KQJ72	♥ 9653	♥ A8
♦ 106	♦ 98754	♦ QJ3
♣ AQ6	♣ J8	♣ 1097542
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AKQ873	
	♥ 104	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ K3	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 2♠; West leads the ♥K.

East overtakes the ♥K, returns a heart and ruffs the third round with the ♠9 (uppercut). Of course, declarer should not overruff, but discard a loser — but which one? If he discards the ♦2, East can play a club through; West will cash two clubs and lead the ♥7 for another uppercut with the ♠J. Since declarer has no more losers to discard, he will have to overruff and concede a trump trick. Instead of a diamond, therefore, declarer must discard a club on the third heart. West will be able to cash only one club before giving the second uppercut, but declarer will have a diamond loser available to discard on this trick.

Maneuvers with winners

Now that you know all about discarding losers, let's talk about discarding winners! This is certainly less common and much more fun.

Which winner to cash?

♠ KQ105	♠ 64	♠ J983									
♥ Q104	♥ J953	♥ 8									
♦ 10754	♦ KJ62	♦ 93									
♣ 74	♣ AK3	♣ J109652									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A72										
	♥ AK762										
	♦ AQ8										
	♣ Q8										

José Le Dentu and Robert Berthe, *Mesurez-vous aux Champions*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer takes the ♠A and cashes the ♥AK, but the queen does not drop. Declarer's two spades should be discarded on the minor-suit winners, but in what order? If he errs, West will ruff in and cash a spade. Since declarer needs West to have at least three diamonds, he should begin by cashing three rounds of the suit. If East follows three times, he now takes three rounds of clubs and then discards the last spade on the fourth diamond. If East follows only twice, a fourth round of diamonds should be played before the three clubs.

Winner-on-loser play

♠ KQ109874	♠ J32	♠ 65									
♥ 876	♥ AKQ	♥ 3									
♦ 74	♦ J1065	♦ 9832									
♣ 8	♣ 652	♣ KQJ1073									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A										
	♥ J109542										
	♦ AKQ										
	♣ A94										

South plays 6♥ after East bid clubs and West spades; West leads the ♣8 to South's ace.

If declarer cashes three rounds of trumps, the diamonds are blocked. If he cashes three diamonds first, West will ruff in and declarer still has to lose a club, because there is only one diamond winner left. Instead, he should draw one round of trumps and then play two rounds of diamonds. Now he crosses to dummy with a trump and leads the ♠J, on which he discards the blocking ♦Q. He can ruff the spade return and go back to dummy with the ♥Q. A rare tactic, here serving both to unblock a suit and keep the control.

(See 'Morton's Fork', p. 122 and 'Strategies in trump contracts', p. 44)

Winner-on-winner play

♠ KJ4
 ♥ Q10962
 ♦ A
 ♣ AJ104

♠ 652
 ♥ 4
 ♦ QJ1086
 ♣ 8532

♠ AQ10763
 ♥ J8753
 ♦ 72
 ♣ —

♠ 9
 ♥ AK
 ♦ K9543
 ♣ KQ976

N
 W E
 S

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠A.

West continues with a heart to the ace. The ♣A reveals the bad break and declarer should try a crossruff. He plays the ♠K first and discards the ♥K. He then cashes the ♦A and plays the ♥Q, no longer caring whether East ruffs in.

Terence Reese, *The Expert Game*.

Scissors Coup (Coup without a name)

In a trump contract, it is helpful to sever enemy lines of communication before they can be used; usually this enables declarer to avoid a later ruff. Often this coup will involve a loser-on-loser play.

Scissors Coup

	♠ AQ742	
	♥ K1076	
	♦ J83	
	♣ 9	
♠ 10953		♠ K86
♥ A8		♥ 5
♦ KQ		♦ 9752
♣ K10762		♣ AQJ43
	♠ J	
	♥ QJ9432	
	♦ A1064	
	♣ 85	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦K.

If declarer plays a trump, West will win, cash his ♦Q and play a club to East to get a diamond ruff. Instead, declarer must start by cutting the club communication, playing the suit himself at Trick 2.

Gilles Quéran, deal from the Masters Roy René simultaneous event.

Scissors Coup with a loser-on-loser play

	♠ A10	
	♥ J963	
	♦ J3	
	♣ KQ1085	
♠ 8432		♠ QJ76
♥ 75		♥ A8
♦ Q97		♦ AK10852
♣ 9762		♣ 4
	♠ K95	
	♥ KQ1042	
	♦ 64	
	♣ AJ3	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦7.

After East wins the ♦K and returns the ♣4, declarer cannot play trumps without having a club ruffed. Unfortunately, he cannot cut communications in diamonds by playing the suit, as that would result in an immediate club ruff. Instead, he should play the ♠A, the ♠K and the ♠9, discarding the diamond from dummy. The communications are severed and declarer can safely play trumps. If West can cover the ♠9, declarer has to ruff in dummy and hope West has no entry. Failing that, he should go down with dignity.

Scissors Coup in time or space

	♠ KQ763	
	♥ A	
	♦ 10	
	♣ AK8632	
♠ 8542		♠ AJ9
♥ K103		♥ 4
♦ 93		♦ AJ876542
♣ Q1075		♣ J
	♠ 10	
	♥ QJ987652	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ 94	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 4♥ after East has bid diamonds; West leads the ♦ 9.

Declarer wins the second diamond. One possibility is to play a spade to sever the communications between the opponents. The third round of diamonds can be ruffed with the ♥ 5, with the ♥ A acting as a watchdog — only one trump will be lost. It is a Scissors Coup in time. Alternatively, declarer can cash the ♥ A and then play the ♣ A, the ♣ K and the ♣ 8, discarding his losing spade, a loser-on-loser Scissors Coup in space.

Defense against the Scissors Coup

	♠ AJ432	
	♥ 6	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 1098754	
♠ 5		♠ K6
♥ KQJ74		♥ A103
♦ K932		♦ QJ108
♣ K32		♣ AQJ6
	♠ Q10987	
	♥ 9852	
	♦ A764	
	♣ —	

Robert King and Philip King, *The Hog in the 21st Century*.

South plays 4♠ doubled, a 'sacrifice' against 4♥; West leads his trump.

Declarer wins the ♠ A and plays a diamond to his ace. Even though the lead has removed one ruff, there are still enough tricks if East cannot get the lead to play a second spade. When, on successive diamond leads, the ♦ K appears from West, the ♥ 6 can be thrown from dummy and East cannot get in. Declarer will scramble home with ten tricks, unless... West discards his ♦ K under the ace at Trick 2!

Keeping trump control; forcing leads

One side tries to make the other side lose trump control. The tools of resistance are: refusing to ruff while discarding a loser or even a winner; using a secondary suit for trump pick-up; the duck in trumps; and the watchdog.

Retaining control as declarer

♠ 9876	♠ K32	♠ J10
♥ AK86	♥ 1093	♥ Q7542
♦ 75	♦ J98	♦ 643
♣ Q65	♣ A1043	♣ J97
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ54	
	♥ J	
	♦ AKQ102	
	♣ K82	

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥A and ♥K.

Declarer ruffs and is already shorter than West in trumps. He cashes the ♠AQ and starts running diamonds (See ‘Trump pick-up’, p. 197). As soon as West ruffs and plays another heart, declarer can ruff and cross to dummy to draw the last trump.

Retaining control as declarer

♠ KQ1084	♠ J92	♠ A65
♥ AJ73	♥ 105	♥ 4
♦ 93	♦ AQ102	♦ 8764
♣ Q2	♣ AK97	♣ J10543
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 73	
	♥ KQ9862	
	♦ KJ5	
	♣ 86	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *How the Experts Do It*.

South plays 3♥; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer ruffs the third round of spades. If he plays the ♥K, he will lose control when West ducks once, takes his ace on the second round and continues the force with another spade. Instead, declarer should play the ♥2 towards the ♥10 in dummy. If West wins the jack, the ♥10 can act as a watchdog. If West ducks, a second round of hearts can be drawn. Declarer will be forced once, but can then run his diamonds as a replacement for trumps.

Retaining control as defender

	♠ K7	
	♥ 952	
	♦ Q1074	
	♣ J752	
♠ J95		♠ 108642
♥ A64		♥ 873
♦ 963		♦ J5
♣ KQ103		♣ A84

Terence Reese, *Bridge Tips by World Masters*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣K.

East encourages, takes the ♣3 with the ace and plays back a third club, which declarer has to ruff. However, when declarer plays the ♥K and the ♥Q, West holds up his ace. Declarer cannot make his contract any longer, because either West will score a club or East will score a ruff in addition to the ace of trumps. Had West taken his trump ace earlier, declarer could have ruffed a second club with no damage, since dummy's ♥9 would have been big enough to draw the remaining adverse trumps.

Using a ruff and sluff to force declarer

	♠ Q1042										
	♥ AQ63										
	♦ K4										
	♣ KJ4										
♠ A765		♠ 8									
♥ 75		♥ J1092									
♦ 109862		♦ AQ75									
♣ 92		♣ 8763									
	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ93										
	♥ K84										
	♦ J3										
	♣ AQ105										

Terence Reese and David Bird, *How the Experts Do It*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦10.

East wins the ♦Q and ♦A and continues the suit; the ruff and sluff is worthless, and declarer has to shorten one of his trump holdings. When declarer plays trumps, West must hold up his ace twice. If declarer tries a third round of trumps, West will win and play another diamond, removing declarer's last trump. West will then ruff the third heart or the third club and cash a diamond. If declarer doesn't play a third round of trumps, West will ruff in earlier and still score his ace of trumps.

Refusing to overruff

	♠ 105	
	♥ 982	
	♦ A98542	
	♣ 32	
♠ 764		♠ 8
♥ QJ53	N	♥ K106
♦ Q7	W	♦ J103
♣ KQJ8	S	♣ 1097654
	♠ AKQJ932	
	♥ A74	
	♦ K6	
	♣ A	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣K.

Everyone can see that dummy has no entries except for the ♠10 and the ♦A. Declarer cashes the ♠A and then plays three rounds of diamonds, ruffing with the ♠2. If West carelessly overruffs, he has just one trump left, like dummy, and the ♠10 will allow declarer to reach and cash the diamonds. West must refuse the Greek gift and hang on to one more trump than dummy, keeping the diamonds isolated.

Keeping an external control

	♠ J9543	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 6532	
	♣ Q84	
♠ 10872		♠ 6
♥ Q1082	N	♥ KJ965
♦ K8	W	♦ 974
♣ J76	S	♣ K952
	♠ AKQ	
	♥ A74	
	♦ AQJ10	
	♣ A103	

Victor Molloy and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♠2.

Declarer wins the ♠Q and should suspect a 4-1 trump break, which materializes when he lays down the ♠A and ♠K. If he cashes the ♥A, ruffs a heart and cashes the ♠J, he will have no trumps left when the diamond finesse loses. The most secure line is to duck a round of hearts and then ruff the heart return, before drawing West's last trump. Now the ♥A protects the suit.

Control and establishment

♠ K
 ♥ J753
 ♦ J108653
 ♣ 62

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 984
 ♥ 86
 ♦ AK42
 ♣ KQ85

♠ Q10763
 ♥ Q94
 ♦ —
 ♣ J10743

♠ AJ52
 ♥ AK102
 ♦ Q97
 ♣ A9

The Bridge World, January 1987.

A 5♦ contract presents no difficulties for North-South, but several pairs played 4♥. The ♣K was led, because dummy had bid diamonds. If declarer rushes to take his club discard from dummy (♣A, ♠K, ♥A, ♠A to discard a club), he will succumb to the forcing black-suit returns when he attempts to establish his diamonds. He will lose two diamonds, one heart and one spade. However, if the ♥Q is onside, it is possible to accept losing a club and two diamonds. Therefore, the right line is: the ♣A, the ♥A, the ♠K, heart finesse, the ♥K dropping the queen and then attack the diamonds with a tempo advantage while both remaining trumps control the adverse clubs.

Trump pick-up

When the trump texture is frail, running a side suit to provoke adverse ruffs can serve to keep trump control.

Maintaining control

	♠ A654	
	♥ A32	
	♦ J1093	
	♣ QJ	
♠ J		♠ Q1098
♥ KQ7654		♥ J1098
♦ Q876		♦ K54
♣ 73		♣ A8
	♠ K732	
	♥ —	
	♦ A2	
	♣ K1096542	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥K.

Declarer wins the ace and discards the ♦2. The ♠A is cashed, but the fall of the jack warns of the danger. Declarer switches to the ♣Q, taken with the ace. East plays another heart, so declarer ruffs, cashes the ♠K and runs his good clubs. East can ruff, but declarer is in control.

Being in a position to overruff

	♠ AK2	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
immaterial		♠ —
		♥ —
		♦ —
		♣ J98
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ10	

Clubs are trumps.

A spade is led from dummy, East must ruff and can be overruffed. This is, in fact, a trump coup, because the cards have to be positioned correctly for it to work.

Picking up the trumps

♠ Q10852		♠ A7	
♥ A9754		♥ KQJ106	
♦ J108		♦ 643	
♣ —		♣ K42	
	W	N	E
		S	
		♠ KJ	
		♥ 3	
		♦ AK72	
		♣ AQ9753	

Géza Ottik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♦J.

Declarer needs two dummy entries to pick up East's trumps, making it impossible to run the hearts. Declarer should play hearts right away, win the diamond return and play a club towards the king. Now, noting the bad break, he can use the hearts to extract East's trumps. East ruffs and is over-ruffed; back to dummy with the ♠A, and another heart ruffed and overruffed. Now declarer draws the last trump and re-enters dummy for the heart winners by overtaking the ♣3 with the ♣4.

Avoiding a ruff

♠ 10865		♠ AQ	
♥ K62		♥ 10765	
♦ J6		♦ AQ732	
♣ 9654		♣ AK	
	W	N	E
		S	
		♠ 93	
		♥ AQJ843	
		♦ K1085	
		♣ 8	
		♠ KJ742	
		♥ —	
		♦ 94	
		♣ QJ10732	

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥2.

Declarer is shortened right away, so he should be worried about a layout that includes a 4-2 trump split, the ♦K offside and a singleton club with one defender. He ruffs the heart lead, cashes the ♠A, the ♣A and overtakes the ♠Q with the king. He lays down the ♠J, confirming the bad split, while discarding the ♣K — a club ruff by East would have been fatal. The road is now clear to lead clubs and force out West's last trump.

En passant play

A losing trump can sometimes be scored '*en passant*' when it is placed behind the master trump. A plain suit is led: if the opponent ruffs high, he 'ruffs air' and sets up declarer's trump.

Simple *en passant* play

♠ A
 ♥ —
 ♦ —
 ♣ A

♠ 2
 ♥ —
 ♦ —
 ♣ 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

immaterial

♠ —
 ♥ 32
 ♦ —
 ♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a heart, the small trump in dummy scores a trick whether West ruffs high or discards.

Double *en passant* play

♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ A
♦ —	♦ —
♣ K97	♣ 102

N

S

W E

♠ —	♠ —
♥ 2	
♦ —	
♣ Q8	

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a heart, the defenders can score just one trump. (If West plays the ♣J, declarer will overruff and play a club to the ♣8.)

Houdini's Coup

♠ 9873	♠ A1054	♠ KQJ
♥ 8	♥ 4	♥ QJ109
♦ QJ109	♦ 8743	♦ AK5
♣ Q985	♣ AK43	♣ J107
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 62	
	♥ AK76532	
	♦ 62	
	♣ 62	

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

South plays 3♥; West leads the ♦Q.

Declarer ruffs the third diamond and plays the ♥AK. He goes to dummy with a club, ruffs a diamond, goes back to the board with a club and ruffs a club. Back to dummy with a spade and the last club is led, scoring a trump *en passant*.

Astuteness and *en passant* play in defense

♠ 94	♠ AKQ2	♠ J1083
♥ K2	♥ A1083	♥ J96
♦ AKJ976	♦ Q82	♦ 103
♣ J102	♣ A5	♣ 9763
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 765	
	♥ Q754	
	♦ 54	
	♣ KQ84	

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

South plays 4♥; West cashes the ♦AK and switches to the ♣J.

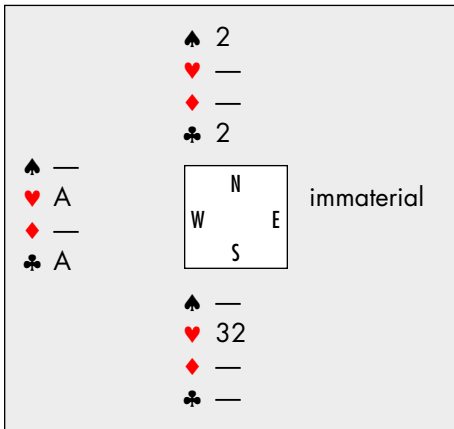
Declarer wins in dummy and leads the ♦Q to tempt East to ruff, but he discards a club instead. Hoping to find West with a doubleton ♥K, declarer plays ace and another heart, but East puts in the jack; declarer changes his plan and covers with the ♥Q, taken with the king. Another diamond allows East to score his ♥9 *en passant*.

(See 'Gambits')

Elopement

Elopement, meaning to escape or run away, consists of scoring one's small trumps by ruffing when they would otherwise lose to higher adverse trumps. As in the *en passant* play, one scores a ruff, but this time in a suit where the opponents must follow suit.

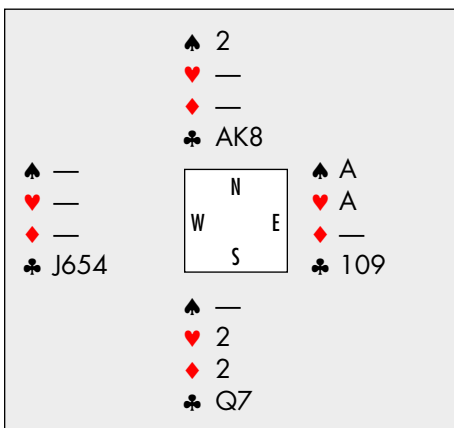
Simple elopement



Clubs are trumps.

When a heart is led, West must follow and the small trump in dummy can score a trick.

Simple elopement



Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a heart, West must ruff with the jack to avoid an easy crossruff. Dummy overruffs and the ♣7 can be eloped by ruffing the ♠2. Declarer can crossruff the rest.

Rank elopement

♠ —	♠ 2	♠ A
♥ KQ	♥ A3	♥ J
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ —
♣ 54	♣ —	♣ A3
	N	
	W E	
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ KQ2	

Clubs are trumps.

If declarer attempts to draw trumps, he will lose two tricks, because the ♣5 will score *en passant*. Instead, a heart to the ace and a heart back allows the ♣2 to score, unless East ruffs in with the ♣3; if he does, declarer can overruff and duck a club to the now singleton ace.

Extended rank elopement

♠ —	♠ 2	♠ A
♥ KQ	♥ A3	♥ J
♦ —	♦ 32	♦ A
♣ 9865	♣ 2	♣ A43
	N	
	W E	
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ KQJ107	

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer plays the ace of hearts and a heart to elope the ♣7. If he tries to play trumps instead, he will lose two tricks.

Double elopement

♠ —	♠ 2	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ A
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ J543	♣ AQ6	♣ 1087
	N	
	W E	
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 2	
	♣ K9	

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a heart, West must ruff with the jack to prevent an easy crossruff. Dummy overruffs and when the ♠2 is led, East must ruff high with the ♣10 to avoid the ♣9 elopement. Declarer overruffs and now the ♣A and the ♣9 will score separately.

Elopement or crossruff

	♠ —		
	♥ K		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 3		
♠ —		♠ A	
♥ A		♥ Q	
♦ A		♦ K	
♣ A		♣ —	
	♠ 2		
	♥ —		
	♦ 3		
	♣ 2		

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer plays the ♠2, West can ruff high, but then both declarer's trumps will score on a crossruff. If West discards the ♥A, dummy will ruff and the now master ♥K will give declarer one more trick. If West discards the ♦A, dummy will ruff and the ♥K can be ruffed quietly in hand.

Elopement or establishment (McShane Coup)

	♠ J2		
	♥ —		
	♦ J2		
	♣ —		
♠ A		♠ 3	
♥ —		♥ A2	
♦ A		♦ 3	
♣ AK		♣ —	
	♠ —		
	♥ J10		
	♦ —		
	♣ 76		

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer plays the ♥J, West can ruff, but then one of declarer's trumps will score. If West discards the ♠A or the ♦A, East will win the ♥A. Now he can either play a heart to the master ♥10 and one of declarer's trumps will score, or lead a pointed suit, forcing West to ruff high or allow an elopement.

Giorgio Belladonna.

Elopement or establishment

	♠ 32		
	♥ 42		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 43		
♠ AK		♠ QJ10	
♥ AK		♥ 76	
♦ —		♦ —	
♣ QJ8		♣ 109	
	♠ —		
	♥ Q53		
	♦ —		
	♣ AK72		

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer plays the ♥3, West wins. If he plays a trump, the ♥Q can be set up; if he plays a spade, declarer will ruff and lead a second heart. West is a victim of the same blackmail that allows declarer either to elope the second small trump or to set up a heart.

Elopement or squeeze

♠ —
 ♥ A2
 ♦ 432
 ♣ A4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AKQ
 ♥ 98
 ♦ A
 ♣ K

♠ 2
 ♥ K743
 ♦ —
 ♣ 32

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer plays the ♠2, West can ruff while dummy discards a diamond. The heart or trump return is taken in dummy and a diamond is ruffed. Then it is back to dummy with the remaining ace, which squeezes West. If instead West discards a heart, the ♣4 is eloped and then the ♣2 with a diamond ruff. The two top hearts and the ace of trumps also score. Finally, if West discards a diamond, the ♣4 is eloped and then the ♣2 scores via a diamond ruff. Declarer lays down the ♣A and then leads the established diamond to force West to ruff.

Guillemard's Maneuver

Named for Dr. Guillemard of France, this tactic consists of hoping that a defender, short in a suit, is also short in trumps and cannot either overruff or ruff high before dummy. Declarer must also pay attention to preserving trump control.

Guillemard's Maneuver

	♠ Q65	
	♥ Q8	
	♦ AQ832	
	♣ A109	
♠ J10		♠ 983
♥ 104		♥ J953
♦ J975		♦ K104
♣ KJ743		♣ Q65
	♠ AK742	
	♥ AK762	
	♦ 6	
	♣ 82	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♠J.

Declarer is afraid that hearts will break 4-2 and that he will also lose the diamond finesse. First, he lays down the ♠K and ♠Q. Then he plays the ♥Q and ♥K and ruffs a heart. West, who has only two trumps, cannot prevent this ruff. If West were able to ruff, declarer could then discard two clubs on hearts and ruff a club in dummy.

Vincent Labbé, *100 Pièges pour un Déclarant*.

Guillemard's Maneuver by rank

	♠ Q10984	
	♥ 832	
	♦ Q862	
	♣ 4	
♠ K6532		♠ AJ7
♥ 65		♥ 1074
♦ J2		♦ K1094
♣ 10653		♣ 982
	♠ —	
	♥ AKQJ9	
	♦ A53	
	♣ AKQJ7	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠2.

Declarer could consider cashing two trumps and then playing four rounds of clubs, discarding diamonds from dummy. That succeeds if clubs are 4-3 and the opponent with four clubs has only two hearts — about a 30% chance. However, declarer can do better: playing a diamond to the queen wins 50% of the time. If East wins the king and continues with a spade, declarer must then draw one round of trumps and play three top clubs, discarding two diamonds from dummy. Then he plays ace and another diamond, ruffing with the ♥8 and hoping no one can over-ruff.

Guillemard's Maneuver after a duck

♠ K32
 ♥ 432
 ♦ K32
 ♣ A543

♠ Q108
 ♥ Q76
 ♦ J987
 ♣ QJ10

N
 W E
 S

♠ J9
 ♥ KJ1098
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ 9876

♠ A7654
 ♥ A5
 ♦ A654
 ♣ K2

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣Q.

If declarer plays the $\heartsuit A$, the $\heartsuit K$ and a small diamond, he is exposed to an overruff by East when West leads a fourth round of the suit. If he starts by cashing the $\spadesuit A$ and $\spadesuit K$ (partial trump removal) before playing diamonds, West can play a third round of trumps, canceling the diamond ruff. The solution is to duck a diamond right away. He then plays two rounds of trumps before cashing the $\heartsuit K$ and $\heartsuit A$ and taking the diamond ruff in dummy.

Uppercut

This is a ruff, generally with a high trump, where declarer's overruff promotes a trump in partner's hand. It is often difficult to ruff partner's winner without enduring raised eyebrows or worse, so when doing so, you should make sure to set up a trump trick for partner as compensation.

Uppercut

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ A	♥ —	♥ —									
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —									
♣ J3	♣ 654	♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —	♠ —									
	♥ —	♥ —									
	♦ —	♦ 2									
	♣ AK10	♣ Q2									

Clubs are trumps.

When West leads a heart, East should ruff with the queen, promoting West's jack after the overruff. Declarer was hit right on the chin with the queen of trumps!

Uppercut

♠ 8	♠ KQ92	♠ 106543									
♥ AKQ954	♥ J32	♥ 87									
♦ J72	♦ —	♦ 105									
♣ Q32	♣ AKJ987	♣ 10654									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AJ7										
	♥ 106										
	♦ AKQ98643										
	♣ —										

South plays 5♦; West cashes the ♥A and ♥K, and continues with the ♥4.

East should ruff with the ♦10 and West's jack of trumps is promoted. Even if West plays the ♥Q at Trick 3 instead of the ♥4, East should work out that he has to ruff it, but West ought to make it easier for partner to find the right play.

Double uppercut

	♠ 984	
	♥ 4	
	♦ Q74	
	♣ AKQ1064	
♠ AKJ765		♠ Q2
♥ A85	N	♥ 976
♦ 65	W	♦ J10932
♣ 75	S	♣ J82
	♠ 103	
	♥ KQJ1032	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ 93	

South plays 4♥.

West leads the ♠A and ♠K and continues with the ♠5; this is ruffed by East, declarer overruffing with the jack. Declarer plays the ♥10, but West is wide awake and goes up with his ace to lead the ♠6, which East ruffs again. Declarer must overruff, but West's ♥8 is now promoted.

Swing

	♠ Q86	
	♥ QJ98	
	♦ 1098	
	♣ KJ6	
♠ J32		♠ 105
♥ 64	N	♥ AK732
♦ A543	W	♦ J762
♣ 9754	S	♣ 82
	♠ AK974	
	♥ 105	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ AQ103	

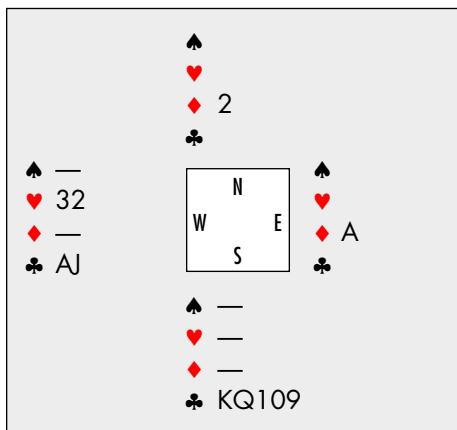
South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥6.

East cashes the ♥AK and continues a heart. The promotion of the ♠J is secured — immediately if declarer ruffs with the ♠9, or later if he ruffs with the ♠K. This is actually an *en passant* coup, or a trump promotion, but it is often confused with the uppercut.

Trump Promotion

Trump promotion involves letting an opponent ruff high and refraining from overruffing, so as to increase the rank of one's own trumps. The temptation to overruff can be strong, but it must be resisted.

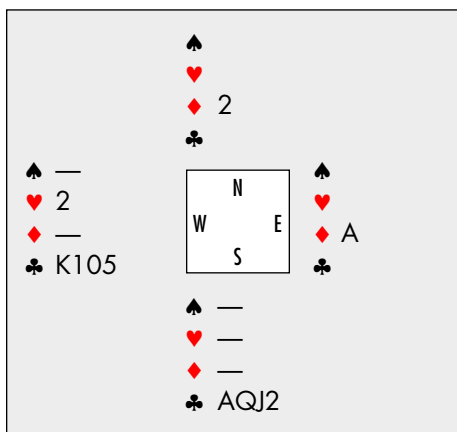
Promoting the jack of trumps



Clubs are trumps.

The $\heartsuit 2$ is led and declarer ruffs with the $\clubsuit K$. West could overruff, but refraining to will promote the jack of trumps.

Promoting the ten of trumps



Clubs are trumps.

A diamond is led and declarer ruffs with the $\clubsuit J$. West could overruff, but refraining promotes the $\clubsuit 10$.

Columbus's Coup

The name of this technique derives from the puzzle of Columbus's Egg. The story goes that Columbus challenged a number of gentlemen to stand an egg on end. One by one they failed and declared the task impossible. In response, Columbus stood an egg on its smallest end and crushed the shell just a little so that it could stand upright. Simple!

♠ K1043	♠ 986	♠ AQJ752
♥ 103	♥ AKQ7	♥ J
♦ 95	♦ A4	♦ Q1082
♣ AKQ83	♣ 10952	♣ 76
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ 986542	
	♦ KJ763	
	♣ J4	

José Le Dentu, *Les Donnes Extraordinaires*.

South plays 5♥ after competitive bidding; West leads the ♣A and ♣K.

What now? There is little chance of a trick in the pointed suits. The best hope is that East has the ♥J, even singleton. Therefore, West should continue with a club and try to give him a ruff. Like Columbus's solution to the egg problem, it is simple, but one has to think of it.

Promotion by astuteness

♠ A4	♠ Q1052	♠ J93
♥ AKQ82	♥ 1054	♥ 763
♦ K1043	♦ AQJ	♦ 986
♣ 73	♣ AKJ	♣ 9654
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ K876	
	♥ J9	
	♦ 752	
	♣ Q1082	

Terence Reese, *Bridge for Ambitious Players*.

South plays 4♠; West leads three rounds of hearts.

Declarer ruffs and plays a spade to the queen, which holds. When he leads another spade from dummy, East puts in the jack instead of the nine. Being human, declarer cannot play for West to have started with ♠A4, so he puts up the king, which loses to the ace. Now a fourth heart promotes the ♠9 *en passant*. Attributed to Zia Mahmood.

(See 'En passant play', p. 199).

Promotion with a void

	♠ AKQ	
	♥ Q10652	
	♦ J7	
	♣ K83	
♠ 652		♠ 109873
♥ K984		♥ —
♦ AK86		♦ 942
♣ Q10		♣ J6542
	♠ J4	
	♥ AJ73	
	♦ Q1053	
	♣ A97	

Victor Mollo, *The Compleat Bridge Player*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A.

East plays the ♦9, and then the ♦2 on the king that follows, creating the illusion of a doubleton. West plays a third diamond, which declarer ruffs in dummy with the ♥10 as a safety measure against an overruff, while East passively follows suit. Declarer will now lose two trumps to West. Attributed to Ira Corn.

(See ‘Persuading declarer to ruff high’, p. 152).

Avoiding a promotion

	♠ —	
	♥ 3	
	♦ Q876543	
	♣ KQJ32	
♠ 10432		♠ 98765
♥ A987		♥ 4
♦ A10		♦ KJ9
♣ 987		♣ A1064
	♠ AKQJ	
	♥ KQJ10652	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 5	

Andrew Diosy and Linda Lee, *You Have To See This*.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♦A, followed by the ♦10, which is ruffed.

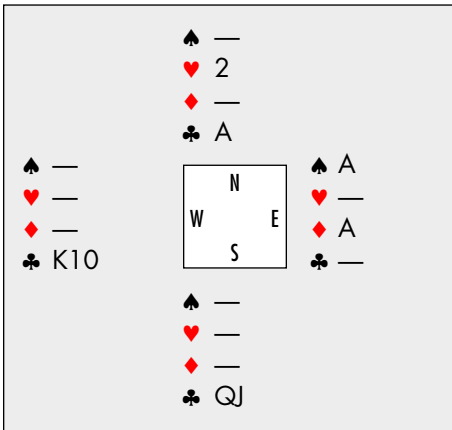
If declarer plays trumps, West can take the ace and play a club to East, whose diamond return will promote the ♥9. Instead, declarer should ruff a spade in dummy and then play a diamond himself, discarding the ♣5. The defense will score only two diamonds and a trump.

(See ‘Scissors Coup’, p. 191)

Smother play

This technique consists of capturing an adverse 'impregnable' trump by overruffing — the opponents' trump trick simply disappears!

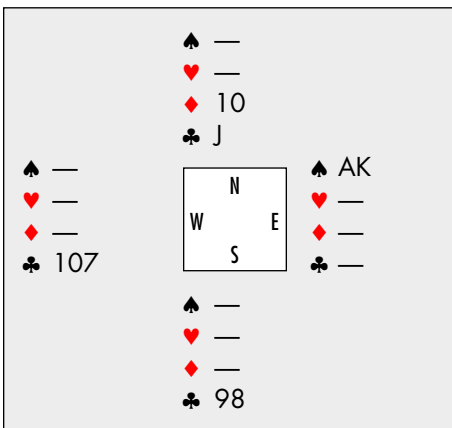
Simple smother play



Clubs are trumps.

When East leads one of his aces and South ruffs, West can overruff or underruff. Either way, he will lose his 'impregnable' king of trumps.

Simple smother play

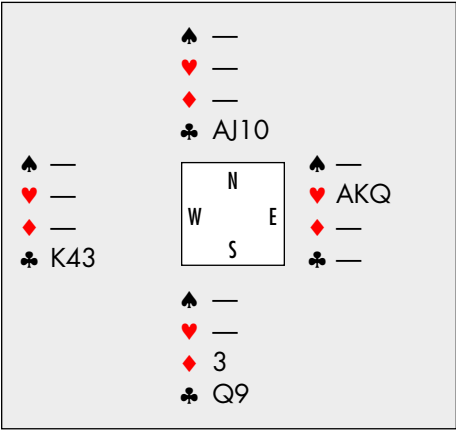


Clubs are trumps.

When East leads and South ruffs, West loses his 'impregnable' ten of trumps, which shows that it is not only very high cards that can be smothered.

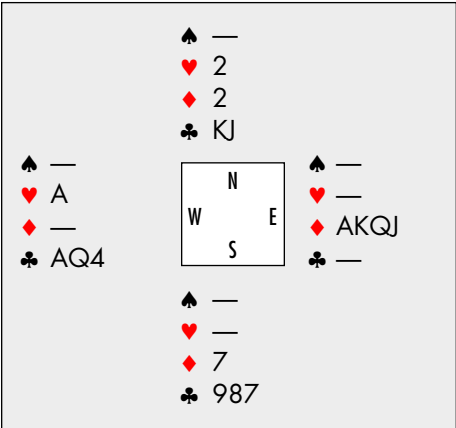
The Bridge World, December 1998.

Extended smother play



The Bridge World, December 1998.

Smother play with a finesse



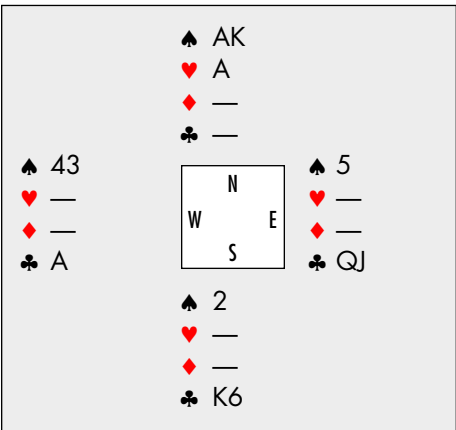
Clubs are trumps.

When East leads a heart and South ruffs with the ♣Q, West can overruff or under-ruff. Either way, he will lose his ♣K.

Clubs are trumps.

When South leads the ♦7, if West discards his heart, the diamond continuation will smother his trumps and he will score only the ace. If West ruffs and plays a heart, he still scores only one more trick.

Self-smother play



Clubs are trumps.

If South plays a spade to dummy, East will ruff in on the next trick and South will lose his 'sure' trump trick.

Smother play with an escape hatch

♠ —	♠ J76	♠ Q
♥ —	♥ —	♥ QJ9
♦ Q	♦ —	♦ —
♣ 953	♣ K	♣ —
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ 8	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ A87	

Robert Gray, *The Bridge World*, October 1979.

Clubs are trumps.

South needs three tricks and playing trumps can bring in only two. Instead, South leads his losing ♠8. If West discards, East's forced heart return smothers his ♣9. To escape this fate, West has to ruff the spade and play trumps, after which his ♣9 will score either naturally or by overruffing.

Simili smother play

♠ A	♠ —	♠ —
♥ K	♥ A	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ A
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 2
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ J	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Hearts are trumps.

South plays his ♣7 and smothers the king of trumps.

(See 'Trump pick-up', p. 197)

Defense against a smother play

♠ Q652	♠ AK104	♠ —
♥ 94	♥ Q2	♥ AKJ765
♦ 10542	♦ AK8	♦ Q963
♣ 1073	♣ K965	♣ QJ4
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ J9873	
	♥ 1083	
	♦ J7	
	♣ A82	

Julian Pottage, *Defend These Hands With Me*.

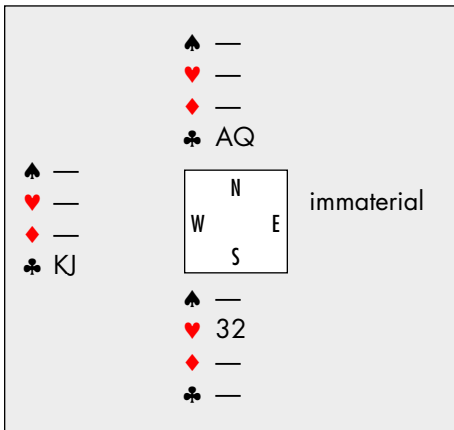
South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥9.

Declarer ruffs the third round of hearts and plays the ♠A, getting the bad news. He eliminates diamonds and leads a trump to the ten. Now comes the ♣5: East splits and declarer wins in hand, West giving count. Another club goes to the king. It is now the tenth trick and East should realize that he will be on lead soon with the ♣Q, obliged to execute a smother play by returning a red card. Only the unblock of the ♣Q, hoping that West has the ten, can save the day. West can win the next club and exit with a low trump to set up his ♠Q.

Trump coups

There are many positions in which declarer can maneuver to pick up a defender's apparently impregnable trumps. They all involve leading a side suit through the defender's trump holding.

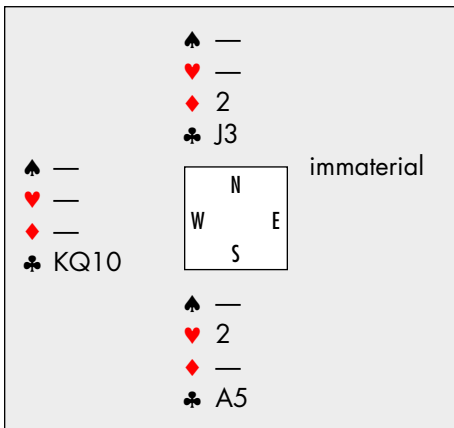
Simple trump coup



Clubs are trumps.

When South leads a heart, it is like taking a trump finesse. The small heart works as if it were a small trump.

Extended trump coup



Clubs are trumps.

When South leads a heart, either dummy will score the ♣J by overruffing or West will be endplayed in trumps.

Robert's Coup

♠ —	♠ —		♠ —
♥ —	♥ —		♥ —
♦ 3	♦ A2		♦ KQJ10
♣ KQ10	♣ J3		♣ —
		<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —		♠ —
	♥ 2		♥ —
	♦ —		♦ —
	♣ A42		♣ —

Robert Darvas and Norman De V. Hart,
Right Through the Pack.

Clubs are trumps.

When East leads a diamond, South must ruff instead of discarding his heart. He is now in the same position as our last example and a heart lead will limit West to one trick. The ♦ A is a mirage — it is of no use.

Extended trump coup

	♠ —		♠ —
	♥ —		♥ —
	♦ —		♦ —
	♣ K96		♣ —
immaterial		<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	♣ AJ8
	♠ —		♠ —
	♥ 2		♥ —
	♦ —		♦ —
	♣ Q4		♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

When South leads a heart, dummy ruffs with the ♣ K and East can score only his ♣ A.

Extended trump coup

	♠ —		♠ —
	♥ 3		♥ —
	♦ —		♦ —
	♣ Q54		♣ —
immaterial		<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	♣ AJ109
	♠ —		♠ —
	♥ 2		♥ —
	♦ —		♦ —
	♣ K32		♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

South leads a heart and East can score only two trump tricks.

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam.*

Trump coup, keeping the lead in the right hand

	♠ AQJ	
	♥ A954	
	♦ AK73	
	♣ 92	
♠ 8742		♠ 1093
♥ KJ863		♥ Q1072
♦ Q984		♦ J2
♣ —		♣ AKJ7
	♠ K65	
	♥ —	
	♦ 1065	
	♣ Q1086543	

Julian Pottage, *Win the Big Match*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠7.

The problem boils down to not losing more than two trump tricks. If, as here, East has four trumps, then South must reduce his trump length three times and finesse twice in trumps. Let's suppose the ♣9 is led from dummy. East puts up his ace and plays back a spade. North's entries allow declarer to shorten his trumps and arrive in dummy at the end of Trick 10. The ♣2 is then led, but East simply covers with the ♣7. South wins the ♣8, but will now lose the last two trumps. One down. Conversely, if the ♣9 was preserved by playing the ♣2 at Trick 2, it can now be led to Trick 11, keeping the lead in dummy for a simple trump coup.

Disappearing trump trick (The Devil's Coup)

This is not a smother play!

	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ K10	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ —		♦ A
♣ Q76		♣ J8
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ A9	

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

Clubs are trumps.

South leads a diamond. If West ruffs low, then dummy overruffs and the ♣K and ♣A both score. If West ruffs with the queen, again dummy overruffs and then East's jack can be finessed.

Disappearing trump trick

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ 2	♥ 2	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ A
♣ K92	♣ K92	♣ Q43
♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ 106	♥ 106	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ A
♣ J5	♣ J5	♣ Q43
♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ 2	♦ 2	♦ —
♣ A108	♣ A108	♣ —

Jimmy Tait, *The Devil's Coup*.

Clubs are trumps.

When South leads a diamond, West must ruff. If he ruffs low, declarer will overruff in dummy, cash the ♣K and finesse against the queen. If West ruffs with the ♣J, again he is overruffed, and now the ♣9 is led from dummy to pick up the queen.

Disappearing trump trick

♠ J65	♠ K73	♠ Q2
♥ AQ6	♥ K4	♥ 10852
♦ Q75	♦ KJ42	♦ A106
♣ QJ82	♣ A765	♣ 10943
♠ —	♠ A10984	♠ —
♥ —	♥ J973	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 983	♦ —
♣ —	♣ K	♣ —

The Bridge World, December 1998.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣Q.

Declarer wins the ♣K and plays a heart. West takes his ♥A and continues a club to the ace, declarer discarding a diamond. Now comes the ♥K and a club ruff, followed by a diamond to the jack and ace. East returns a club, which is ruffed, and a heart is ruffed in dummy. Finally, declarer cashes the ♦K and ruffs a diamond, bringing about a three-card ending. Now the ♥J forces West to ruff and be overruffed, losing the defensive trump trick. The defense thus scores only their two aces.

Double trump coup

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ 2	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ A
♣ KJ6	♣ A7	♣ 108
♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ —
♣ —	♣ Q9	♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

When South leads a diamond, West has three choices. Ruffing with the ♣K immediately gives declarer two tricks. Ruffing with the ♣6 allows declarer to score the ♣7. And if West ruffs with the ♣J, declarer will overruff and lead a club to the nine, again scoring two tricks. No matter what, declarer benefits.

Double trump coup

	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ A109	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —	N	♥ —
♦ —	W E	♦ A
♣ Q85	S	♣ J6
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ K7	

Clubs are trumps.

When South plays a diamond, if West ruffs small, he will be overruffed with the ♣9. If he ruffs with the ♣Q, he is overruffed with the ♣A and declarer runs the ♣10 on the way back. In either case, declarer scores all three tricks.

Ruff and ruff

	♠ KJ102	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ K	
♠ AQ5		♠ 876
♥ —	N	♥ —
♦ AK	W E	♦ QJ
♣ —	S	♣ —
	♠ 943	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ A3	

Clubs are trumps.

If South has the lead, there is no problem losing only one trick. However, West is on lead and he plays the ♦A. Declarer cannot afford to throw any of dummy's spades (see 'One-suit squeeze', p. 376), so he ruffs with the ♣K and overruffs in hand. The ♠9 is then led and declarer loses only one trick.

Jean Besse.

Trump coup with honor crash

	♠ 32	
	♥ 3	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ A2		♠ K
♥ —	N	♥ —
♦ —	W E	♦ —
♣ K	S	♣ A6
	♠ —	
	♥ A	
	♦ —	
	♣ Q2	

Clubs are trumps.

When South plays his heart, if West ruffs in, then South scores a trump. If West discards, however, East has to ruff and South again scores a trump.

Trump coup, defensive underruff

	♠ —										
	♥ A63										
	♦ A63										
	♣ Q										
immaterial	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ KQJ									
		♦ KQJ									
		♣ 2									
	♠ 32										
	♥ 2										
	♦ 2										
	♣ AK9										

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads a spade and dummy ruffs with the ♣Q. East must underruff to keep all of his red-suit cards; otherwise, the weakened suit can be established.

Double trump coup (Lydon Coup)

	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ 2										
	♣ KJ9										
♠ —	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ —											
♦ —											
♣ Q1075											
	♠ 432										
	♥ —										
	♦ —										
	♣ A										

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer plays a spade, West ruffs and dummy overruffs. The ♦2 is ruffed with the ♣A and another spade coups West again.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Triple trump coup

	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ 32										
	♣ Q1086										
♠ —	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ —											
♦ —											
♣ J97532											
	♠ 32										
	♥ 32										
	♦ —										
	♣ AK										

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a heart, West ruffs and dummy overruffs. Declarer plays the ♦2 from dummy, ruffs with the ♣A and leads another heart for a ruff and overruff. The ♦3 is ruffed with the ♣K and a spade finishes the job. West can score none of his six trumps!

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Trump coup with lob

	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ A64	
	♣ —	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ AK		♥ QJ10
♦ —		♦ —
♣ A		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ 32	
	♣ K	

Clubs are trumps.

When declarer leads a diamond, either West ruffs air or he discards and has to ruff the diamond return, setting up the ♣K.

(See ‘Lob’, p. 209)

Drawing trumps with an overruff

	♠ 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ KQ3	
♠ KQ		
♥ —		
♦ A		
♣ A2		
	♠ A54	
	♥ AK	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads a heart. If West ruffs small, he will be overruffed, and when declarer returns to hand with a spade to lead a second heart, West can score only his ♣A. If instead West discards on the first heart, declarer will cash the ♠A and lead a second heart; again, West can score only his ace of trumps. Lastly, if West ruffs high in the first place, dummy’s losing diamond will be discarded.

Passion Coup

	♠ A432	
	♥ K	
	♦ KQJ4	
	♣ Q985	
♠ 87		♠ KJ1065
♥ 98654		♥ 1073
♦ 108653		♦ 97
♣ 2		♣ A43
	♠ Q9	
	♥ AQJ2	
	♦ A2	
	♣ KJ1076	

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠8.

Declarer wins the ♠A and plays three rounds of diamonds. East must ruff small or else declarer will discard his spade. Declarer overruffs, crosses to the ♥K and leads his last diamond — again East must ruff small and is overruffed. Now three additional rounds of hearts provide discards for dummy’s spades, while East can only trump in with his ace.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Drawing trumps by overruffing both defenders

♠ KQJ87	♠ 432	♠ 109
♥ QJ6	♥ 2	♥ 98754
♦ 976	♦ AQJ53	♦ K1084
♣ 42	♣ A1085	♣ K6
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A65	
	♥ AK103	
	♦ 2	
	♣ QJ973	

Bob Hamman.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer wins the ♠A, cashes the ♥AK, discarding a spade, and ruffs a heart. Then he plays the ♦A and ♦Q, covered with the king and ruffed. Declarer crosses back to the ♣A, cashes the ♦J, discarding a spade, and then leads the ♦3, covered by East and ruffed. Now comes the ♥10, which West must ruff, and dummy overruffs. Finally, the master ♦5 allows declarer to discard his last spade, whether East ruffs in or not.

Trump coup via an uppercut

♠ 2	♠ A	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ 2
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ K	♣ Q	♣ 3
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ A2	

Clubs are trumps.

When East ruffs his partner's spade, either he scores the trick or he promotes his partner's ♣K.

(See 'Uppercut', p. 207)

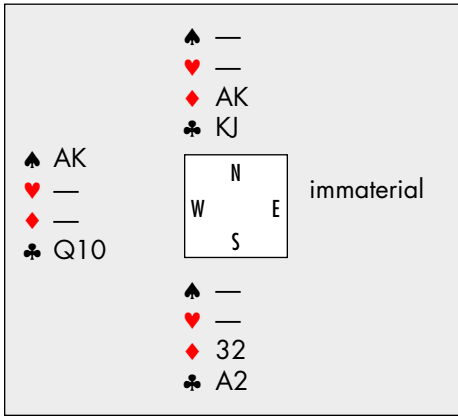
Trump coup via a knockout

♠ 2	♠ A	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ 432
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ K6	♣ A2	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ A	
	♦ —	
	♣ QJ	

Clubs are trumps.

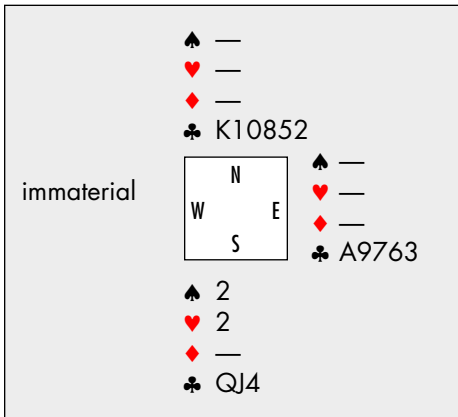
When East leads a heart, West can ruff with the ♣6 and save his ♣K.

Pitt Coup



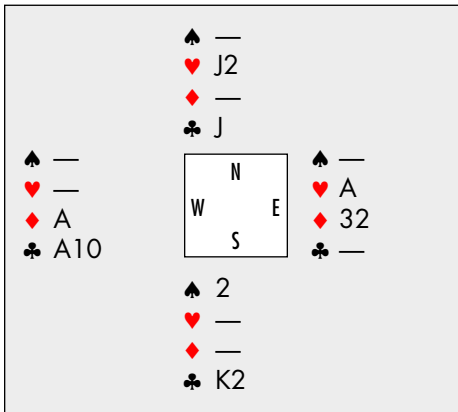
George Coffin, *Endplays at Bridge*.

Double trump coup



Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Backwash trump coup



Clubs are trumps; West is on lead.

When West plays a spade, South should ruff with the ♣A to be able to finesse West's trumps.

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer plays a spade and ruffs in dummy with the ♣10. If East overruffs, declarer will take the rest. If East underuffs, declarer will lead the ♣2 to the jack and then ruff the ♥2 with the ♣K. East has the same dilemma either way and can score only his ace of trumps.

Clubs are trumps.

This is not a backwash squeeze, because only trumps come into the picture. When the ♥2 is led from dummy, South ruffs with the ♣K. If West overruffs, declarer will take the rest. If West underuffs, the ♠2 is played, a ruffing lob. Caught in the backwash, West can score only his ace of trumps.

Trump coup and squeeze

♠ —	♠ —	
♥ J10	♥ K9	
♦ J9	♦ 2	
♣ —	♣ 7	
		♠ 107
		♥ 87
		♦ —
		♣ —
		♠ J8
		♥ 32
		♦ —
		♣ —

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Spades are trumps.

The ♣7 is led from dummy. If East discards, declarer does too. Then the ♥K is cashed and a simple trump coup ensues. If East ruffs, declarer overruffs and draws the last trump, squeezing West.

Trump coup with entry shifting

♠ J10	♠ Q6	
♥ Q9873	♥ AK54	
♦ 742	♦ Q109	
♣ J106	♣ 9542	
		♠ AK7543
		♥ —
		♦ 865
		♣ Q873
		♠ 982
		♥ J1062
		♦ AKJ3
		♣ AK

Rixi Markus, *The Bridge World*, May 1985.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠J.

The defense cashes two spades and then plays a club to the king. The ♥J is covered with the queen and king, and declarer discovers the bad break. Now he cashes the ♣A, the ♦A and the ♦10 and leads the ♦Q. If East shows out, declarer overtakes with the ♦K and cashes the ♦J before playing the ♠9. West ruffs with the ♥7 and is endplayed when this is allowed to hold. If East follows to the ♦Q, declarer ruffs a club to hand and leads the ♠9, again ducking West's ♥7.

Forcing defense

Shortening declarer

♠ 6432
 ♥ K108
 ♦ AQJ
 ♣ AJ10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A7
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 76542
 ♣ 96543

♠ J8
 ♥ QJ962
 ♦ K95
 ♣ KQ8

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠ K.

East overtakes and continues the suit. Declarer ruffs the third spade and plays trumps. West wins the ace and plays another spade. Declarer is already shorter than West and loses control.

Shortening declarer right from the opening lead

♠ A932
 ♥ KQJ10
 ♦ 7
 ♣ 8765

♠ 765
 ♥ A984
 ♦ K863
 ♣ A10

♠ 8
 ♥ 7652
 ♦ A542
 ♣ J943

♠ KQJ104
 ♥ 3
 ♦ QJ109
 ♣ KQ2

South plays 4♠.

If West leads his singleton diamond, as he might be tempted to do, he sets up declarer's side suit and the contract will make easily. If instead, conscious of the strength of his four trumps headed by the ace as well as his nice heart suit, he leads the ♥K, then declarer goes down. Declarer takes the ♥A and plays trumps. West wins and continues hearts, shortening declarer to the same number of trumps, while the diamonds are not yet established. Either declarer will draw trumps and lose heart tricks when the defense takes the ♦A, or he will lead diamonds and lose control when East plays a third heart.

Trump reduction

This technique is used by declarer to shorten his own trump holding to the same length or even less than the adverse trumps. This may be necessary to execute a trump coup or to force a defender to take the lead by ruffing or be thrown in with no exit card. Declarer usually hates having his trumps shortened, but in these positions, he welcomes it.

Trump reduction

♠ 1096	♠ K2	♠ Q8743
♥ QJ1054	♥ A932	♥ 76
♦ KJ65	♦ A10943	♦ Q2
♣ 2	♣ 107	♣ J653
	W	E
	N	S
	♠ AJ5	
	♥ K8	
	♦ 87	
	♣ AKQ984	

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥ Q to the king.

Declarer plays three rounds of spades, the last one ruffed in dummy, and then two rounds of clubs, revealing the distribution. Now the ♥ A and a heart ruff, followed by the ♦ A and another heart ruff, reduces declarer to two trumps. He exits with a diamond and can pick up East's trumps by overruffing.

Alec Traub, *Trump Technique*.

Quintuple trump reduction

♠ KQ9	♠ 2	♠ 8
♥ QJ10	♥ AK76	♥ 8542
♦ Q54	♦ AK10	♦ 8732
♣ A1074	♣ Q8652	♣ KJ93
	W	E
	N	S
	♠ AJ1076543	
	♥ 93	
	♦ J96	
	♣ —	

South plays 6♠, doubled by West; West leads the ♥ Q.

West's double places the trump honors. To arrive at the same length, declarer must ruff five times. The play goes: the ♥ K, club ruff, the ♥ A, club ruff, the ♦ J to the king, club ruff, the ♦ 6 to the ten, club ruff, and finally the ♦ A and a heart ruff. Declarer is down to ♠AJ10. Now leading the ♠10 puts West on lead to give up the last two tricks.

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

Super trump reduction

	♠ J102	
	♥ AK6543	
	♦ A2	
	♣ KJ	
♠ KQ9865		♠ 7
♥ J7		♥ Q1098
♦ K876		♦ J954
♣ Q		♣ 10762
	♠ A43	
	♥ 2	
	♦ Q103	
	♣ A98543	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♦8.

Declarer runs the lead to his ♦Q and then plays the ♣3 to the queen and king. Now comes the ♥AK and a heart ruff, followed by the ♠A, the ♦A, another heart ruff and then a diamond ruff in dummy. Now East is longer in trumps than declarer and must ruff whatever dummy leads. Declarer discards his last spade and East has to surrender a free trump finesse into the ♣A-9 tenace.

Defense against the trump reduction

	♠ QJ5	
	♥ AJ6542	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ A2	
♠ 987		♠ A1064
♥ 98		♥ Q107
♦ Q1087654		♦ K3
♣ 5		♣ Q976
	♠ K32	
	♥ K3	
	♦ 92	
	♣ KJ10843	

Bertrand Romanet, *Bridge Total*.

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠9.

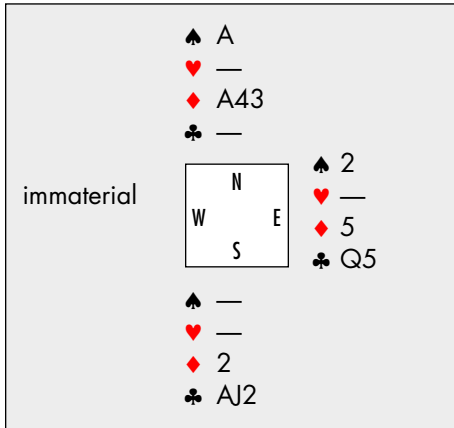
East wins the ♠A and the fate of the contract depends on his return. With the ‘impregnable’ queen of trumps, he should be careful of a trump reduction, which would work if he returned a heart or a spade. East must remove one entry to dummy before declarer can begin to shorten himself. Only the ♦K can achieve the feat of prematurely removing an entry. Now declarer has too many trumps and will lose a trick to the queen.

(See ‘Communication’, p. 55 and ‘Merrimac Coup’, p. 73)

Grand Coup

In a Grand Coup, declarer ruffs his own winners, either for transport between the hands, or to shorten his trumps, or simply because no card other than a trump is idle.

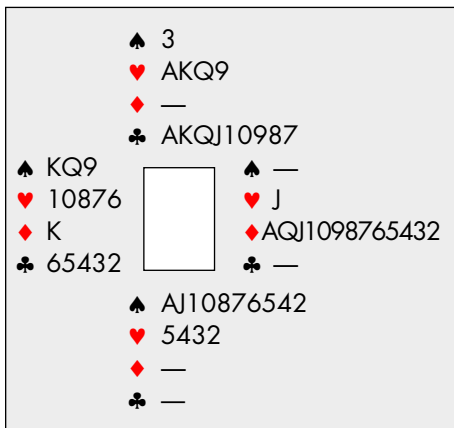
Grand Coup to reduce trumps



Clubs are trumps.

With the lead in dummy, the ♠A should be ruffed to reduce declarer's trumps to the same length as East's. Then go back to dummy with the ♦A for the trump coup.

Sextuple Grand Coup



South plays 6♠ redoubled; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer needs to reach a three-card ending in which both he and West have only trumps left. To that end, declarer ruffs the lead in dummy and undertruffs with the ♠2 in hand. He ruffs the ♣A and then goes back to dummy four times in hearts, which allows him to ruff five clubs in all. Now he can exit with the ♠J and West is endplayed in trumps. Note: the initial undertruff is not, strictly speaking, a Grand Coup, but there are still five of them!

José Le Dentu, *Bridge à la Une*.

Grand Coup to avoid weakening a suit

♠ Q107532
 ♥ K94
 ♦ A93
 ♣ A

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ —
 ♥ 532
 ♦ 742
 ♣ K987532

♠ A9864
 ♥ AJ86
 ♦ KJ65
 ♣ —

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣Q.

Discarding from a red suit cannot help matters, so declarer ruffs his superfluous ♣A. Now he plays ace and another spade. West wins and must either give up a ruff and sluff or break a red suit, in which case the fourth card will be used for a discard from dummy in the other red suit.

SECTION 4

FINESSES

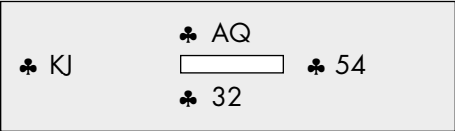
*It is said that a peek is worth a thousand finesSES.
Are you sure about that?*



Finesses and playing towards an honor

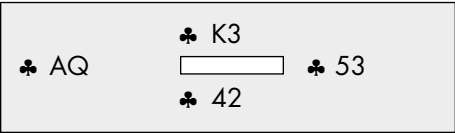
A finesse works because of the position of one or several adverse cards relative to the clockwise rotation of play. Semantically, we say that we ‘finesse’ against an opponent’s card; we can also say that we ‘finesse’ the lower card of a tenace. Beginners enjoy finessing, but other things being equal, the play offers only a 50% chance of success. A good player tries to learn more about the distribution and the placement of adverse honors before attempting a finesse. Sometimes he can eliminate the adverse exit cards and throw an opponent in to give him a free finesse. Bertrand Romanet used to call suits that are missing honor cards ‘strainers’. When a strainer tries to retain water, it flows through, but the water slows down when it tries to pass through. In other words, strainers dislike action: better let the opponents touch them first.

Simple finesse



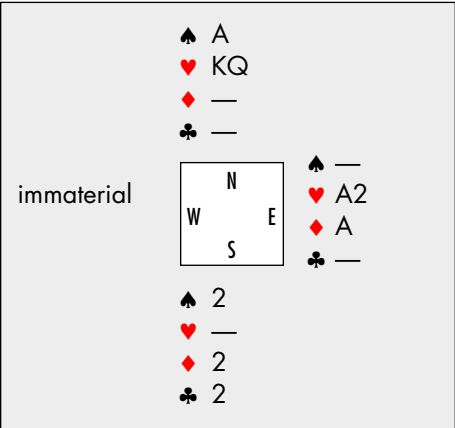
Declarer can take two tricks if the king is in front of the tenace. The finesse works when South leads the suit and also when East or West leads it. It does not work, of course, when the North hand is on lead.

Simple play towards an honor, or indirect finesse



The ♣K will score as long as the suit is not led by North. This play depends on the location of the ace in front of the king. There is no tenace.

Ruffing finesse



Clubs are trumps.

The ♥K of hearts is led from dummy. Declarer will ruff if East covers and discard a diamond otherwise. Success depends on the location of the ace that is to be ruffed, establishing the ♥Q.

Ruffing finesse

		♠ QJ1093		
		♥ KQ		
		♦ A82		
		♣ 543		
♠ 4				♠ K8765
♥ 4				♥ J52
♦ KQJ10743				♦ 965
♣ AQ106				♣ 72
		♠ A2		
		♥ A1098764		
		♦ —		
		♣ KJ98		

David Brown, *The Bridge World*, January 1984.

South plays 6♥; West leads his singleton spade.

If declarer plays dummy's ♠Q, East will duck and the contract is dead. A ruffing finesse works much better than a simple finesse. Declarer plays low from dummy at Trick 1 and wins his ♠A. Then he plays a trump to the queen, throws his spade on the ♦A and leads the ♠Q, East covering. Declarer ruffs and then a second trump to the dummy allows three clubs to be discarded on the established spades.

Forced ruffing finesse

		♠ —		
		♥ KQ		
		♦ 32		
		♣ 5		
♠ A				♠ ?
♥ ?				♥ ?
♦ AQ				♦ ?
♣ —				♣ ?
		♠ —		
		♥ —		
		♦ K4		
		♣ 762		

Clubs are trumps; West is on lead. The question mark represents the ♥A.

A spade concedes a ruff and discard and a diamond sets up the ♦K. A heart lead, however, gives declarer a trick irrespective of the position of the ♥A.

Strainers

	♠ 543	
	♥ 987	
	♦ AQ32	
	♣ AJ4	
♠ AQ8		♠ J1092
♥ QJ1032		♥ 76
♦ 87		♦ J109
♣ Q76		♣ 9852
	♠ K76	
	♥ AK4	
	♦ K654	
	♣ K103	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer could try to guess the ♣Q and then fall back on playing a spade to his king. However, these two strainers do not call for action. Instead, declarer can win the ♥K, eliminate diamonds in three rounds, cash the ♥A (West has only three left) and throw West in with a heart. He will have to give up the ninth trick in a black suit.

Double finesse

	♣ AQ10	
♣ KJ6		♣ —
	♣ 32	

Declarer can finesse the ten and later the queen, making three tricks if the king and jack are both onside. He will need a side entry to hand.

Repeated finesse

	♣ AJ10	
♣ K98		♣ Q76
	♣ 32	

Finessing the ten and then later the jack can produce two tricks, depending on the location of the queen and king.

Deep finesse

	♣ A7	
♣ KQJ6		♣ 543
	♣ 10982	

A deep finesse is the finesse of a low card early in the play of a suit. Here declarer can make two tricks by leading the ♣2 and putting in the ♣7 if West does not split. If West does play an honor, the ♣10 can be set up later.

Finesse the right card

	♣ KJ	
♣ Q54		♣ 9876
	♣ A1032	

Lead the ♣2 to the ♣J — the only chance to score four tricks. Leading the ♣K wins only the three tricks to which declarer was always entitled, even if East has the ♣Q (unless it is singleton, of course).

A frozen suit: he who plays first loses

♣ Q4	♣ K2	♣ A10
	♣ J3	

Whichever side leads this suit will give up a trick. North-South would score none, while East-West would score only the ace, which was always there for the taking.

Repeated finesse in defense

♣ K976	♣ 103	♣ AJ2
	♣ Q854	

East should lead the ♣J to score four tricks for his side. The ace is an entry permitting him to lead through the ♣8 next time.

Repeated finesse

♠ 10983	♠ AQ	♠ J7652
♥ 962	♥ AKQ	♥ J854
♦ 53	♦ Q106	♦ J987
♣ Q1095	♣ AK432	♣ —
	♠ K4	
	♥ 1073	
	♦ AK42	
	♣ J876	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♠10.

Declarer wins dummy's queen and plays the ♣2 towards the jack to assure four tricks in the suit. If East has all of the clubs, the position is obvious. If West has all of the clubs, the diamond entries to hand allow declarer to pick up the ♣109 by finessing.

Jimmy Tait, *Tales of the Club Expert*.

Free finesse

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ ?	♥ 3	♥ ?
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ ?76	♣ A102	♣ ?98
	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ KJ3	

With no indication where the ♣Q could be, declarer exits with a heart. Whichever defender wins will have to give him a free finesse in clubs.

Finesse, blocking and unblocking

	♠ 432	
	♥ 432	
	♦ K2	
	♣ AQ983	
♠ 1098765		♠ KQJ
♥ 76		♥ QJ1098
♦ A986		♦ 7
♣ 4		♣ K765
	♠ A	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ QJ10543	
	♣ J102	

George Coffin.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10.

Declarer plays diamonds and West holds up twice to allow East to unblock his spade honors. Now comes the ♣J, followed by the ♣10, and East should hold up twice to cut the communication in this suit. Finally, declarer cashes the ♥AK and exits with a ♥5 to throw East in and force him to give up a free finesse in clubs.

Finesse and unblocking

	♣ A1043	
♣ J987		♣ K65
	♣ Q2	

It is possible to score two tricks with no other entry to dummy. When West plays the ♣7 to the king, declarer should unblock the queen and later finesse against the jack.

Finesse and unblocking

	♣ Q103	
♣ AJ		♣ 9765
	♣ K842	

Jimmy Tait, *The Devil's Coup*.

Declarer leads the ♣2. It is possible to score three tricks with no entry to hand. When West takes the ace, declarer must discard the ♣10 from dummy and later finesse against the ♣9.

Finesse against both opponents

♠ Q753	♠ K64	♠ 2
♥ QJ108	♥ A	♥ K964
♦ 75	♦ AKQJ9	♦ 642
♣ AQ8	♣ J964	♣ K10532

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AJ1098	♠ 2
♥ 7532	♥ K964
♦ 1083	♦ 642
♣ 7	♣ K10532

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥ Q.

Declarer leads a spade to the ♠8, which holds the trick. If he goes back to dummy with the ♠K to renew this trump finesse, he will lose control when, as here, West has made the good play of holding up the ♠Q. Instead, declarer should lead the ♠9 and let it run, finessing the other way this time. It is a safety duck to retain a trump in dummy, which guards against a heart continuation.

(See 'Duck to retain a watchdog', p. 103)

Finesse to lose

♠ KJ8	♠ Q765	♠ 1094
♥ KQ1096	♥ A	♥ 7532
♦ 7642	♦ AKQJ10	♦ 83
♣ 4	♣ J82	♣ Q976

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A32	♠ 1094
♥ J84	♥ 7532
♦ 95	♦ 83
♣ AK1053	♣ Q976

Victor Mollo and Eric Jannersten, *The Best of Bridge*.

South plays 6♣; West leads the ♥ K.

To preserve control, declarer should retain a trump in dummy while drawing trumps. It is not enough to finesse against the queen by playing a club to the ♣10 and then playing one back towards the jack. East can win and play a third trump, removing declarer's heart ruff. The solution is to lead the ♣J at Trick 2 and duck the queen when East covers.

Finessing into a specific opponent

♠	KJ2									
♥	102									
♦	K43									
♣	KQJ103									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	A10983									
♥	AJ3									
♦	65									
♣	A42									

Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener, *Card Play Technique*.

South plays 4♠; West leads a small heart.

East plays the ♥Q and declarer ducks to keep West out and protect his ♦K. He wins the heart continuation with the ace and plays the ♠3 to his jack, possibly losing to a singleton queen, but securing his contract.

(See ‘Avoidance play’, p. 115)

Repeated play to an honor

♠	A7										
♥	KJ62										
♦	964										
♣	KQ74										
♠	J108	♠ 965432									
♥	A1093	♥ —									
♦	J83	♦ Q1072									
♣	1062	♣ 983									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠	KQ										
♥	Q8754										
♦	AK5										
♣	AJ5										

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠J.

Declarer can see that his only obstacle is to avoid losing two trumps if they are 4-0. If East has four hearts, nothing can be done. However, if West has them, the loss can be limited by playing twice towards dummy. Declarer should start by leading the ♥Q. If he starts with the king, he goes down ignominiously.

Finesse with Morton’s Fork

♣ K95	♣ AJ108	
	<div></div>	♣ Q3
	♣ 7642	

If South were on lead and/or there were plenty of side entries, two club finesses would bring the suit in for three tricks. However, the lead is in the North hand and only one entry to the South hand is available. Start with the ♣J or the ♣10, the only way to lose just one trick. If East does not take his queen, it will be crushed under the ace; if he does, the king can be finessed.

Combined finesse and play to an honor

immaterial

♠ AJ

♥ Q1032

♦ —

♣ —

♠ Q10

♥ AJ98

♦ —

♣ —

♠ 32

♥ K4

♦ —

♣ 76

N

W E

S

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads the ♥K. If East takes the ace, he must lead into the major-suit tenaces. If East holds up, a second heart towards dummy throws East in, again with a choice between giving up a trick in hearts and giving up one in spades.

Combining finesses

♠ K1074

♥ J1093

♦ 85

♣ 873

♠ J5

♥ 862

♦ KJ1094

♣ A106

♠ 862

♥ 754

♦ 763

♣ K942

N

W E

S

♠ AQ93

♥ AKQ

♦ AQ2

♣ QJ5

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥J.

Declarer could try the black-suit finesses or hope the ♠10 comes down in three rounds. To combine his chances, he should lead the ♠3 towards the jack. If West plays the ♠K, declarer has three spade tricks. If West plays low, there is time to establish a second club trick. If the ♠J loses to East's ♠K, declarer can still try to drop the ♠10 before attempting the club finesse.

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

Safety finesse

	♠ 86	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ KJ1094	
	♣ AKQ	
♠ KJ109742		♠ 53
♥ 73	N	♥ J1095
♦ Q7	W	♦ 652
♣ J5	S	♣ 10963
	♠ AQ	
	♥ 8642	
	♦ A83	
	♣ 8742	

Vincent Labbé, *Ne Plus Jamais Chuter de Chelem*.

South plays 6NT after West opened the bidding with 3♠; West leads the ♥7.

Declarer cashes a second heart and three rounds of clubs, as West discards a spade. West's distribution is known: East has the master club and must be kept off lead. The correct play now is to cash the ♦K and play a diamond to the eight, a safety finesse against East. If West can win this, he has to lead a spade into the A-Q. After unblocking the ♦A, declarer can get back to dummy with a heart.

Finesse and percentages

	♠ K963	
	♥ 98	
	♦ AQJ109	
	♣ Q5	
♠ 852		♠ Q107
♥ 2	N	♥ Q764
♦ K862	W	♦ 753
♣ J8764	S	♣ 1093
	♠ AJ4	
	♥ AKJ1053	
	♦ 4	
	♣ AK2	

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 7♥; West leads the ♣8.

Declarer wins in dummy and should immediately take the heart finesse. He can repeat it to avoid losing any trumps and must also find either the ♦K or the ♠Q. Cashing the ♥A first would be an error. This would, of course, win against a singleton queen, but declarer would not be able to pick up queen fourth, as here. If trumps are 4-1, the queen is four times as likely to be in the hand with four as she is to be singleton.

For a complete study, see Émile Borel and André Chéron, *The Mathematical Theory of Bridge*, trans. and ed. Alec Traub (New York: Monna Lisa, 1974).

Possible and impossible finesse

	♠ KJ3	
	♥ A	
	♦ KJ743	
	♣ 9843	
♠ 2		♠ Q975
♥ J10652		♥ 9873
♦ 952		♦ Q108
♣ A1072		♣ 65
	W	E
	N	S
	♠ A10864	
	♥ KQ4	
	♦ A6	
	♣ KQJ	

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥J.

Here, percentages are not the issue, but rather whether or not it is possible to succeed against a certain lie of the cards. Since we cannot pick up ♠Q9xx if West has it, we should play East for the ♠Q. The correct line is to cash the ♠K and then run the ♠J. If East covers the jack, dummy's diamond entry allows us to finesse against the ♠9.

Transforming a finesse into a play towards an honor

	♠ K8	
	♥ KQ76	
	♦ A763	
	♣ 843	
♠ Q109		♠ J5432
♥ 98		♥ 5
♦ KQ10952		♦ J84
♣ K9		♣ J1065
	W	E
	N	S
	♠ A76	
	♥ AJ10432	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ72	

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♥ after West has bid diamonds; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer attempts to count the adverse hands. He ruffs the diamond lead, plays a trump to dummy, ruffs a second diamond, goes back to dummy with another trump, cashes the ♦A and ruffs dummy's last diamond. Now he cashes the ♠K, the ♠A and the ♣A (!), and then ruffs the last spade. At this point, West is known to have started with only two clubs. The ♣8 is led from dummy, covered with the ten and the queen. West takes the king and must concede a ruff and sluff. The advantage of this line of play is obvious, as declarer gains regardless of who has the ♣K! The lead towards an honor is far superior to the finesse, because it serves as a safety measure by first removing West's second club.

Suit establishment with a play towards an honor

♠ QJ2
♥ A853
♦ Q102
♣ QJ9

♠ K76
♥ 1072
♦ J98
♣ 6543

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 103
♥ KJ96
♦ K763
♣ K107

♠ A9854
♥ Q4
♦ A54
♣ A82

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣6.

The ♣Q is played from dummy and East (incorrectly) ducks. The third club should be taken care of before touching trumps. After the ♥3 is led, East plays his king. Since he cannot touch clubs from his side, he returns a trump. Declarer has time to discard the losing club on the ♥A and the only hurdle left is guessing diamonds. If East had covered the ♣Q at Trick 1, declarer could have played on diamonds right away, hoping to create an entry to dummy to lead a heart up before West could regain the lead. Declarer can also play on spades instead. After West wins his ♠K and leads another club through, declarer can use the losing ♣9 to throw East in and force him to underlead one of his red kings.

Ruffing finesse festival

♠ Q
 ♥ AJ1075
 ♦ 65
 ♣ 65432

♠ AKJ
 ♥ 963
 ♦ AQJ4
 ♣ KJ10

♠ 7
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ K10987
 ♣ AQ987

♠ 109865432
 ♥ K42
 ♦ 32
 ♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

South plays 5♠ after East has bid clubs and West has bid hearts; West leads the ♦6.

Declarer wins the $\spadesuit A$ in dummy, leads the $\clubsuit K$, which is covered and ruffed, and goes back to dummy with a trump. Now comes the $\clubsuit J$, covered and ruffed. Then back again to dummy for a diamond discard on the $\clubsuit 10$, followed by the $\spadesuit Q$, which is also covered and ruffed. The last entry to the board (with a trump) allows a heart to be discarded on the good $\spadesuit J$.

Victor Mollo and Robert King, *Winning Bridge in the Menagerie*.

Finesses to avoid

	♠ Q109	
	♥ QJ105	
	♦ 543	
	♣ AQ5	
♠ 72		♠ 53
♥ A876		♥ K432
♦ KJ9		♦ 876
♣ J1092		♣ K863
	♠ AKJ864	
	♥ 9	
	♦ AQ102	
	♣ 74	

Andre Fovet and Jean Audebert, *Le Tiercé Gagnant de la Défense*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♣J.

Declarer should win the ♣A and lead the ♥5 from dummy. East must win the king or be exposed to a later ruffing finesse. When East returns a diamond, declarer should again refuse to finesse. Instead, he wins the ♦A, plays two rounds of trumps ending in dummy and leads the ♥Q, throwing his club loser. The defense is over. If declarer tries either of the available finesses, he goes down. Finesses are not a universal solution to every play problem!

Intra-finesse

This play consists of pinning an adverse card while taking a finesse. The complete maneuver involves taking finesses against both defenders and pinning an adverse card. A nice study was published by Gabriel Chagas as a BOLS Bridge Tip.

Intra-finesse against the king

♣ K7	♣ A63	♣ J1054
	♣ Q982	

Start with the ♣9. West cannot play the king without giving you three tricks, so the ten wins. Then the ace drops the king and the eight is finessed on the third round.

Intra-finesse against the king

♣ K10	♣ AJ2	♣ Q87
	♣ 943	

Start with a small club towards the ♣J: the queen wins. Then cash the ace, dropping the king and setting up the ♣9.

Intra-finesse against the ten

♣ 108	♣ J93	♣ KQ6
	♣ A75	

Start with a small club to the ♣9. Then enter dummy and play the jack to pin the ten.

Intra-finesse against the ten

♣ 106	♣ Q43	♣ KJ7
	♣ A98	

Start with the ♣9. If West covers, a simple finesse picks up two more tricks; if he ducks, leading the ♣Q from dummy pins his ten on the next round.

Intra-finesse against the ten

♣ 103	♣ Q962	♣ KJ85
	♣ A74	

Start with the ♣4. If West ducks, the ♣6 forces the eight. Now leading the ♣Q on the second round pins the ten and eventually sets up the ♣9. Even if the ♣9 is put in on the first round, the ♣6 can be set up.

Intra-finesse against the ten

♣ 108	♣ Q962		♣ KJ54
	♣ A73		

Start with the ♣3 and insert the ♣9. Leading the ♣Q on the second round sets up the ♣6 by pinning the ♣10.

Intra-finesse against the jack

♣ K1062	♣ A854		♣ J
	♣ Q973		

Lead small from dummy, intending to insert the ♣9 and play East for J-x or 10-x. When the jack appears, declarer's problems are over.

Intra-finesse against the eight

	♠ AQ		
	♥ AJ2		
	♦ Q97642		
	♣ J2		
♠ 10843		♠ 9762	
♥ 9763		♥ 1085	
♦ 8		♦ AJ103	
♣ K975		♣ A8	
	♠ KJ5		
	♥ KQ4		
	♦ K5		
	♣ Q10643		

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠3.

Playing on diamonds seems more hopeful than playing on clubs: they may be 3-2, or the ♦8 could be singleton. Declarer wins Trick 1 in dummy and leads the ♦9. East can score only two tricks in this suit.

Terence Reese and Julian Pottage, *Positive Declarer Play at Bridge*.

Intra-finesse against the eight

♣ J1065	♣ Q743		♣ K8
	♣ A92		

If East is the danger hand and the clubs must be set up, start with the ♣3 from dummy. If East plays the ♣8, declarer puts in the ♣9. If East plays the ♣K, declarer wins the ace and leads the ♣9 to pin the ♣8.

Intra-finesse with Morton's Fork

♠ —
 ♥ 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ AJ108

♠	N	♠
♥	W	♥
♦	E	♦
♣ K95	S	♣ Q3

♠ —
 ♥ A
 ♦ —
 ♣ 7642

With South on lead, two finesses bring in the club suit for one loser. However, the lead is in dummy and there is only one entry to hand. The solution is to lead the ♣J from dummy. If East takes the queen, only one more club finesse is needed. If he does not, it falls under the ace next round.

Forced intra-finesse

♠ AJ3
 ♥ J5432
 ♦ J32
 ♣ 32

♠ 107
 ♥ AK876
 ♦ A10987
 ♣ 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K9862
 ♥ 3
 ♦ 54
 ♣ AKQJ5

♠ Q54
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ 109876

South plays $4\spadesuit$; West leads the $\heartsuit A$, followed by the $\clubsuit 4$.

This club switch looks very much like a singleton. The challenge is to ruff the ♣5 in dummy, but with the ♠3, not the jack, which is needed for drawing trumps. Playing the ♠A followed by the ♠J is the only winning possibility, whether East covers with the queen or not. This is **Guillemard's Maneuver** with an intra-finesse.

Indirect finesse with an intra-finesse

♠ 10982
 ♥ 9863
 ♦ A83
 ♣ 94

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6543
 ♥ 1072
 ♦ QJ1095
 ♣ 10

♠ AQ
 ♥ AKQJ
 ♦ —
 ♣ AKJ7532

South plays 6♣; West leads a cautious ♥ 5.

Declarer leads the ♣J at Trick 2, a Greek gift, pinning the ♣10. If West takes the queen, declarer can reach dummy with the ♣9 to discard the ♠Q on the ♦A. If West ducks his queen, he will never make it.

Ruffing finesse after an intra-finesse

	♠ J76	
	♥ J43	
	♦ 106542	
	♣ A6	
♠ 842		♠ 5
♥ K10		♥ AQ98652
♦ KQ98		♦ 73
♣ KJ95		♣ 1042
	♠ AKQ1093	
	♥ 7	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ Q873	

South plays 4♠ after East's 3♥ opening; West leads the ♥K and switches to a trump.

Declarer wins in hand and needs to set up his club ruffs without letting West in to play another trump. Therefore, he leads the ♣3, intending to put in the ♣6, but West plays the ♣9. Declarer takes dummy's ace and runs the ♣6 to the jack. West plays another trump, as feared, but now the ♣Q, pinning the ♣10, allows a ruffing finesse against the ♣K. The ♣8 is set up and there is no more need to ruff it.

Mélange of finesses

	♠ A976	
	♥ Q1097	
	♦ J105	
	♣ J8	
♠ KQ54		♠ 1032
♥ J8		♥ 62
♦ 84		♦ AKQ9732
♣ KQ1053		♣ 6
	♠ J8	
	♥ AK543	
	♦ 6	
	♣ A9742	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♥8.

Declarer wins in dummy and then runs the ♣J, hoping to set up the suit. West wins and plays a second trump to the queen. On the ♣8, East discards a diamond, so declarer takes the ace, knowing the clubs are useless. He ruffs a club and plays a spade to the eight (a simple finesse against the ♠10). West wins, but cannot play back a club or declarer will be able to set up a club trick after all. Instead, West plays a diamond and declarer ruffs the second round. Now the ♠J is led (hoping to pin East's ♠10). When West covers, declarer wins with the ♠A. Now the ♠76 can be used for a ruffing finesse against East's ♠10. After the simple finesse of the ♠8, this line wins whether East has ♠10x (intra-finesse), ♠10xx (establishment by ruffing) or ♠10xxx (ruffing finesse).

Backwards finesse

Backwards finesse against the queen and ten

♣ Q65 ♣ A32 ♣ 1087
 ♣ KJ9

Start with the ♣J (West must cover) and then finesse against East's ♣10 on the way back.

Backwards finesse against the jack and the nine

♣ AJ7	♣ K32 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; margin: 5px;"></div> ♣ Q108	♣ 965
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Same position, one rank lower. Start with the ♣10 (West must cover) and then finesse against East's ♣9 coming back.

True backwards finesse in a trump contract

♠ —
 ♥ 32
 ♦ 2
 ♣ 2

♠ —
 ♥ A
 ♦ A98
 ♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ —
 ♥ —
 ♦ Q765
 ♣ —

♠ —
 ♥ —
 ♦ KJ10
 ♣ A

Clubs are trumps.

Without any entry to dummy, declarer should start with the $\spadesuit 10$. East wins and the ace can then be collected with a ruffing finesse. If the positions of the $\heartsuit A$ and $\heartsuit Q$ are reversed, declarer must start with the king and take a ruffing finesse against the queen.

Ernst Theimer, *The Bridge Adventures of Androdes MacThick*.

Backwards finesse and suit establishment

♠ QJ982	♠ AK3	♠ 104
♥ 975	♥ J42	♥ 63
♦ 103	♦ KJ87	♦ Q9542
♣ AK9	♣ 753	♣ Q1064
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 765	
	♥ AKQ108	
	♦ A6	
	♣ J82	

Terence Reese, *The Most Puzzling Situations in Bridge*.

South plays 4♥ after West passed as dealer and then later bid spades; West leads the ♣A.

West continues with the ♣K and a club to the queen. East switches to the ♠10. Declarer draws three rounds of trumps, finishing in dummy. West cannot have the ♦Q, so it is correct to lead the ♦J to the ♦Q and ♦A. Now the ♦K drops the ♦10. Finally, the ♦8 and the ♦7 are equals against the ♦9, and a diamond can be established via a ruffing finesse. The losing spade can be discarded.

Surrounding play

♣ K87	♣ 1065	♣ AJ93
	<div></div>	
	♣ Q42	

East is on lead. The only way to take four tricks is to start with the ♣J so as to keep the A-9 over dummy's ♣10. If the ♣9 is led, declarer ducks in hand and will later score the queen. There are many similar positions.

False or Chinese finesse

This is a psychological finesse playing on the opponents' ignorance of the true situation. Declarer tries a fake finesse to avoid a cover or, on the contrary, to tempt a cover.

Chinese finesse

♣ K987	♣ A2		♣ J106
	♣ Q543		

There is no legitimate way to score two tricks. However, we could hope West won't cover when we lead the queen, thinking his king is protected.

False finesse

♣ A74	♣ K10963		♣ Q5
	♣ J82		

Hugh Kelsey, *Deceptive Plays*.

There is no legitimate way to play this position for one loser. However, if the ♣3 is led from dummy, East may duck. Now a low club to the king will drop the queen. This can be particularly useful if East is the danger hand for another suit.

False finesse against the queen

♣ Q1065	♣ K972		♣ A
	♣ J843		

There is no legitimate way to play this position for one loser. Declarer can hope West will cover when the jack is led. Then declarer ducks in dummy and East has to win the ace. The ♣10 can be picked up later by finessing.

False finesse against the queen

♣ Q98	♣ J2		♣ AK
	♣ 1076543		

There is no legitimate way to lose only two tricks. However, leading small towards the jack may induce West to play his queen.

False finesse against the king

♣ K876	♣ Q1092		♣ A
	♣ J543		

There is no legitimate way to play this position for one loser. However, we can hope that West covers the jack, which is then ducked to the singleton ace.

False finesse against the ace

♣ A8	♣ 32	♣ J109
	<div></div>	♣ KQ7654

There is no legitimate way to play this position for one loser. However, starting with the queen can induce West to hold up his ace, fearing East has a singleton king. Then South can lead a small club next round.

Idiot's finesse

♣ 1062	♣ KQ83	♣ J97
	<div></div>	♣ A54

The Bridge World, July 1978.

Declarer plays the ♣A and then leads the ♣5. West puts in the ♣10 and East plays the ♣9 under dummy's king. Declarer could well believe that West has split from J1062. Declarer can come back to hand in another suit and try the finesse against the jack.

Temptation

♣ J1083	♣ AK752	♣ Q
	<div></div>	♣ 964

Declarer has nothing to lose by leading the ♣9. If West covers, the suit can be set up for just one loser with another lead up and a duck.

Temptation

♠ 10854	♠ KJ6	♠ A3
♥ K87	♥ J43	♥ Q5
♦ J6	♦ AQ10842	♦ 975
♣ AKQ6	♣ 3	♣ J108752
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q972	
	♥ A10962	
	♦ K3	
	♣ 94	

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♣A.

East signals with the ♣J and the defense switches to ace and another spade. Declarer has nothing to lose by leading the ♥J. If East plays the queen (cover an honor with an honor...), he loses only one trump trick. If East withholds his queen, the defenders score two trump tricks — naturally, if declarer plays the ace, or via a spade ruff if he lets the jack ride.

Guess

♣ KJ54	♣ Q107	♣ A92
	<div></div>	♣ 863

West leads the jack, covered with the queen and the ace. When West regains the lead in another suit, he plays the ♣4. If declarer ducks this to his ♣8, he scores no club tricks.

Entry-creating finesse

Also called the Oslo finesse, this is a finesse that does not produce an extra trick, but is necessary to gain an entry (usually to dummy) to establish another suit.

Obligatory Oslo finesse

♣ J98	♣ AQ10		
			immaterial
	♣ K32		

Suppose declarer needs three entries to dummy. It is correct to start with the king and overtake with the ace, finessing the ten later. Declarer could also start with a club to the ♣10 and overtake the ♣K later. However, this line is inferior because East could have the ♣J singleton.

Attempted Oslo finesse

♣ K87	♣ A103		
			immaterial
	♣ QJ2		

If declarer needs two entries to dummy, he leads the ♣2 and puts in the ♣10. The queen can be overtaken later with the ace. West can defeat this plan by rising with the king on the first round, blocking the suit. Starting with the queen can never win because West will always know when to rise to prevent the ten from becoming an entry.

Attempted Oslo finesse

♣ J87	♣ K109		
		♣ A654	
	♣ Q32		

If declarer needs two entries to dummy, he leads the ♣2 and puts in the ♣9. The finesse against the jack can be repeated later for a second entry. West can defeat this plan by playing the ♣J on the first or second round. Starting with the queen can never win because East will simply duck it.

Attempted Oslo finesse

♣ A1085	♣ Q97		
		♣ K32	
	♣ J64		

Declarer needs one entry to dummy. He leads the ♣4 and puts in the ♣9. He can later play towards the queen. West can defeat this plan by playing the ♣10 on the first round. Starting with the ♣J can never win because East will duck it.

Entry or squeeze

	♠ AJ9843	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ AQ104	
	♣ 3	
♠ K1075		♠ —
♥ A1092		♥ 643
♦ 52		♦ J8763
♣ KJ10		♣ 98752
	♠ Q62	
	♥ J875	
	♦ K9	
	♣ AQ64	

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥A followed by the ♥2.

Declarer needs three entries to hand to set up the spades. He plays the ♦4 from dummy, intending to put in the ♦9. If East rises with the ♦J, he gives away a trick in diamonds. Then the fourth diamond will squeeze West in three suits.

Entry or tempo

	♠ Q107	
	♥ KQ95	
	♦ AK	
	♣ AK105	
♠ 84		♠ KJ952
♥ J10743		♥ A8
♦ 9753		♦ 62
♣ J4		♣ Q872
	♠ A63	
	♥ 62	
	♦ QJ1084	
	♣ 963	

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠8.

Declarer plays dummy's ♠10 and ducks the jack. However, East continues with the ♠K, a [Merrimac Coup](#), and the diamond suit looks buried. Declarer wins the ♠A and, hoping for an entry with the ♣9, plays the ♣3 to the ♣10. East refuses to take it! Now declarer cashes the ♦AK, the ♣AK and then exits with the ♥9. West takes the ♥J and plays a heart to the five and the ace. East can cash his ♣Q, but must give the rest to dummy. By refusing the non-material finesse, East gave a tempo to declarer.

Double Oslo finesse

	♠ AJ	
	♥ 2	
	♦ K102	
	♣ 8765432	
♠ Q5432		♠ 9876
♥ —	N	♥ J543
♦ J8765	W	♦ 94
♣ AKQ	S	♣ J109
	♠ K10	
	♥ AKQ109876	
	♦ AQ3	
	♣ —	

Victor Mollo, *Masters and Monsters*.

South plays 7♥; West leads the ♣K.

Declarer ruffs and lays down the ♥A, finding a 4-0 break. He must reduce his trumps! He plays the ♠10 to the jack, ruffs a club, plays the ♦3 to the ten, another club ruff, the ♦Q to the king and a third club ruff. The ♠A is a last entry to dummy to lead a master club and pick up East’s trumps. West had three chances to bring the contract down: first to refuse to lead a club, which would help to reduce the trumps; then later to rise with the ♠Q or the ♦J to block the entries.

Oslo finesse and a squeeze

	♠ AKJ105	
	♥ K	
	♦ KQJ103	
	♣ Q7	
♠ Q8742		♠ —
♥ J	N	♥ Q10974
♦ A4	W	♦ 9875
♣ ?8632	S	♣ ?954
	♠ 963	
	♥ A86532	
	♦ 62	
	♣ AJ	

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥J. The question marks represent the ♣K and ♣10.

Declarer wins the ♥K, but when the ♠A is cashed, East discards. Where do you want the ♣K to be? If East has it, you need to come to hand twice to finesse in spades and only then cash the ♥A. If you cash it too early, it will squeeze dummy. Depending on which club is led from dummy, East covers or not with the king, not allowing declarer a hand second entry. Too bad for the Oslo finesse! It looks strange, but you must hope that West has the ♣K, reducing the possibilities in this suit, but creating a menace. Set up and run the diamonds and then come back to hand by overtaking the ♣Q. Now the ♥A squeezes West, who must keep four spades and the ♣K. If he discards his ♣K, the ♣J will be the second hand entry needed to finesse again in spades.

Obligatory finesse

This technique involves playing for an honor doubleton, starting from the right hand, to be the only chance to lose only one trick. Often, this involves a lead up to an honor and a duck on the way back.

♣ A8	♣ Q543		♣ J109
	♣ K762		

Play the ♣2 towards the queen and then duck the ♣3 from dummy, hoping for the ace to be doubleton.

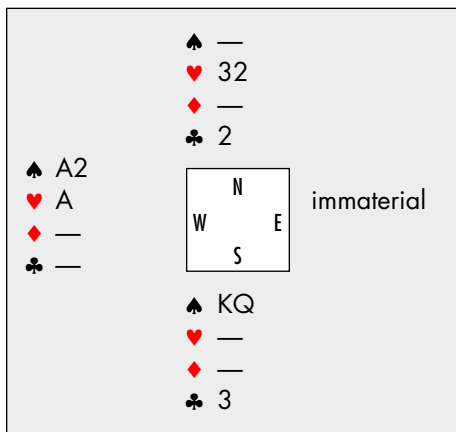
♣ K9852	♣ J64		♣ Q7
	♣ A103		

Play the ♣4 to the ♣10 and the king. Then cash the ace, dropping the queen and establishing the jack.

Ruffing finesse

Playing from a sequence towards a void allows a trick to be established without loss if the defensive honor is in front of the void. However, this simple basic position leads to some complex variations.

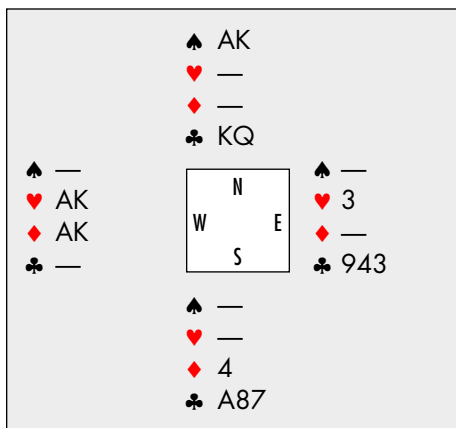
Simple ruffing finesse



Clubs are trumps.

The ♠K forces the ace, which is ruffed, setting up the queen. Many variations on this theme are possible.

Forcing out a trump



Clubs are trumps.

East's third trump makes it hard for declarer to untangle his tricks. He goes to dummy with the ♣K and leads a spade. East must ruff and declarer overruffs. Dummy's second trump collects East's last club.

Forcing trump finesse

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ 2		♥ —
♦ —		♦ A
♣ A98		♣ 754
♠ —	N	♠ —
♥ —	W	♥ —
♦ —	E	♦ —
♣ KJ103	S	♣ —
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ 2		♦ —
♣ Q62		♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads a diamond. Now if West ruffs small, declarer overruffs and leads a heart, ruffing low and endplaying West in trumps for three tricks. If West ruffs with the ♣10, dummy discards a heart and West must then lead into the trump tenace: declarer scores two tricks.

Defensive trump coup ruffing finesse

♠ 2	♠ A	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ A
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ K92	♣ A84	♣ —
♠ —	N	♠ —
♥ —	W	♥ —
♦ —	E	♦ —
♣ QJ107	S	♣ —
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —

Clubs are trumps.

East leads a heart. Now if declarer ruffs high, West discards and will score his ♣9. If declarer ruffs small, the overruff with the ♣9 sets up the ♣K.

Ruffing finesse and endplay

♠ ?2	♠ AQ8	♠ ?93
♥ ?43	♥ —	♥ ?2
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ 32	♣ —
♠ —	N	♠ —
♥ —	W	♥ —
♦ —	E	♦ —
♣ —	S	♣ —
♠ 654		♠ —
♥ Q		♥ —
♦ —		♦ —
♣ 7		♣ —

Clubs are trumps. The question marks represent the major-suit kings.

Declarer leads his ♥Q. Now if West has the king and covers, it is ruffed, and there is still the possibility of the spade finesse. If West does not cover, a spade is thrown from dummy. At this point, if East has the ♥K, he is on lead to give up a ruff and discard or lead into the spade tenace.

Pitt's Finesse

♠ A	♠ —	♠ —				
♥ —	♥ 2	♥ AKQJ				
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —				
♣ 10432	♣ J986	♣ Q				
	<table><tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr></table>	N	E	W	S	
N	E					
W	S					
	♠ 2					
	♥ —					
	♦ —					
	♣ AK75					

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer lays down the ♣A, dropping the queen. He then finesses against the ♣10 and ruffs his losing heart high. He finishes with a second club finesse. Pitt's Coup and Pitt's Finesse are characterized by playing or ruffing with a master trump before taking a finesse.

(See 'Trump coups', p. 217)

Finesse percentage play

When declarer cannot combine all of his chances, usually due to entry problems, he should choose the most productive line, the one that gives him the best chance of success.

Best percentage

	♠ 2	
	♥ AK3	
	♦ J95	
	♣ AK7642	
♠ K1074		♠ 53
♥ 10986		♥ QJ4
♦ Q86		♦ K432
♣ 105		♣ QJ98
	♠ AQJ986	
	♥ 752	
	♦ A107	
	♣ 3	

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♥10.

The trump finesse can be attempted only once against either the king or the ten; it is helpful only if East holds K-x or 10-x. If declarer tries it now and loses, West will play a heart back. There will be no more entries to dummy because the ♣AK must be cashed fast to discard the losing heart. In contrast, the immediate finesse in diamonds offers more than a 75% chance for two tricks. Declarer can afford to lose two tricks in spades and one in diamonds. If he starts with the spade finesse, he will be short an entry to dummy for two diamond finesses.

The only chance

	♠ A97	
	♥ 62	
	♦ J854	
	♣ KJ63	
♠ —		♠ 63
♥ AKQJ743		♥ 10985
♦ A10		♦ Q972
♣ 9854		♣ Q72
	♠ KQJ108542	
	♥ —	
	♦ K63	
	♣ A10	

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♠ after West opened the bidding in hearts; West leads the ♥A.

West's bid means that attempting a diamond play towards the king cannot be reasonable. Instead, two diamonds will have to be discarded on the clubs. To achieve that, declarer needs the ♣Q to be third at the most. However, if West has the ♣Q, only one discard is available, because he will cover the ♣10. The only chance is to play East for the ♣Q. To that end, cross to dummy in trumps and try an immediate club finesse, playing low to the ♣10. On the layout above, two diamonds can be discarded on the good clubs.

A finesse that wins even when it loses

	♠ AQJ6	
	♥ KJ73	
	♦ —	
	♣ AJ953	
♠ 102		♠ K974
♥ 54		♥ 82
♦ K87642		♦ AQ10953
♣ Q107		♣ 2
	♠ 853	
	♥ AQ1096	
	♦ J	
	♣ K864	

Fred Karpin, *How to Play Slam Contracts*.

South plays 6♥; West leads a low diamond.

Declarer ruffs in dummy, draws trumps in two rounds and then plays the ♣K followed by the ♣4. When West plays the ♣10, dummy's ♣J can be played in complete safety. If East has the ♣Q, it is his last club and he must either lead a spade or concede a ruff and discard. The second losing spade goes on the fifth club.

(See 'Elimination play', p. 76)

Restricted choice

This is a principle studied by Alan Truscott and developed by Terence Reese. If a player could hold two equal cards, and plays one of them, it is twice as likely that he was forced to play it (i.e. his choice of plays was restricted) than that he chose to play it holding both cards. So when declarer is interested in two equal missing cards (the queen and jack, say), once an opponent plays one of them, it is twice as likely that his partner has the other. Of course, other considerations, like the bidding, the distribution and any high cards already known, must be taken into account before applying this principle.

Restricted Choice against king-queen

♣ K98	♣ AJ1032		♣ Q6
	<input type="text"/>		
	♣ 754		

Declarer leads to the ♣10, which loses to the queen. Everyone knows that declarer should finesse again on the next round rather than hope for East to have a doubleton K-Q.

Restricted Choice against ace-king

♣ A875	♣ QJ9		♣ K106
	<input type="text"/>		
	♣ 432		

Declarer leads towards the queen, taken with the king. He should later lead the ♣3 to the jack, rather than try the finesse against the ♣10.

Restricted Choice against jack-ten

♣ J865	♣ A973		♣ 104
	<input type="text"/>		
	♣ KQ2		

Declarer cashes the ♣KQ and sees East's ♣10 fall. On the third round, it is twice as likely that West started with jack-fourth than that East held ♣J10x.

Restricted Choice against queen-jack

♣ J95	♣ A108763		♣ Q
	<input type="text"/>		
	♣ K42		

When declarer cashes the ♣K and sees East's queen fall, West has J-x-x twice as often as East has Q-J alone. Declarer should finesse on the second round.

Restricted Choice against king-jack

♣ KJ	♣ 8632		♣ 1097
	♣ AQ54		

Declarer ducks a round of clubs and see West's jack take the trick. Later he plays this suit from dummy, knowing West has only one card left in it. It is twice as likely that West started with K-J (from which he would never win the king) than J-10 (from which he could play either card). Therefore, declarer should play the ace. The principle does not apply only to touching cards.

Restricted Choice between two suits

	♠ 102		
	♥ AJ1054		
	♦ AK74		
	♣ Q9		
♠ J5		♠ K973	
♥ 97632		♥ 8	
♦ 653		♦ J98	
♣ K54		♣ J8762	
	♠ AQ864		
	♥ KQ		
	♦ Q102		
	♣ A103		

The Bridge World, November 1985.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♦ 5.

East's ♦ J is won with the queen. The double finesse in clubs offers better percentages than the simple finesse in spades, but that will require two entries to dummy. The hearts could be 5-1, as here, so overtaking an honor could be costly. The other solution is to play a club towards dummy and play the right card. Suppose declarer guesses wrong, putting in the ♣ 9, and East returns a club. If East has the ♣ K, we must let this run to the queen. However, if he had the ♣ K, East could have played it now to smother the queen. In addition, West's choice of leading a diamond rather than a club might mean that the two suits were not equivalent: that West held nothing in diamonds, and something in clubs. Declarer therefore takes the ♣ A, cashes his red-suit winners and takes the winning spade finesse.

SECTION 5

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF SQUEEZES

Making advances to a sexy opponent



About squeeze play

Victor Mollo's Rueful Rabbit believes that executing a squeeze means playing a long suit to provoke discard errors. This is certainly a possibility, but it is not as simple as that. To 'squeeze' means to 'tighten', to leave no room for a useful card that an opponent would prefer to keep. The rules of the play are pitiless: you are not allowed to keep more cards than the other players!

When all else fails, there might still be the chance of a squeeze. Bertrand Romanet wrote that a squeeze is not a last-chance technique, but an additional chance, helpful against the bad splits that set up squeeze positions. It is useful to think about a squeeze early in the conception of a line of play and to keep it in reserve if something goes wrong. Therefore, when studying the dummy that just hit the table, we start by trying to think of a line of play using one or more of the techniques described earlier in this book. If nothing else is going to produce the right number of tricks, we can think about a squeeze. We can also think about falling back on a squeeze if our chosen technique fails, if we run into an unexpected bad split or a distribution that is less friendly than we hoped for. A very good player can include a squeeze in his line of play right from the beginning.

Some technical terms that are useful when talking about squeezes:

Squeeze card: a card that strangles the opponent's hand, like a boa constrictor, and forces him to sacrifice a winner, a guard, an entry, an advantage, a tempo — well, anything that would profit the other side. The squeeze card is often a winner, but can also be a losing card played by declarer (submarine squeeze) or a winner played by the opponents (suicide squeeze).

Menaces: a card or cards that threaten to become established when an opponent must play to the squeeze card, discarding, perforce, his guard. As a general rule (although there are some exceptional or 'exotic' cases), two menaces are needed against the same opponent, who must make a fatal choice to unguard one of the menaces, establishing a trick. In a double squeeze, two menaces are needed against each opponent, among them a 'double' menace or an extended menace. An important idea is that of 'isolating the menaces', i.e. making sure that only one opponent can guard them.

Guard: a card held by the defense that controls a menace and is subject to the pressure of the squeeze card.

Communicating menace: A menace can be either 'blocked' or 'communicating'. To be 'blocked' means it has no intrinsic communication, and to be 'communicating' means it is accompanied by a winner that enables declarer to reach it. This communication card can, in fact, be in the same suit as the menace, or in another suit. Some positions require communication in two directions: to the dummy and back to declarer's hand. An isolated or blocked menace in dummy with no communication, as if it were on a desert island, is usually of no use: it can be established, but not reached (except in a stepping-stone squeeze). All squeezes need some means of communication, without which they are non-productive.

Rectifying the count: This technique consists of giving up a losing trick before the squeeze can operate in order to remove an idle card from the hand of one or both opponents. In order to 'strangle' an opponent, one should first, most of the time, crowd him, removing his breathing room, and strip him of all the idle cards that he could discard without pain. Then the squeeze takes place in a position where you have all the rest of the tricks but one. However, many of the more exotic squeezes can work without rectifying the count. Rectifying the count is an operation the declarer should actively work on, giving the opponents the tricks that belong to them early to tighten the position.

Discarding: Dummy's discard can be automatic, when the hand possesses an idle card. It can also be non-automatic, meaning that dummy's discard depends on the card discarded by the hand playing just before it, with dummy keeping the suit that has just been unguarded.

Position: Like the finesse, the lob and other techniques, the squeeze often depends on a positional element, in that the play follows a clockwise movement. A player must make up his mind and play a card before the next hand does so. The position of menaces in relation to the defense's guards is often of prime importance. We say a squeeze is 'positional' when a menace must be specifically placed after the defensive hand, the one that suffers the squeeze. When this is not the case, the squeeze is 'non-positional' or 'automatic'.

Simple squeeze: a squeeze operating against one opponent.

Double squeeze: a squeeze operating against both opponents.

Triple squeeze: This is actually an abuse of language, because we cannot have three opponents (no, partner is not one!). A triple squeeze operates against one opponent in three suits, and we should really call it a 'three-suit squeeze'.

Preparation: All this shows that preparing a squeeze calls for several precise actions: choose the squeeze card, rectify the count, isolate or position ([Guard Transfer](#)) or free a menace ([Vienna Coup](#)), and protect the communications. Constructing a squeeze requires declarer to visualize what is necessary, although sometimes he may fall into a position where the squeeze operates anyway, like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain, who talked prose all his life without knowing it.

The stages for preparing a squeeze are of prime importance. First, identify the suit that will provide the squeeze card. Then the menaces between the two hands are easily identified, along with their position relative to each defender. Now verify the useful communications, and the squeeze card can be chosen. Depending on the placement of cards, one type of squeeze or another can be selected. Finally, one must tighten the position before applying the *coup de grace*, the squeeze card.

Counting your tricks

Declarer counts his winning tricks using the techniques previously described. When one or more tricks are missing, the possibility of a squeeze needs to be considered. Mario Cicchelli, in his magical book *Lo squeeze: studio sul gioco di compressione nel bridge*, which is out of print and has been unobtainable for many years, proposes a different trick count in possible squeeze situations: he counts potential tricks, including menaces. When this count is two more than thirteen, there is a potential double squeeze. If it is one more, then there is a possible simple squeeze. He gives the following examples.

Count for a simple squeeze

	♠ 7432	
	♥ J752	
	♦ A875	
	♣ 6	
♠ J10965		♠ AK8
♥ —		♥ 98
♦ KJ109		♦ 532
♣ J1085		♣ Q9732
	♠ Q	
	♥ AKQ10643	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ AK4	

South plays 6♥; West leads the ♠J.

Cicchelli counts the following tricks and potential tricks: two in spades, both menaces; seven in hearts; two in diamonds — the ace for sure and the queen or eight as a menace; three in clubs — both honors and a ruff. That is a total of fourteen potential tricks, or +1 over thirteen. We could also say, more classically, that we have eleven tricks and two menaces, predicting a simple squeeze. The correct line is to ruff the second spade and play the ♥A and ♥J. Now ruff a spade, cash the ♣AK, ruff a club and run the trumps. With three cards left, dummy has ♠7 ♦A8, and West is squeezed in spades and diamonds. At the second trick, East should have returned a diamond to cut communications.

Count for a double squeeze

♠ KQ104	♠ AJ5	♠ 98762									
♥ Q974	♥ A832	♥ J105									
♦ J85	♦ 10432	♦ Q97									
♣ 72	♣ AK	♣ 83									
	<table> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 3										
	♥ K6										
	♦ AK6										
	♣ QJ109654										

South plays 7♣; West leads the ♠K.

Cicchelli counts: two spade tricks — the ace and the menace of the jack; three heart tricks — the ace, the king and the menace of the eight; three diamond tricks — the ace, the king and the menace of the ten; and seven club tricks. The total is fifteen potential tricks, or +2 over thirteen. We could also say, more classically, that we have twelve tricks and three menaces, predicting a double squeeze or, if all the guards are in the same hand, a three-suit squeeze. We play the ♠A, the ace and king of trumps, ruff a spade and run three more rounds of trumps. With six cards left, the last trump is played and forces West to discard a diamond, East a heart. The ♦AK follows, West discards a heart, dummy a spade, and East is squeezed in the red suits. If West had discarded a heart and East a diamond on the last trump, the ♥AK would have squeezed West in spades and diamonds.

Dear reader, count the way you prefer. For myself, I think that the classical count is easier; what's more, none of the authors of major books on squeeze play (Bertrand Romanet, Clyde Love, Hugh Kelsey, David Bird) ever talks about Cicchelli's type of count. However, all authors insist on the necessity of properly identifying the number of potential menaces: two menaces against the same opponent for a simple squeeze and two menaces against each opponent, among them a suit guarded by both opponents, for a double squeeze.

One must also understand the problem posed by the available space in a hand. Declarer cannot have all of his working cards for a squeeze in the same hand: they must be split between his two hands. In other words, he could not pressure an opponent between one hand and nothing, between menaces and a vacuum. Even the location of those menaces relative to the opponents who have the guards is important when the squeeze is positional.

One defender cannot, by himself, carry the entire burden of the defense in his own hand without collapsing under pressure. That is the underlying principle of all squeezes.

Falling back on a squeeze

Declarer first selects a line using a normal technique from among the ones studied in the earlier parts of this book. However, when an unfriendly distribution shows up, he must review his line of play. This is the moment when a squeeze becomes necessary.

	♠ A5	
	♥ A82	
	♦ K4	
	♣ 975432	
♠ 98		♠ 102
♥ Q1075		♥ J943
♦ 103		♦ QJ976
♣ AKQJ6		♣ 108
	♠ KQJ7643	
	♥ K6	
	♦ A852	
	♣ —	

Mario Cicchelli, *Lo squeeze*.

South plays 7♠; West leads the ♣A.

The normal line is to ruff two diamonds in dummy. Diamonds need be only 4-3, as the second ruff can be made with the ace with no risk of an overruff. Declarer ruffs the opening lead and cashes the ♦K, comes to hand by ruffing a club (a discovery play), cashes the ♦A and leads the ♦2. Alas, West ruffs with the ♠8 in front of dummy. The normal plan just failed, unless the ♠8 is singleton; this is unlikely and therefore it is too dangerous to try for another diamond ruff. The best recourse now is a squeeze. Dummy overruffs with the ♠A and a club is led, to which East fails to follow. We now know that the ♦8 is a menace against East, and the ♣9 against West. When the spades are run, with three cards remaining, no opponent can keep two hearts. The ♥8 will score the last trick: a simultaneous double squeeze.

	♠ A54	
	♥ 86	
	♦ AJ532	
	♣ 842	
♠ QJ102		♠ 9876
♥ J9		♥ 107432
♦ K83		♦ Q1097
♣ 10973		♣ —
	♠ K3	
	♥ AKQ5	
	♦ 6	
	♣ AKQJ65	

Mario Cicchelli, *Lo squeeze*.

South plays 7♣; West leads the ♠Q.

The normal line is to ruff the third heart in dummy. Declarer plays two top trumps and the ♥AK, but when the ♥J falls, this plan has become too dangerous. Three suits contain losers, so there are as many menaces. Declarer cashes the ♠A, a Vienna Coup, and then runs all of the trumps. With four cards left, he has a guard squeeze position. East's last four cards are the ♠9, ♥107 and the ♦Q. If he discards the ♦Q, declarer just finesses against the king. If East discards a heart, the ♥5 is established. If East discards a spade, the ♥Q squeezes West in spades and diamonds.

	♠ A843	
	♥ J764	
	♦ A52	
	♣ K10	
♠ Q62		♠ J975
♥ Q1052		♥ 983
♦ Q103		♦ J976
♣ 764		♣ 85
	♠ K10	
	♥ AK	
	♦ K84	
	♣ AQJ932	

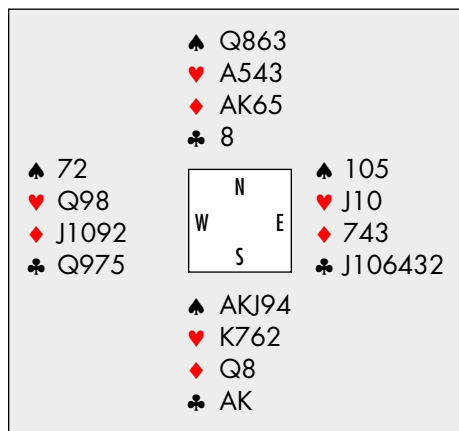
Mario Cicchelli, *Lo squeeze*.

South plays 7♣; West leads the ♣4.

The normal line is to see whether the ♥Q will fall in three rounds. Declarer cashes the ♥AK, crosses to dummy with a trump and ruffs the ♥4 high. Unfortunately, the ♥Q does not appear. Time to think about a squeeze. The ♥J is a menace, but declarer needs a second menace, which is easy to construct by playing the ♠AK and ruffing the ♠3 high. The diamonds are surely guarded by both opponents. Declarer cannot know which opponent is menaced in each suit, but the squeeze card is necessarily the last trump in the closed hand. Therefore, he must hope the guards are placed as in the diagram and discard the ♥J, rather than the ♠8, on the squeeze card. The ♦8 will score the last trick via a simultaneous double squeeze.

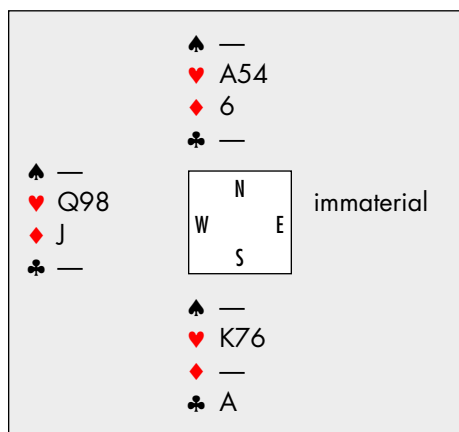
Recognizing the elements of a squeeze

The menaces and the positions of their guards, the communications and the squeeze suit, must be identified and their respective placements must conform to a known squeeze position.



South plays 7NT; West leads the ♦ J.

No normal line of play can produce thirteen tricks, so declarer immediately starts thinking about a squeeze. He has enough length in both red suits that each can be guarded by only one opponent; there are no other possible menaces. We require the same opponent to be guarding both suits. The ♦ 6 can be a blocked menace, and either the ♥ 7 or the ♥ 5 can be a communicating menace. However, since dummy needs to discard a heart on the last black card, we should use the ♥ 7. The last spade or the last club can be the squeeze card. With only four cards left, we shall have a simple automatic squeeze.



In the diagram, West is squeezed, but East could hold both guards with the same result.

Identifying the squeeze suit

The choice of squeeze suit depends on the placement of the other necessary ingredients.

♠ KQJ102	♠ A653	♠ 987									
♥ 8	♥ AK6	♥ QJ1072									
♦ J1053	♦ 872	♦ Q94									
♣ 1052	♣ 643	♣ 98									
	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W			S			
N		E									
W											
S											
	♠ 4										
	♥ 9543										
	♦ AK6										
	♣ AKQJ7										

South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠K. During the auction, East bid hearts and West bid spades, which East supported.

No normal line of play can produce eleven tricks. Therefore, from the start declarer should plan a squeeze. The squeeze card could be the last trump. A spade menace can be isolated against West. A communicating menace exists in hearts against East and the communicating ♦6 acts against both opponents. The count should be rectified: hold up the ♠A and take the third round, discarding two hearts from hand.

♠ Q	♠ 6	♠ —									
♥ 8	♥ A3	♥ QJ									
♦ J10	♦ 8	♦ Q9									
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W			S			
N		E									
W											
S											
	♠ —										
	♥ 9										
	♦ A6										
	♣ 7										

However, when the trumps are played off, dummy has no good pitch on the last club. One hand cannot hold too many of the necessary elements. Dummy has a blocked menace, the communicating menace and a communication to the double menace. There is no more room for an idle card to discard on the squeeze card before East has to play. The plan must be revised so that dummy's hearts become the final squeeze suit. The bottom position on the left is the one to aim for:

♠ Q	♠ 6	♠ —									
♥ 8	♥ AK6	♥ QJ10									
♦ J1053	♦ 87	♦ Q94									
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W			S			
N		E									
W											
S											
	♠ —										
	♥ 93										
	♦ AK6										
	♣ 7										

Play the last trump, throwing a diamond from dummy. East is squeezed in the red suits and is forced to let go a diamond. East is now out of the hand and it is time to take care of West. Cash both hearts and the second one squeezes West between diamonds and spades. This is a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

Identifying the squeeze card

Declarer must be in the right hand when the squeeze is applied. Therefore, he must be careful to select the card as well as the suit that will apply the pressure.

	♠ 43	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ AKJ104	
	♣ Q952	
♠ QJ1098		♠ 72
♥ KQ864		♥ 975
♦ 3		♦ Q8762
♣ A6		♣ J43
	♠ AK65	
	♥ 1032	
	♦ 95	
	♣ K1087	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer wins his ace and plays a club to the queen to remove West's entry. Next comes a club to the ten and ace. West cannot set up both of his suits, so he continues with a spade to declarer's king. The ♦9 is led for a losing finesse against the ♦Q. If East plays a heart now, he destroys the squeeze by removing the communication in hearts. Instead, he exits with a club. Now South must be careful! He wins the ♣K, unblocking the ♣9 on it, and cashes the master diamond. The squeeze card will be the ♣7 beside the isolated menace, the ♠6 — not the ♣9, which is located with the diamonds in the wrong hand along with the communicating menace. This will be a positional squeeze against West.

Rectifying the count

This technique is used to prepare for a squeeze. It consists of giving up a losing trick before the squeeze can operate in order to remove an idle card from the hand of one or both opponents. If we want to suffocate an opponent, we should, as far as possible, remove his ability to breathe! There are three basic methods:

- Ducking a round of a suit.
- Conceding the opponents their winners, sometimes using a loser-on-loser play.
- Allowing the opponents to score a trick via a hold up play.

By ducking

	♠ 32	
	♥ 532	
	♦ K962	
	♣ AK72	
♠ Q9654		♠ J1087
♥ 10987		♥ 4
♦ 10		♦ QJ87
♣ Q53		♣ J1064
	♠ AK	
	♥ AKQJ6	
	♦ A543	
	♣ 98	

South plays 6♥; West leads a trump.

Three more rounds of trumps are drawn, discarding a spade from dummy. Then declarer ducks a diamond, rectifying the count and keeping the precious ♦K as a communication with dummy. The club menace is then isolated by ruffing the third round and East can be squeezed in the minors.

Bertrand Romanet, *Le Squeeze au Bridge*.

By letting the opponents take their due

	♠ Q73	
	♥ A75	
	♦ A6542	
	♣ J7	
♠ 62		♠ 9854
♥ Q92		♥ J864
♦ KQJ109		♦ 8
♣ Q98		♣ 10632
	♠ AKJ10	
	♥ K103	
	♦ 73	
	♣ AK54	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♦K.

Declarer has nine tricks, but he wants an overtrick. He holds up for three rounds of diamonds, rectifying the count. The fourth diamond is won with the ace and four spades are cashed, West having no choice but to part with hearts. With five cards left, East must keep his hearts (the suit he is now guarding alone) and so cannot keep three clubs. West is then squeezed on the ♥AK, forced to release either his club or diamond guard. The ♣5 should take the last trick after a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

Keeping an idle card

To avoid squeezing dummy, an idle card must be kept as a discard for when the squeeze operates. If all of its cards are working, dummy risks being squeezed before an opponent.

♠ Q102
 ♥ J7
 ♦ KQ42
 ♣ KQ108

♠ 743
 ♥ A10982
 ♦ 53
 ♣ A43

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ KJ986
 ♥ 653
 ♦ J1087
 ♣ 2

♠ A5
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ A96
 ♣ J9765

South plays 4NT; West leads the ♥ 10.

All of dummy's cards are useful, except for the ♥7, so declarer should take the opening lead with the ♥J. When West takes his ♣A, he plays a spade back to the ace, but East is squeezed in three suits on the last club. Forced to discard his last heart and the communication with his partner's hand gone, East is now thrown in with a diamond to lead up to the ♠Q.

If declarer had taken the first heart in hand, dummy would have been squeezed before East. While the ♥7 could easily be discarded on the last club, the ♥J would have to be kept or else East could bare his ♠K and keep a heart to lead through declarer's heart holding.

Vienna Coup

This maneuver consists of establishing a winner for the defense, while at the same time freeing up a menace. It is not, properly speaking, a coup, but rather an unblocking technique in preparation for a squeeze.

immaterial

♠ A6		♠ KQ
♥ A		♥ KQ
♦ —		♦ —
♣ 2		♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 2		
♥ J2		
♦ —		
♣ 7		

Declarer should cash the ♥A, establishing East's king, but freeing the ♥J as a menace, before playing the club squeeze card in a simple automatic position.

Triple Vienna Coup

	♠ A72	
	♥ 62	
	♦ K2	
	♣ A76543	

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ QJ98		♠ 103
♥ 874		♥ KJ1053
♦ Q965		♦ J1043
♣ QJ		♣ 82

	♠ K654	
	♥ AQ9	
	♦ A87	
	♣ K109	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♥4 to the ten and queen.

Two rounds of clubs bring the good news of the 2-2 split and declarer can try for thirteen tricks. Returning to the ♣10, he cashes the ♥A (Vienna Coup), the ♠AK (double Vienna Coup), the ♦K, and then the rest of the clubs, discarding two spades. On the ♣7, East, who has come down to two cards, must let a diamond go, while declarer throws his ♥9. West must discard from the ♠Q and two diamonds. Either the ♠7 or the ♦7 will score the thirteenth trick depending on his choice. This is a simultaneous double squeeze.

Played by the author (Guy Levé) in La Grande-Motte, December 2004.

Quadruple Vienna Coup

♠ AQJ7
 ♥ J76
 ♦ AK10
 ♣ AK10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 5432
 ♥ 32
 ♦ 5432
 ♣ 432

♠ K1086
 ♥ 54
 ♦ Q98
 ♣ Q985

♠ 9
 ♥ AKQ1098
 ♦ J76
 ♣ J76

Victor Mollo, *Masters and Monsters*.

South plays 7♥; West leads the ♥3.

The ruffing finesse against the ♠K is not enough to produce thirteen tricks. Instead, declarer cashes the ace and king in each minor (quadruple Vienna Coup) and takes all his trumps. With three cards left, East is the victim of a repeating squeeze in three suits.

Vienna Coup against oneself

♠ A8753
 ♥ 6
 ♦ 5
 ♣ AQ8764

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J
 ♥ 1097
 ♦ A1098732
 ♣ 92

♠ Q10964
 ♥ 54
 ♦ J64
 ♣ K103

♠ K2
 ♥ AKQJ832
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ J5

South plays 6♥ after East (for reasons known only to himself) doubled a spade cuebid by North; West leads the ♦A and switches to the ♣9,

East's double most likely indicates that he also has the ♣K, so winning the club finesse is less probable than a black-suit squeeze against East. Instead of finessing, declarer takes the ♣A (Vienna Coup) and then runs his hearts and the ♦K, squeezing East. East has revealed the position with his suicidal double.

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*.

Vienna Coup in defense

	♠ 94	
	♥ J763	
	♦ 965	
	♣ Q852	
♠ K108762		♠ QJ3
♥ Q10		♥ A95
♦ 832		♦ AKJ7
♣ 74		♣ A106
	♠ A5	
	♥ K842	
	♦ Q104	
	♣ KJ93	

Victor Mollo, *The Finer Arts of Bridge*.

South opened with a weak 1NT, which he plays doubled; West leads the ♠7.

East-West should aim at a maximum penalty to compensate for their possible game. Declarer takes the second spade and plays on clubs. East wins the ace on the third round, while West discards a diamond. A heart continuation can produce down two; a spade leads to down three. However, East cashes the ♥A, a Vienna Coup, before playing a spade. Now the last spade squeezes declarer in the red suits for down four.

Brunswick Coup

	♠ J65	
	♥ AKQ764	
	♦ —	
	♣ A752	
♠ 98742		♠ KQ
♥ 9		♥ J1052
♦ 653		♦ 742
♣ J943		♣ K1086
	♠ A103	
	♥ 83	
	♦ AKQJ1098	
	♣ Q	

José Le Dentu, *Les Donnes Extraordinaires*.

South plays 7NT; West leads the ♠9.

If the hearts are 3-2, fifteen tricks are there for the taking; otherwise, there are only twelve. Declarer wins the ♠A and cashes the diamonds, discarding all the black cards from dummy including the ♣A (Vienna Coup), promoting the ♣Q to the rank of menace. East is squeezed in three suits and if he discards the ♣K, the ♣Q squeezes him anew. If he discards the ♠K, it is the ♠10 that will accomplish this menial task. If he discards his heart, the deal is over.

Isolating the menace

A menace is effective only if one opponent cannot relinquish his guard. This is not the case if his partner can guard the menace too. This position is called a double menace, useful for a double squeeze, which, to operate, requires that there be additional one-way menaces. A squeeze should be prepared, if necessary, by isolating the guard of each menace in the hand of a specific opponent. Properly speaking, we should talk about 'isolating the guards' or 'transferring the menaces', but this latter phrase has a specific meaning which is slightly different (see the next section).

Active isolation of a menace

♠ QJ107	♠ AK92	♠ 843
♥ K97	♥ A8642	♥ QJ105
♦ KJ432	♦ 75	♦ Q1098
♣ 2	♣ J3	♣ 108
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ 65	
	♥ 3	
	♦ A6	
	♣ AKQ97654	

South plays 7♣; West leads the ♠Q, taken with the ace.

After this lead, declarer is short an entry to dummy to set up and reach the fifth heart. A spade menace exists against West, so declarer must isolate the heart menace. The diamonds are evidently guarded on both sides. Declarer cashes the ♥A and ruffs a heart, crosses to the ♣J and ruffs another heart to isolate East's guard. All the trumps are cashed and on the last one, with four cards left, West cannot keep two spades and two diamonds, so he discards the ♦J. On the next trick, the ♠K forces East to discard a heart or a diamond, and the ♦A is used to reach the ♦6, the thirteenth trick. This is a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

Active isolation of two menaces

♠ K85	♠ AJ32	♠ 7
♥ KQJ7	♥ 9843	♥ 1062
♦ Q84	♦ A63	♦ J10972
♣ 954	♣ 63	♣ QJ108
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ Q10964	
	♥ A5	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AK72	

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♥K, won with the ace.

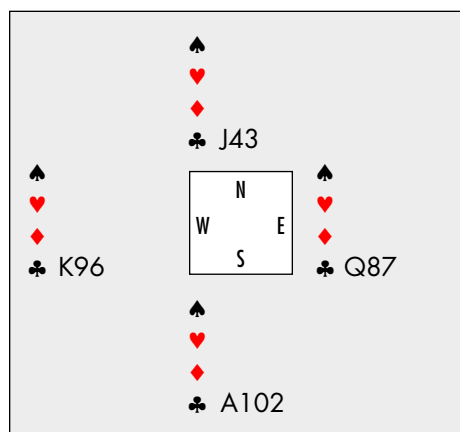
Three rounds of spades are played, but West refuses to cover, as that would allow declarer two easy club ruffs. Declarer concedes a heart and wins the diamond return with the king. Now he plays the ♣AK and ruffs a club to isolate the club guard in the East hand. A heart ruff leaves West guarding that suit. Meanwhile, the diamonds are guarded by both opponents. All the ingredients for a double squeeze are present. The last spade now executes a simultaneous double squeeze, as neither opponent can keep two diamonds as well as his other guard.

Alec Traub, *Trump Technique*.

Transferring / shifting the guard

For a menace to be useful, the opponent who guards it must also be guarding something else. Sometimes it is essential to transfer the guard of a menace from one opponent, who has no problem, to the other, who already has a guard he must keep.

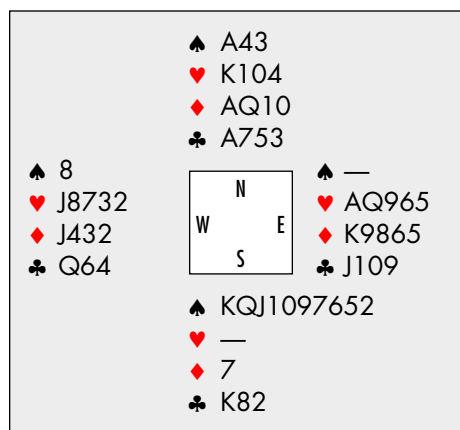
Guard positioning



Warning: this diagram does not show all the remaining cards; there are other suits.

If declarer wants to set up a squeeze on East, he leads a club from dummy and puts in the ♣10. West scores his king and East now guards the suit. If declarer wants to squeeze West, he leads the ♣2 towards the jack. East scores his queen, leaving West guarding the suit.

Transferring the guard



South plays 7♠; West leads the ♥3.

East plays the ♥Q and declarer ruffs. He draws the adverse trump, plays the ♦A and then leads the ♦Q, which is covered with the king and ruffed. The menace of the ♦10 is now directed against West, while East is in charge of guarding the ♥K. The trumps are cashed and on the last one, both opponents are squeezed. It is a simultaneous double position, with West guarding the minors and East the rounded suits.

Communication

The communication between the closed hand and dummy is an essential element of all squeezes, either directly or via an opponent ([stepping stone](#)). A lack of communication is generally a synonym for failure. Declarer should carefully preserve his communications and select the most useful one.

Preserving good communications

♠	K642									
♥	J43									
♦	—									
♣	A5									
<table><tr><td colspan="3">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">S</td></tr></table>		N			W		E	S		
N										
W		E								
S										
♠	A53									
♥	AK									
♦	—									
♣	KQJ3									

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*.

South plays in notrump; an opponent is on lead.

If a heart or a club is led, declarer cashes the ♥AK and runs clubs (throwing spades from dummy) to end with a simple automatic major-suit squeeze. If a spade is led, declarer needs to preserve his ♠K as an entry. He therefore wins this trick with the ♠A in hand and cashes just one round of hearts before running clubs, this time ending up with a criss-cross squeeze.

Clearing the way

♠	43	♠	K102	♠	765									
♥	876	♥	AQ105	♥	KJ943									
♦	32	♦	Q1076	♦	KJ854									
♣	J76542	♣	A10	♣	—									
<table><tr><td colspan="3">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">S</td></tr></table>						N			W		E	S		
N														
W		E												
S														
♠	AQJ98	♠	K102	♠	765									
♥	2	♥	AQ105	♥	KJ943									
♦	A9	♦	Q1076	♦	KJ854									
♣	KQ983	♣	A10	♣	—									

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 6♠; West leads a club, which is ruffed by East, who returns a trump.

Which club did you put in from dummy? If it was the ♣10, you will need one more hand entry: the ♣A blocks the suit and there will be no squeeze. As strange as it looks, you have to play the ♣A and let East ruff it. Then, after two rounds of trumps, the ♣K is a hand entry allowing you to force out West's ♣J. Eventually, East will be squeezed in the red suits on the last club or spade (your choice).

Choosing the type of squeeze

A double squeeze is generally more productive than a simple squeeze. If, by any chance, only one opponent guards both suits, a double squeeze reverts automatically to a simple squeeze. But, *a priori*, a double squeeze preserves more options.

♠ QJ9732	♠ 10865	♠ AK
♥ 76	♥ A543	♥ QJ1092
♦ 1065	♦ K82	♦ QJ93
♣ 83	♣ 109	♣ A2
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 4	
	♥ K8	
	♦ A74	
	♣ KQJ7654	

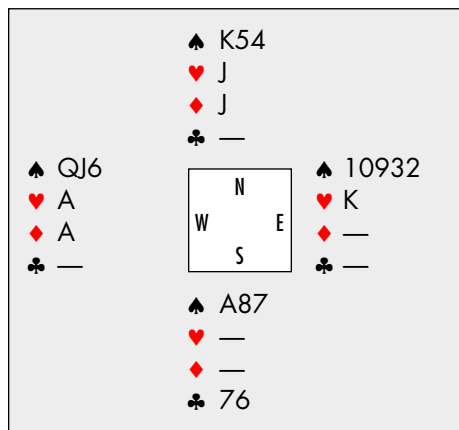
South plays 5♣; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer could think about a red-suit squeeze against East, but West can also guard the diamond suit. Since there are menaces in three suits, there is potential for a double squeeze. West must keep spades and East hearts. Therefore, the double squeeze will operate automatically after the black aces are conceded and the major suits isolated by ruffing. The ♣7 forces West to part with a diamond; dummy discards a spade, and East must also let a diamond go on this same trick. The ♦7 will score the last trick for a simultaneous double squeeze.

Defending against squeezes

The various elements of a squeeze are: the squeeze card, the menaces, the communications, rectification of the count and the positional issues. All these elements can be attacked by the defense, who can eliminate the menaces, cut communications, prevent declarer from rectifying the count or executing a [Vienna Coup](#), and force him to play the squeeze card too early.

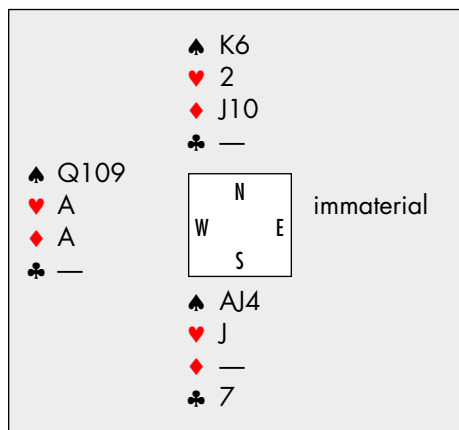
Double squeeze



On the first squeeze card, West must discard a spade, the pivot suit. If he discards his heart, East can be squeezed on the next trick.

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

Keeping the right card against a three-suit squeeze



On the squeeze card, the ♣7, West must discard a spade, the suit with the communicating menace. If he discards his heart, he will be squeezed anew on the ♥J. When there are two communicating menaces and one blocked, the defender must discard from the suit of the communicating menace on his left. When there is one communicating menace and two blocked ones, he must discard from the communicating menace suit.

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

Baring a guard

immaterial	♠	AQ8	♠	K2
	♥	—	♥	—
	♦	—	♦	A
	♣	—	♣	—

On the squeeze card, East must discard a spade, the only card to pose declarer a problem. Declarer may be tempted to finesse rather than cash the ♠A.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Cooperation between partners

	♠	J62	♠	9543
	♥	865432	♥	Q10
	♦	AK6	♦	842
	♣	6	♣	9842

South plays 7NT; West leads the ♦Q.

Declarer wins in dummy and all the clubs are cashed. West must make four discards before East can give him a signal. He discards a spade, two hearts and finally a diamond. East should keep his diamonds and discard a spade. West can then discard his other diamond and East his spade.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Attacking the menaces

	♠ 8752	
	♥ Q64	
	♦ A3	
	♣ A962	
♠ AKQ9		♠ J43
♥ A53		♥ 97
♦ 85		♦ J109642
♣ Q873		♣ J10
	♠ 106	
	♥ KJ1082	
	♦ KQ7	
	♣ K54	

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♠Q.

If West does not lead and continue spades at every opportunity, the ♠8 will become a menace in a simple automatic position; West will be squeezed in the black suits.

Attacking the communications

	♠ 975	
	♥ K82	
	♦ K96	
	♣ 8532	
♠ 104		♠ J2
♥ AJ109		♥ 7543
♦ 872		♦ AJ1053
♣ QJ94		♣ K6
	♠ AKQ863	
	♥ Q6	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ A107	

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦7 to the six, ten and queen.

After two rounds of trumps are drawn, the ♥Q is led and won with the ace. West returns a diamond to the jack. East must play a heart now to cut the communications to dummy, or else West gets squeezed in hearts and clubs.

Refusing to rectify the count

	♠ 943	
	♥ A32	
	♦ Q653	
	♣ A76	
♠ KQJ102		♠ 85
♥ 108		♥ J974
♦ 102		♦ J984
♣ QJ108		♣ K32
	♠ A76	
	♥ KQ65	
	♦ AK7	
	♣ 954	

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠K.

Declarer takes the second spade and exits with a spade. If West cashes his spades, he rectifies the count and East can be squeezed in the red suits. West should instead play a club immediately: declarer cannot allow him to hold this trick, since he can revert to spades.

Refusing to rectify the count at Trick 1

	♠ J84	
	♥ AQ73	
	♦ 864	
	♣ Q74	
♠ Q10962		♠ A73
♥ J1064		♥ 92
♦ 8		♦ 107532
♣ A109		♣ J63
	♠ K5	
	♥ K85	
	♦ AKQJ	
	♣ K852	

The Bridge World, December 1986.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠10.

If East wins the ♠A and continues the suit, West can be squeezed on the run of the diamonds, forced to discard two clubs and a spade winner to keep his four hearts. Declarer can now quietly play a club towards his queen. West's ♣A is bare and he has only two spades left to cash.

If East holds up at Trick 1, however, West can afford to discard a spade. If declarer takes the same line, East will get in with the ♠A and cash his established ♦10.

Refusing to rectify the count and attacking communications

	♠ A9	
	♥ K63	
	♦ K743	
	♣ KQ86	
♠ QJ102		♠ 8654
♥ J2		♥ Q1085
♦ A5		♦ Q1086
♣ 97532		♣ A
	♠ K73	
	♥ A974	
	♦ J92	
	♣ J104	

Bertrand Romanet, *Squeeze au Bridge*, Tome 3.

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠Q.

Declarer wins the ♠A and leads a club. East wins his ace, plays another spade (ducked) and a third spade, which goes to the king. Declarer plays a diamond to the king and ducks a diamond to the ace. Even though East has a spade left, West must not cash the ♠J, because East will then be squeezed in the red suits. West should play the ♥J instead, attacking the communications without rectifying the count.

Transferring a guard to partner

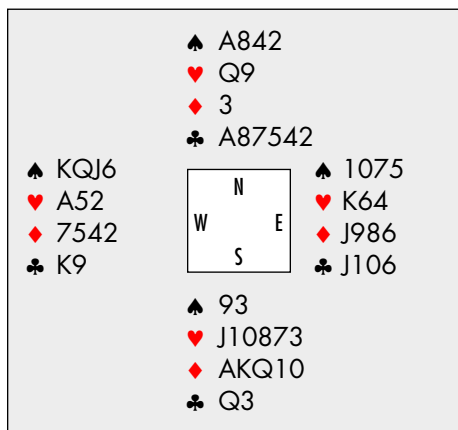
	♠ AJ9642	
	♥ —	
	♦ A8762	
	♣ AK	
♠ KQ		♠ 7
♥ K8762		♥ J543
♦ Q104		♦ 53
♣ QJ10		♣ 876432
	♠ 10853	
	♥ AQ109	
	♦ KJ9	
	♣ 95	

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♣Q.

Declarer cashes the ♣AK and continues with the ♠A and the ♠2, putting West on lead. Playing a minor suit now is obviously fatal, while exiting with a small heart picks up East's jack and sets up West for a red-suit squeeze. Instead, West must switch to the ♥K, letting East guard hearts while he looks after diamonds himself. This is simply the defender's version of transferring a guard, since the aim is to end up with the two suits guarded by different players.

Defending against a Vienna Coup

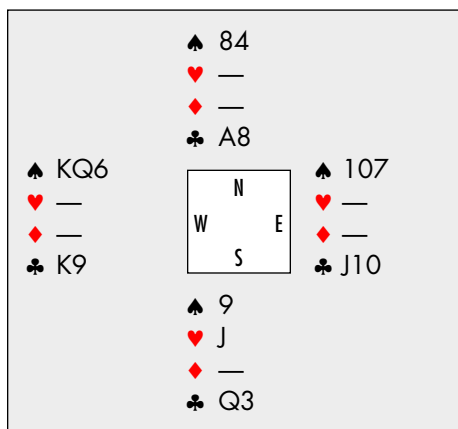


The Bridge World, April 1985.

South plays 4♥; West leads the ♥2.

East wins the ♥K and returns a heart to West's ace. West should not play a spade, which would force a **Vienna Coup**, but should instead play a diamond, which avoids it and defeats the contract.

Otherwise, declarer reaches this ending (second diagram on the left) with West still to discard on Trick 9:



If West discards his small spade, he will be squeezed on the ♥J and thrown in to lead away from the ♣K. If West throws a spade honor to keep an exit card, the ♠8 can be established.

Let's look at all types of squeezes

Warning to the reader: some 120 pages follow in which we describe every type of known squeeze, classifying and explaining them. There is no suggestion here that anyone should learn them by heart; rather, the reader should try to understand the mechanism and the positioning of the elements. A piece of advice: before reading the commentary, it is useful to try to work out the play for yourself (perhaps by laying out cards on a table) and to identify the squeeze elements and to see how each of them works.

A word on terminology: a 'notrump squeeze' means a squeeze in which the power of ruffing does not play a part in the final position. However, the contract may be a trump contract, and ruffing power may have been used before the squeeze action, for example, to isolate the menaces. On the other hand, ruffing power plays a role in the final phase of 'trump' squeezes.

To make things easier to follow, the squeeze card in each example is (almost) always the ♣7, the blocked menace always a jack, and the communicating menace always a six. The idle cards to be discarded will be twos and threes. The squeeze card is usually a winner, but can also be a loser. The other defenders' cards are always exaggerated intentionally. In a real end position, all those aces and kings are normally long gone, but using them here is a help in reading and understanding the diagrams. The lead is generally in the South hand, unless indicated otherwise. Finally, the complete deal is not normally shown, except for some complex positions or when a global view is important.

Many squeezes happen in what we may term an N-1 position, meaning that declarer has all the remaining tricks but one, which the squeeze should provide. There are other squeezes that occur in N-2 (two tricks short) positions, or endings that are N-3 or even more, but they are generally less well-known. They often involve a throw-in or a duck. Some squeezes can produce more than one trick. When a squeeze has more than one characteristic, it is classified based on the one that dominates. However, it should be recognized that there is a certain amount of arbitrariness about some of these decisions, and the classification is, to some extent, subject to personal taste.

Last warm-up

♠ QJ8
 ♥ A74
 ♦ A763
 ♣ A82

♠ 9643
 ♥ —
 ♦ J1094
 ♣ Q9754

♠ 7
 ♥ KQJ9853
 ♦ 82
 ♣ J108

♠ AK1052
 ♥ 1062
 ♦ KQ5
 ♣ K3

N
 W E
 S

David Bird and Martin Hoffman, *Inspired Cardplay*.

South plays 6♠; West leads the ♦ J.

We win the $\spadesuit K$ and take four rounds of trumps, East throwing three hearts. Since a heart must be lost, let's do it right now, at the same time rectifying the count (West discards a club). It is already obvious that East has the hearts and West the diamonds, while both opponents control clubs. A double squeeze is the only possible solution. The club return is taken with the king and the $\heartsuit 10$ menace must be freed, so we cash the $\heartsuit A$, a **Vienna Coup**. The rest is obvious: take the ace and queen of diamonds to reduce the position before playing the last spade, the squeeze card.

SECTION 6

NOTRUMP SQUEEZES

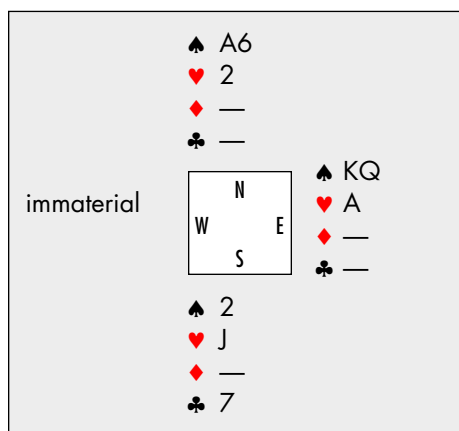
The saga of the ♣7.



Simple squeeze

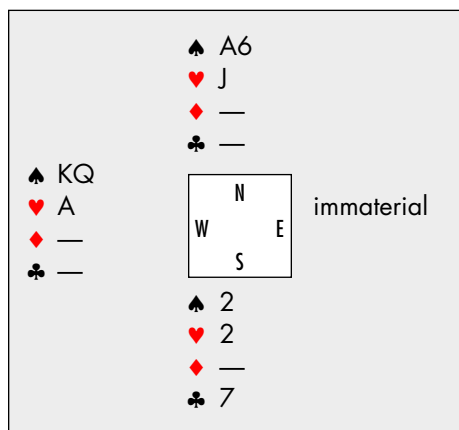
Only one opponent's hand is put under pressure by the squeeze card, but he is obliged to unguard a menace. The opponent has a dilemma: he has two suits to guard. This means that declarer needs two suits with losing cards between his two hands and at least one entry.

Automatic squeeze



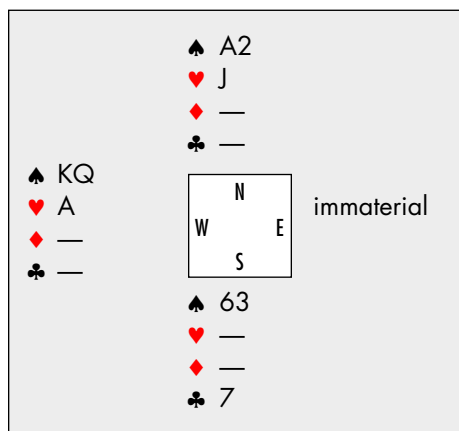
Position N-1. Split menaces, communicating menace in dummy. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard, and works against either East or West. The squeeze card, the ♣7, is played and the ♥2, the idle card, is discarded from dummy. The squeezed defender (East in the diagram) cannot discard either a heart or a spade without giving a trick to declarer.

Positional or one-way squeeze



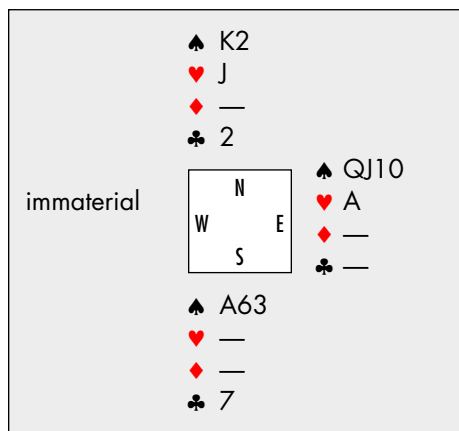
Position N-1. The menaces are grouped together in dummy. The squeeze is positional against left-hand opponent. Depending on the card discarded by West, dummy keeps either the ♥J or the ♠6. The squeeze works only against the opponent in front of the menaces.

Split two-card squeeze



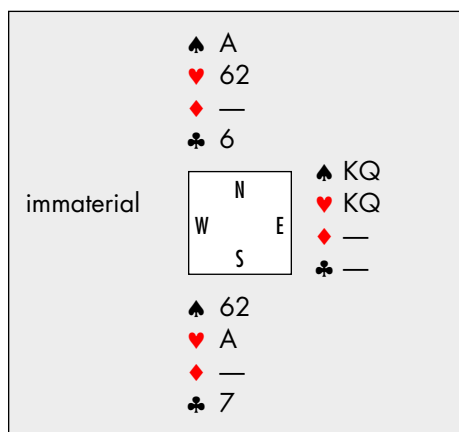
Position N-1. Split menaces, blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional against left-hand opponent. Depending on the card discarded by West, dummy keeps either the ♠2 to communicate with the ♠6 or the ♥J. It works only against the opponent in front of the menaces.

Twin-entry squeeze



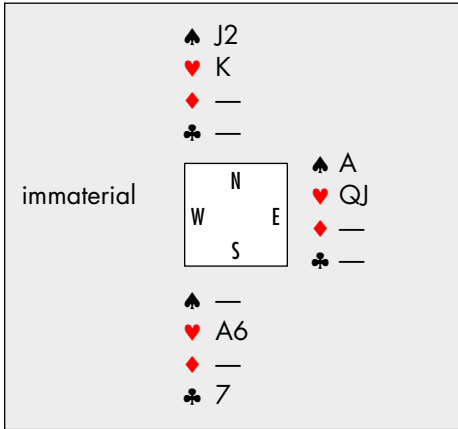
Position N-1. Split menaces. Here, there is two-way communication: over to the blocked menace (the ♥J) and back to the communicating menace. The squeeze is non-positional and the play to the squeeze card is automatic.

Criss-cross squeeze



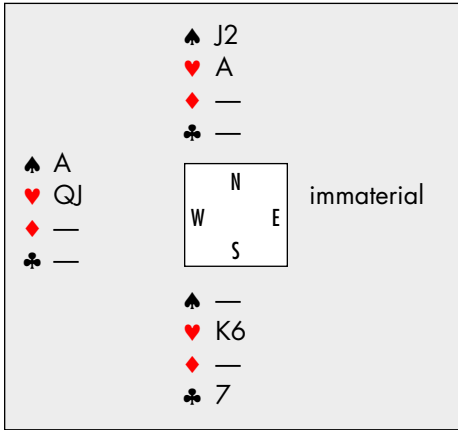
Position N-1. Two blocked menaces. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic play to the squeeze card. The position of the squeeze card is irrelevant: the ♣6 and the ♣7 could be exchanged. Depending on the discard made by the squeezed opponent (East in our diagram), one ace or the other is cashed first, establishing the corresponding six.

Simple crossover squeeze



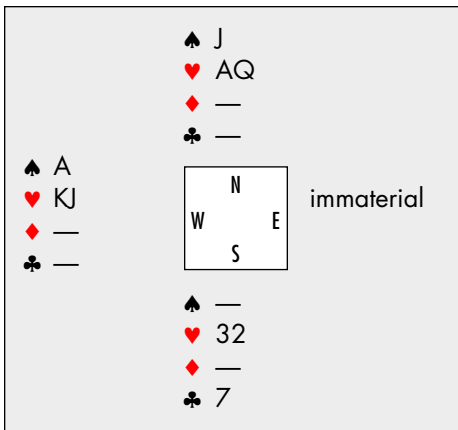
Position N-1. Communicating menace with the squeeze card, blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (the ♠2). Depending on East's discard, either the ♥K is used to reach the ♠J or the ♥A is cashed, establishing the ♥6. Normally, declarer would have been able to arrange to cash his tricks earlier in the play.

Jettison squeeze



Position N-1. Communicating menace with the squeeze card, blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional against left-hand opponent. Depending on the card discarded by West, dummy either throws away the blocking ♥A or uses it as an entry to the ♠J.

Simple show-up squeeze



Position N-1. The squeeze works only if West has the ♥K — that is, if the finesse works! But the squeeze is prettier, avoiding the stress of taking a finesse. If dummy did not have the ♥Q, only the ♥6, there would be no finesse, and only the squeeze works. This show-up position can occur in many sorts of squeezes.

Alternative squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ J	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ K		♠ QJ
♥ A		♥ —
♦ —		♦ A
♣ 2		♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

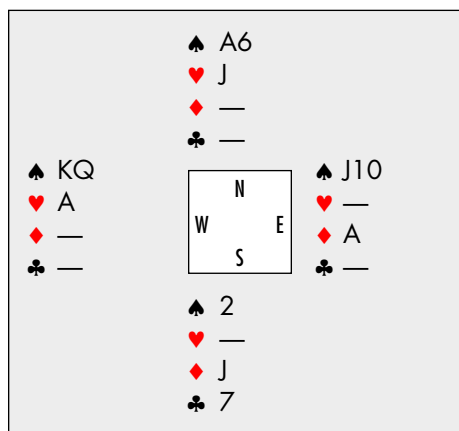
Position N-1. This squeeze is positional. West is known to hold the ♥ A. In this layout, West follows suit on the squeeze card, dummy throws a heart and East is squeezed. If West had held two spades instead of a spade and a trump, he would have been squeezed. This works like an alternative double squeeze, but only one opponent feels the pressure. Depending on who guards spades, it is either an automatic squeeze on East or a positional squeeze on West.

The simultaneous double squeeze

Here, both opponents are squeezed on the same trick by the same squeeze card. Two menaces are needed against each opponent: a one-way menace against each opponent and a common or double menace acting on both defenders at the same time. The suit with the double menace is called the pivot suit; the fourth suit is the squeeze-card suit.

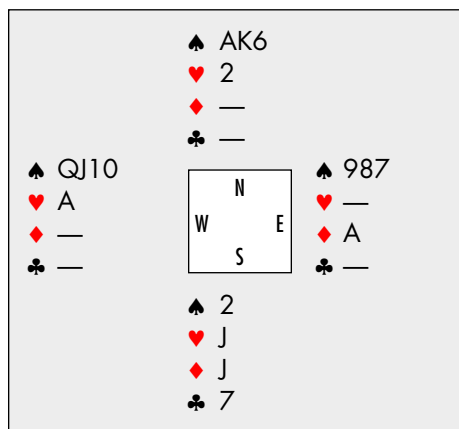
From declarer's point of view, it means that three of his suits have losing cards, split between both hands, and he has at least one suit that affords communication between the two hands.

Simple simultaneous double squeeze



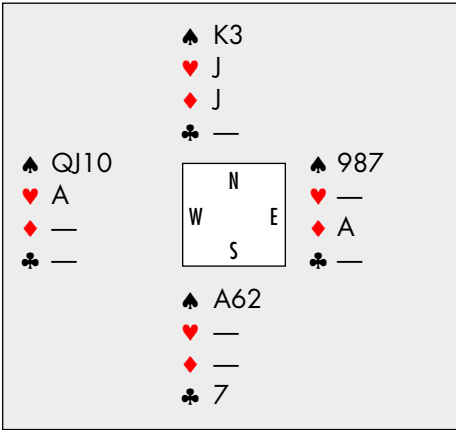
Position N-1. Double menace (here spades) in dummy, one-way split menaces, the menace in dummy guarded by West. This is a positional squeeze, with dummy's discard depending on West's play. An automatic and a positional one-way simple squeeze are superimposed.

Automatic double squeeze



Position N-1. Double extended menace in dummy, one-way menaces grouped with the squeeze card. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard — it is a superposition of two automatic simple positions.

Simultaneous twin-entry double squeeze



Position N-1. Double menace with twin entries, two one-way menaces grouped in dummy. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on West's play — it is a superposition of two twin-entry positions.

Non-simultaneous double squeeze

Both opponents are squeezed one after the other: the first one by the squeeze card; the second by another winner, which is also an entry.

Non-simultaneous double squeeze (LHO first)

	♠ 2										
	♥ A6										
	♦ J										
	♣ —										
♠ KQ		♠ J10									
♥ KQ		♥ 3									
♦ —		♦ A									
♣ —		♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A6										
	♥ 2										
	♦ —										
	♣ 7										

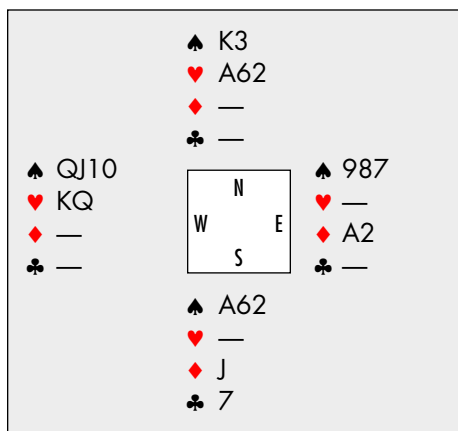
Position N-1. The double menace is with the squeeze card. One-way menaces are grouped in dummy, the communicating menace over left-hand opponent. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on West's play. When the squeeze is executed, West must discard a spade and dummy releases the now useless ♥6. On the next trick, the ♥A squeezes East in the simple automatic position.

Non-simultaneous double squeeze (RHO first)

	♠ 32										
	♥ J										
	♦ A6										
	♣ —										
♠ QJ10		♠ 987									
♥ A		♥ —									
♦ 3		♦ KQ									
♣ —		♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AK6										
	♥ —										
	♦ 2										
	♣ 7										

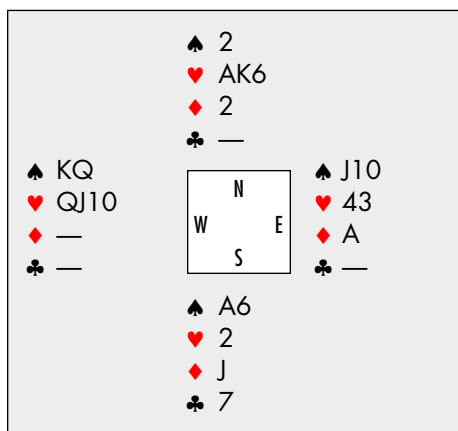
Position N-1. Double extended menace with the squeeze card, one-way menaces grouped in dummy. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer plays the ♣7, throwing a spade from dummy. East has to release a spade. Now the ♦A squeezes West in the simple automatic position.

Non-simultaneous double squeeze (back and forth)



Position N-1. Double twin-entry menace, one-way split menaces with the one in dummy guarded by West. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Playing the ♣7 starts to squeeze West in a simple twin-entry position, and he discards a spade. Now the ♥A catches East in a simple positional squeeze.

Non-simultaneous double squeeze (back and forth)



Position N-1. The double menace is with the squeeze card. The one-card menaces are split, with the one in dummy extended, communicating, and guarded by West. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Playing the ♣7 starts to squeeze West in the simple automatic position, and he discards a spade. Now cashing the ♥AK catches East in a simple positional squeeze.

Reciprocal squeeze

This is a type of double squeeze where all three suits play a role, each having menaces. There are no real squeeze cards in this type of squeeze; instead, each defender is squeezed in succession when a winner is cashed in the suit guarded by his partner.

Positional reciprocal squeeze

♠ KQ	♠ A6	♠ J10
♥ KQ	♥ 62	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ KQ
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ A	
	♦ A6	
	♣ —	

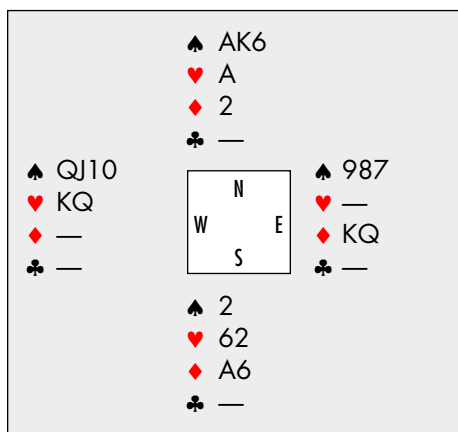
Position N-1. The double menace is in dummy; there are split one-card menaces, both extended, with West guarding the one in dummy. The squeeze is positional, the final discard depending on West's play. First comes the ♥A, squeezing East, who discards a spade; then the ♦A squeezes West in a split position. If the ♥A were to be replaced with the ♣7 and the ♥2 by the ♣2, we would have an automatic simultaneous double squeeze.

Non-positional reciprocal squeeze

♠ QJ10	♠ AK6	♠ 987
♥ KQ	♥ 2	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ KQ
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ A6	
	♦ A6	
	♣ —	

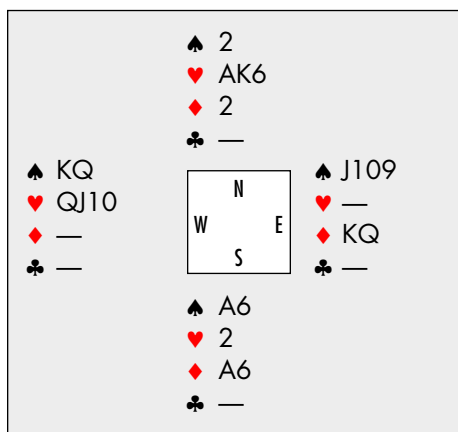
Position N-1. The double menace is in dummy and the two one-card extended menaces are both in hand, as are both squeeze cards. This squeeze is non-positional. The ♥A starts to squeeze East, who discards a spade. Then the ♦A squeezes West in a simple automatic position.

Non-positional back-and-forth reciprocal squeeze



Position N-1. The double menace is in dummy, and extended. The one-card extended menaces are both in hand, while the squeeze cards this time are split. This squeeze is non-positional. The ♥ A starts to squeeze East, who throws a spade. Then the ♦ A squeezes West in a simple automatic position.

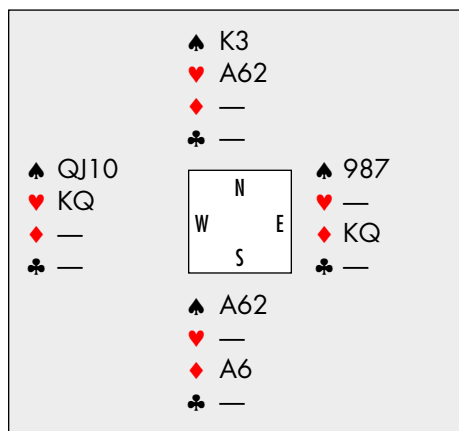
Positional back-and-forth reciprocal squeeze



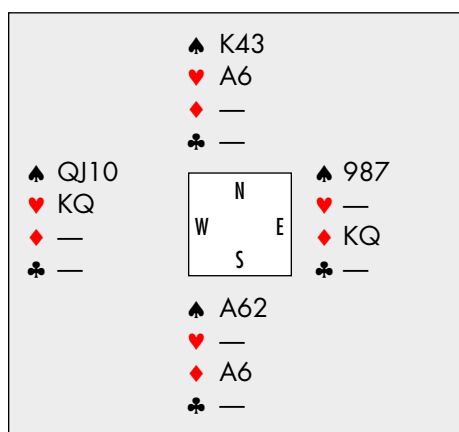
Position N-1. There is a simple double menace in hand. The one-card menaces are extended and split: the one guarded by West is in dummy; the one guarded by East is in hand. The squeeze cards are also split. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the defender's play. Start by playing the squeeze card in the same hand as the double menace. Here, the ♦ A starts to squeeze West, who discards a spade. Now cashing the ♥ A and the ♥ K squeezes East in a simple automatic position.

Twin-entry reciprocal squeeze

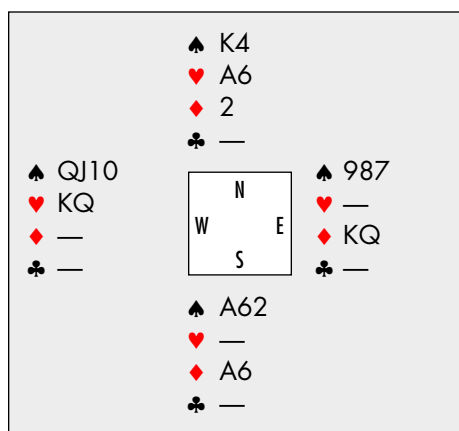
This is characterized by the twin communications afforded by the pivot suit. There are three variants:



Position N-1. The one-card menaces are split, West guarding the one in dummy, and the squeeze cards are also split. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Start with the squeeze card in the same hand as the double menace. The ♦A starts squeezing West, who discards a spade. Dummy is reached with the ♠K and then the ♥A catches East in a simple positional squeeze.



Position N-1. The one-card menaces are split, West guarding the one in dummy, and the squeeze cards are also split. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the defender's play. If the lead is in dummy, cash the ♥A, forcing East to release a spade. Cross to hand with the ♠A. Now playing the ♦A catches West in a simple positional squeeze. If the lead is in hand initially, cash the ♦A, forcing West to let a spade go. Cross to dummy with the ♠K and then cash the ♥A, squeezing East.



Position N-1. The one-card menaces are split, West guarding the one in dummy, and the squeeze cards are also split. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the defender's play. With the lead in dummy, cash the ♥A, forcing East to throw a spade. Cross to hand with the ♦A, which squeezes West in a simple twin-entry position. If the lead is in hand in the diagram, we could start by simply cashing the ♦A. This position is very easy to play.

Bonney Squeeze

	♠ AQ106	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 2	
♠ KJ8		♠ 9754
♥ A		♥ —
♦ KQ		♦ —
♣ —		♣ KQ
	♠ 2	
	♥ J	
	♦ A6	
	♣ A6	

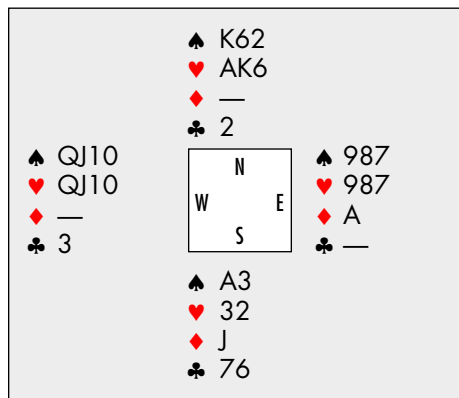
George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Position N-2. The double menace is extended and includes a tenace. In the other hand, three one-card menaces, the squeeze cards, are grouped. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. First, the ♦A forces East to discard a spade and then the ♣A forces West to make a discard. If he releases a spade, one finesse brings declarer all the tricks, while unguarding a red suit leads to a further squeeze when the trick just established is cashed. If East discards a club on the ♦A, then playing the last two clubs forces him to surrender his spade guard.

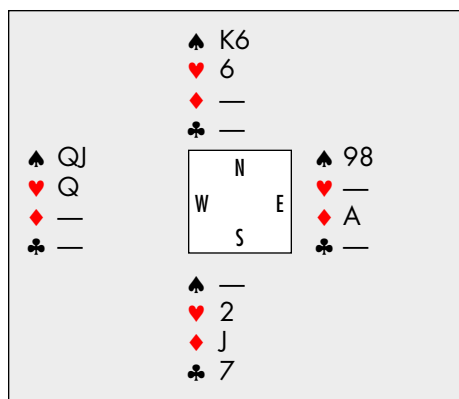
Compound squeeze

In a compound squeeze, two squeeze cards operate in succession. The first forces one opponent to unguard a suit, which sets up a second squeeze, usually a double squeeze.

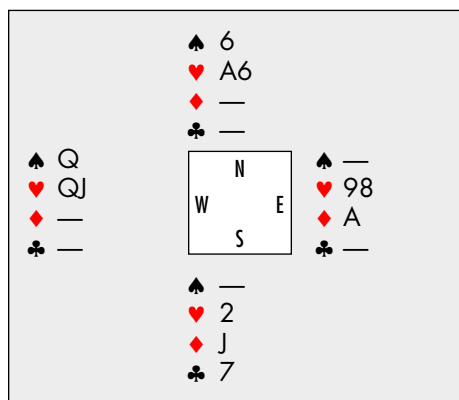
Compound squeeze



Position N-1. Two double menaces sit opposite a one-card menace, which is positioned over the opponent guarding it. The squeeze cards are grouped. The squeeze is positional, with the continuation depending on the defender's play. First, the ♣6 forces East to unguard one of the majors.

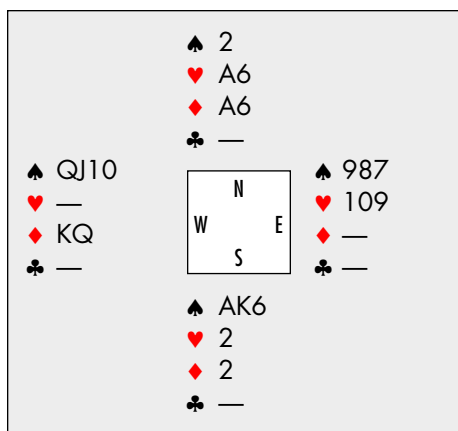
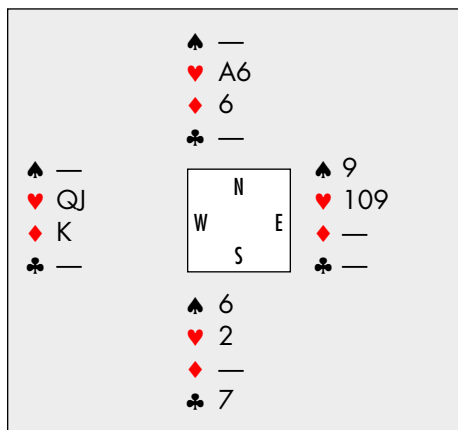
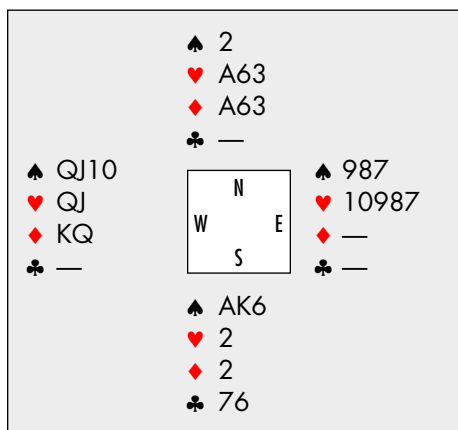


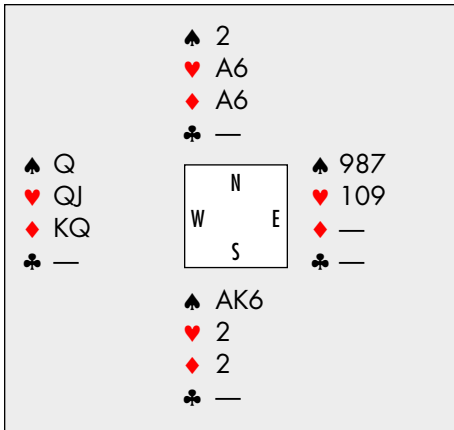
If East discards a heart, cash the ♥AK and the ♠A before playing the second squeeze card in a simultaneous double squeeze position:



If East discards a spade, cash the ♥A and the ♠AK before playing the second squeeze card:

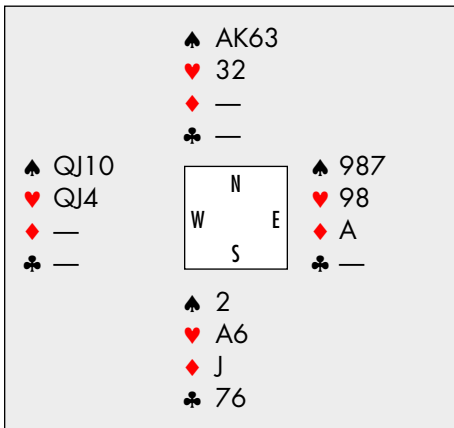
Compound back and forth squeeze



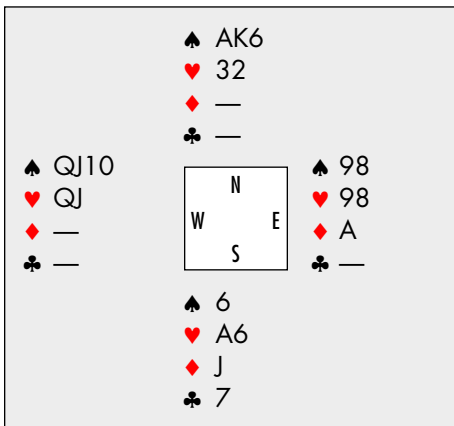


In the case where West discards a spade, we also can just cash the second squeeze card. Now cashing the ♦ A and the ♠ AK executes the double squeeze.

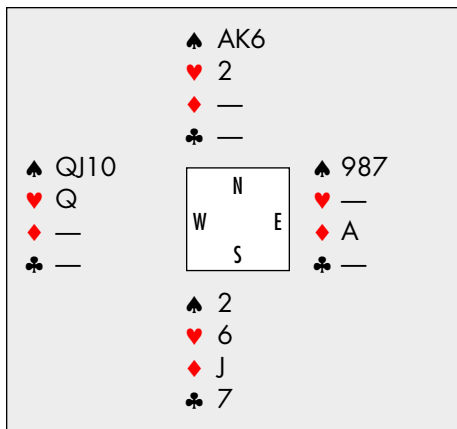
Automatic compound squeeze



Position N-1. There are two double menaces. The one-way menaces are split and correctly positioned, and the squeeze cards are grouped. This squeeze is positional, the continuation depending on the defender's play. The ♣ 6 forces East to unguard one of the majors.

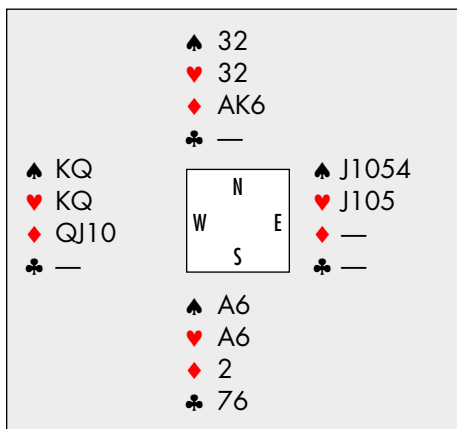


If East throws a spade, we have a non-simultaneous double squeeze position:

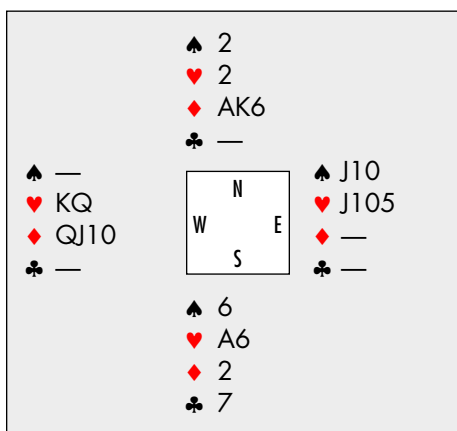


If East discards a heart, we isolate this menace by cashing the ♥A, reaching this double squeeze position:

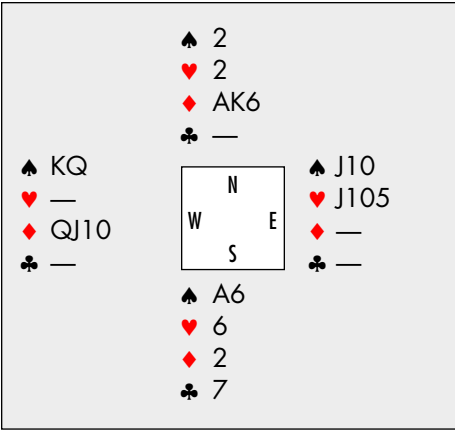
Back and forth compound squeeze



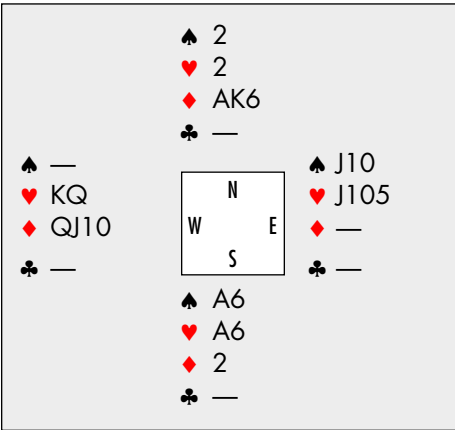
Position N-1. There are two double menaces. The one-way menaces are split, West guarding the extended menace in dummy, and the squeeze cards are grouped. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the defender's play. The ♣6 forces West to unguard one of the majors. If West discards a spade, cash the ♠A. Now the ♣7 executes a non-simultaneous double squeeze.



If West discards a heart, cash the ♥A. Now the ♣7 executes a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

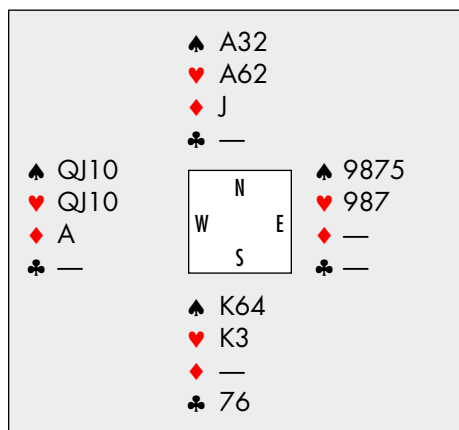


We could also just cash the second squeeze card:

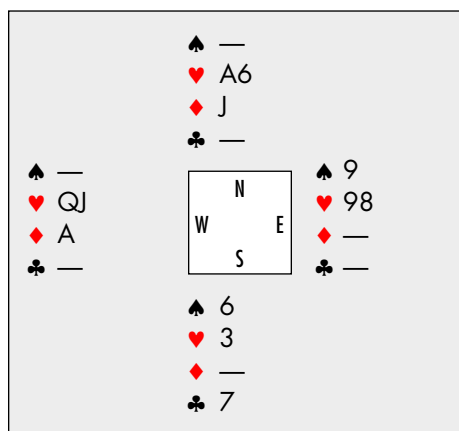


Now the ♠A forces West to unguard hearts, after which two top diamonds finish off East.

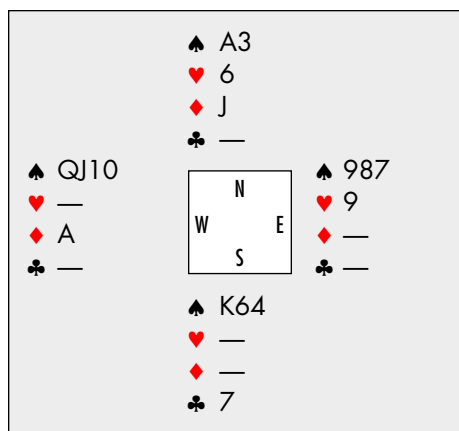
Twin-entry compound squeeze



Position N-1. There are two double menaces. The one-way menaces are split, West guarding the one in dummy, and the squeeze cards are grouped. This squeeze is positional, the continuation depending on the defender's play. The ♣6 forces West to unguard hearts or spades.



If West discards a spade, isolate the menace by cashing the ♠AK and then the ♥K. Now the ♣7 executes the double squeeze:



If West discards a heart, isolate the menace by cashing the ♥AK. Again the ♣7 executes a double squeeze:

Grand twin-entry compound squeeze

♠ KQ

♥ KQ

♦ QJ10

♣ —

♠ A6

♥ 32

♦ A32

♣ —

♠ —

♥ J105

♦ 9875

♣ —

♠ —

♥ A6

♦ K64

♣ 76

N

W

E

S

Position N-1. There are two double menaces, one of them with two-way communication. West guards the one-way menace in dummy, and the squeeze cards are grouped. This squeeze is positional, the continuation depending on the defender's play. The ♣6 forces West to make a discard.

♠ KQ

♥ —

♦ QJ10

♣ —

♠ A6

♥ —

♦ A32

♣ —

♠ —

♥ J10

♦ 987

♣ —

♠ —

♥ 6

♦ K64

♣ 7

N

W

E

S

If West discards in a major, cash the corresponding ace to reach a non-simultaneous double squeeze position:

♠ KQ

♥ KQ

♦ —

♣ —

♠ A6

♥ 2

♦ A

♣ —

♠ —

♥ J10

♦ 98

♣ —

♠ —

♥ A6

♦ 64

♣ —

N

W

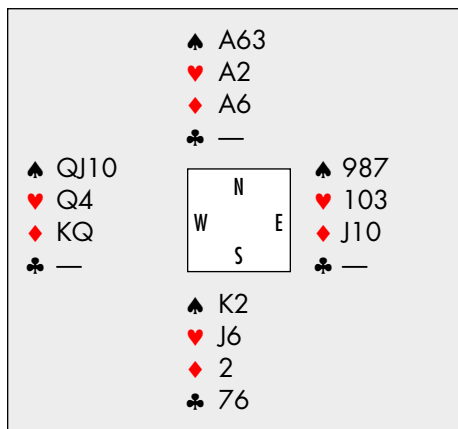
E

S

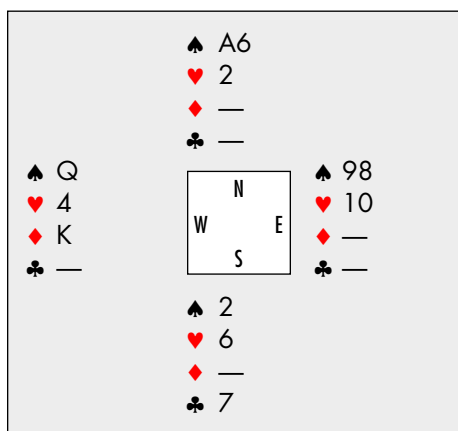
If West discards a diamond, the second squeeze card is cashed to set up a non-simultaneous double squeeze. The ♦A squeezes West and then the ♠A finishes off East:

Compound squeeze with guard transfer

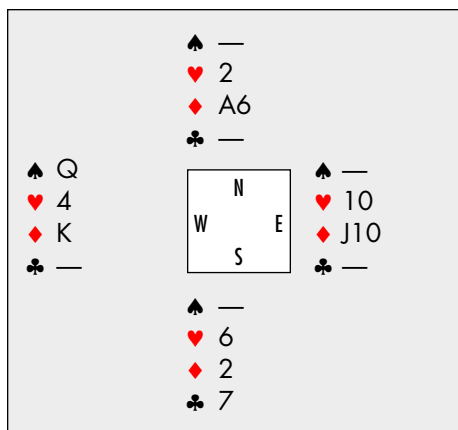
Here we squeeze one opponent and then transfer a guard in order to squeeze the other opponent.



Position N-1. There are two double menaces, the one guarded by West being with the squeeze cards, which are grouped. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the defender's play. The ♣6 forces West to unguard a major.



If West discards a spade, North and East discard diamonds. Then declarer leads the ♥J to transfer the guard and cashes the ♦A and ♠K to reach this simple squeeze position:



If West discards a diamond, North and East discard spades. Then declarer leads the ♥J to transfer the guard and cashes the ♠A and ♠K to reach this simple squeeze position:

Compound triple squeeze

♠ AKJ3

♥ J32

♦ J42

♣ A32

♠ 7

♥ 109876

♦ Q53

♣ 9876

♠ Q98654

♥ —

♦ 10987

♣ QJ10

N

W E

S

♠ 102

♥ AKQ54

♦ AK6

♣ K54

South plays 6NT.

♠ AKJ3

♥ —

♦ J4

♣ A32

♠ 7

♥ 109

♦ Q5

♣ 9876

♠ Q986

♥ —

♦ 109

♣ QJ10

N

W E

S

♠ 102

♥ Q5

♦ A6

♣ K54

If West leads the ♦ 10, then after one round of diamonds and three rounds of hearts, declarer plays the ♥ Q in this position. West must discard a club. The spade finesse is followed by the ♠ A and ♠ K, which squeezes East in three suits.

♠ 3

♥ —

♦ 42

♣ A3

♠ —

♥ 109

♦ 53

♣ 9

♠ Q

♥ —

♦ 109

♣ J10

N

W E

S

♠ —

♥ Q4

♦ A6

♣ 4

If West leads the ♣ Q, declarer wins the ♣ K and finesses in spades. He then cashes the ♠ AK to force East to discard two clubs. The diamond guard is transferred by leading the ♦ J, after which three rounds of hearts bring the position to this. West is squeezed in three suits on the ♥ Q.

Compound squeeze in black and red

♠ 73	♠ A2	♠ QJ865
♥ K9864	♥ AQJ5	♥ 10
♦ J1096	♦ K4	♦ 53
♣ 63	♣ KQJ72	♣ 109854

	♠ K1094	
	♥ 732	
	♦ AQ872	
	♣ A	

	N	
W		E
	S	

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♦ J.

Declarer wins dummy's ♦ K. Now he cashes the top clubs and diamonds, finessing twice in hearts along the way. Depending on the adverse discards, he arrives at one of two positions.

♠ —	♠ 2	
♥ K6	♥ A5	
♦ 10	♦ —	
♣ —	♣ —	

	♠ K	
	♥ 7	
	♦ 8	
	♣ —	

	N	
W		E
	S	

immaterial

Here, on the ♠ K, West is squeezed in the reds:

	♠ 2	
	♥ A	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

	♠ K10	
	♥ 7	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

	N	
W		E
	S	

immaterial

Here, on the ♥ A, East is squeezed in the blacks:

Octagonal Squeeze

	♠ AQ86	
	♥ AQ86	
	♦ A864	
	♣ A	
♠ KJ10		♠ 7542
♥ KJ10		♥ 7542
♦ K		♦ J972
♣ 987642		♣ K
	♠ 93	
	♥ 93	
	♦ Q1053	
	♣ QJ1053	

Constructed by Eric Mansfield.

Any lead produces the same play, so let's assume it is the ♣9.

Declarer wins in dummy, the king falling singleton, and cashes the ♦A. When the ♦K also falls, a finesse is taken against the ♦J. The ♣Q is led and a diamond discarded from dummy. East is squeezed: he can't discard a diamond, because then West would be squeezed on the fourth diamond. East must discard from a major, and since they are identical, let's suppose he chooses a spade. Declarer plays a spade to the queen and cashes the ♠A. Back to hand with the ♦Q, which squeezes West in this position:

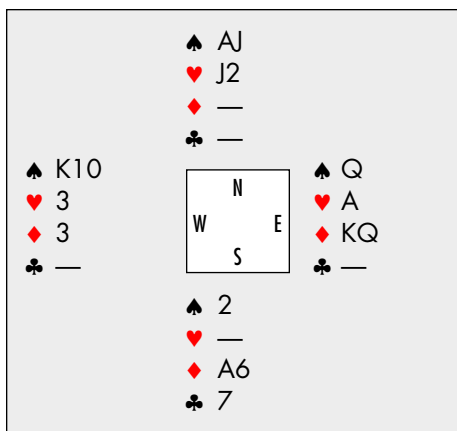
	♠ 86	
	♥ AQ86	
	♦ 8	
	♣ —	
♠ K		♠ 7
♥ KJ10		♥ 7542
♦ —		♦ J9
♣ 876		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ 93	
	♦ Q5	
	♣ J105	

A spade discard is immediately fatal, while a club discard only prolongs the agony. However, a heart discard weakens the suit, allowing the ♥8 to be set up after a successful finesse — and before that, the ♣J squeezes East in the red suits.

Guard squeeze

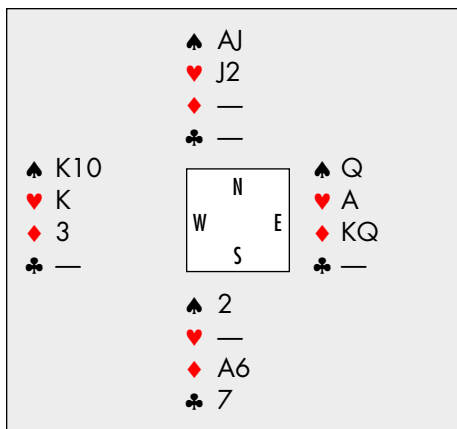
These squeezes act on the opponent placed behind a tenace. He is forced to discard a guard which prevented declarer from finessing. This opponent is squeezed in three suits, two suits that he guards alone and the third in which he protects his partner's card from the finesse. Hugh Darwen, in *Bridge* magazine (1968) discussed guard-squeeze positions where one opponent is squeezed in two or three suits and the other opponent in three suits. He called them 'hedgehogs'.

Simple guard squeeze



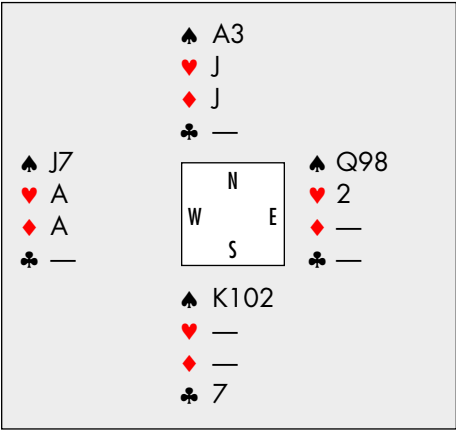
Position N-1. Triple menace against one opponent. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. East cannot discard the ♠Q, exposing West to a finesse.

Guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with isolated menace)



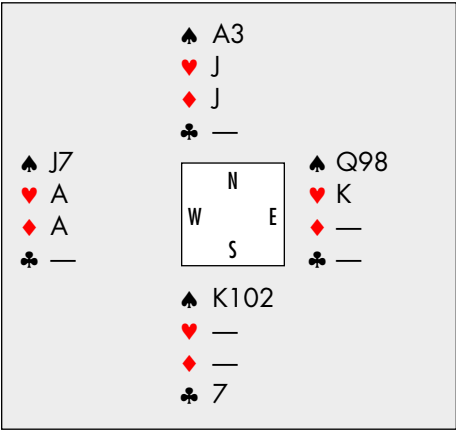
Position N-1. Two double menaces, and simple menace against East. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. East cannot discard the ♠Q, or he will expose West to a finesse, so he must discard the ♥A. Now, however, the ♦A acts as a second squeeze card against West.

Guard squeeze (simple twin-entry variation)



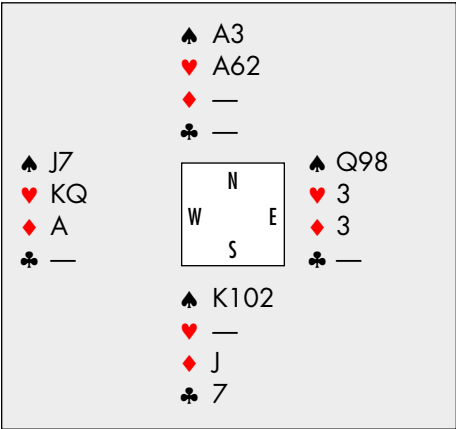
Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional. West must discard a spade, exposing East to the finesse.

Guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with twin entry and isolated menace)



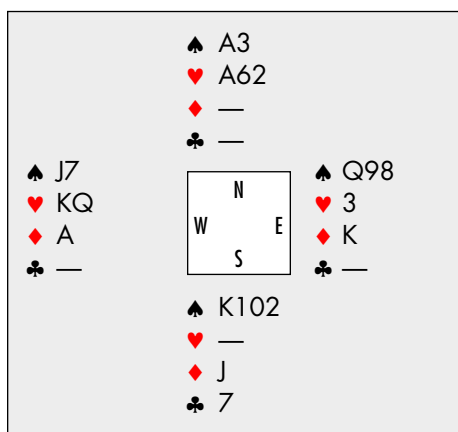
Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional. West cannot discard a spade, exposing East to a finesse. West can discard a heart, but a diamond is thrown from dummy. East is now squeezed.

Guard squeeze (simple twin-entry variation)



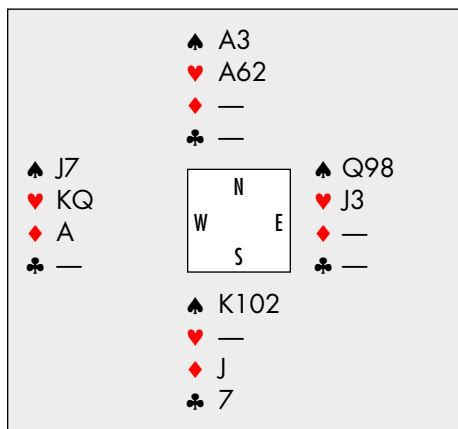
Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West can only discard a spade, exposing East to a finesse.

Guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with twin entry and isolated menace)



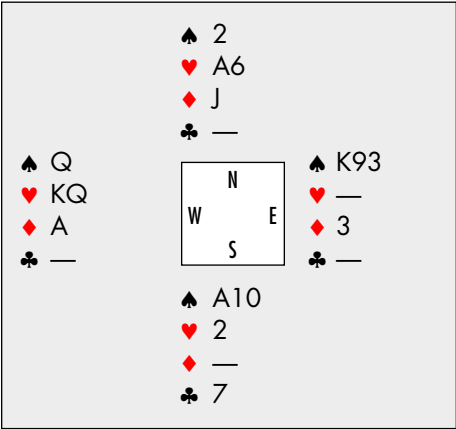
Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West cannot discard a spade, exposing East to a finesse. West must keep his spades and hearts and discard a diamond. East is squeezed next on the ♥ A in a simple twin-entry position.

Guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with twin entry and extended menace)



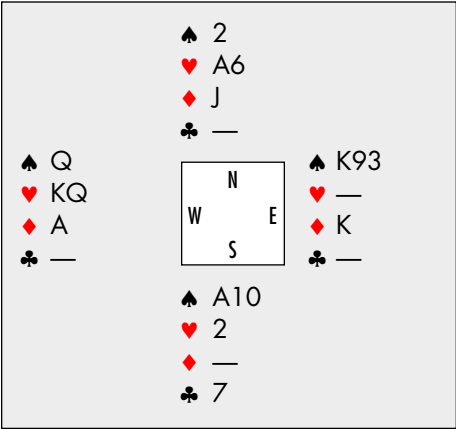
Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West cannot discard a spade, exposing East to a finesse. West can keep his spades and discard a heart, but East is then squeezed in a simple twin-entry position.

Back and forth guard squeeze



Position N-1. One double menace and two simple menaces against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West can only discard a spade, exposing East to a finesse.

Back and forth guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with isolated menace)



Position N-1. There are two double menaces and a simple menace against West. This squeeze is positional. West cannot discard the ♠Q, exposing East to a finesse. If West keeps his spade and discards a diamond, East is squeezed on the ♥A.

Grand back and forth guard squeeze

♠ Q	♠ 2	♠ K9
♥ QJ10	♥ AK63	♥ 54
♦ A	♦ —	♦ 2
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A10	
	♥ 2	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

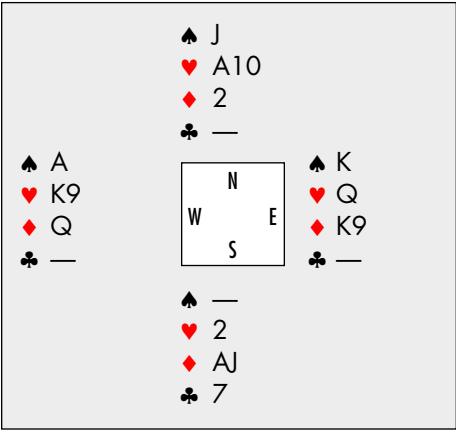
Position N-1. There are two double menaces and a simple menace against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West can only discard a spade, exposing East to the finesse.

Grand back and forth guard squeeze (double squeeze variation with isolated menace)

♠ Q	♠ 2	♠ K9
♥ QJ10	♥ AK63	♥ 54
♦ A	♦ —	♦ K
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A10	
	♥ 2	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. There are two double menaces and a simple menace against West. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West cannot discard the ♠Q, exposing East to a finesse. West can keep his spade and discard a diamond, but East is squeezed on the ♥AK.

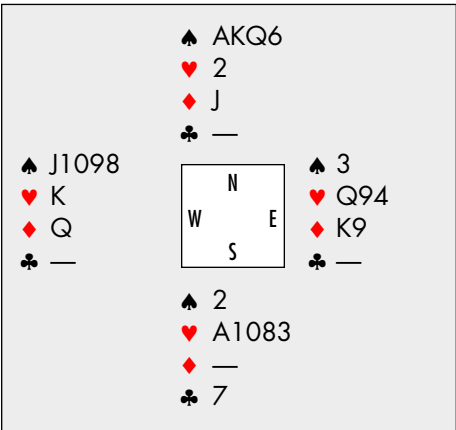
Double guard squeeze (hexagon squeeze)



George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

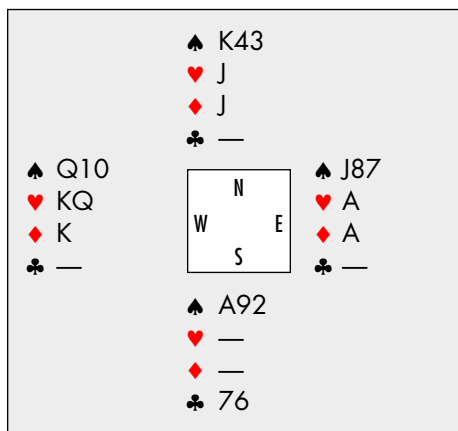
Position N-1. There are three double menaces. This squeeze is positional. West cannot discard the ♦ Q, exposing East to a finesse, so he discards his spade. Dummy discards a diamond. East is now guard-squeezed and cannot protect West against the heart finesse.

Double guard squeeze



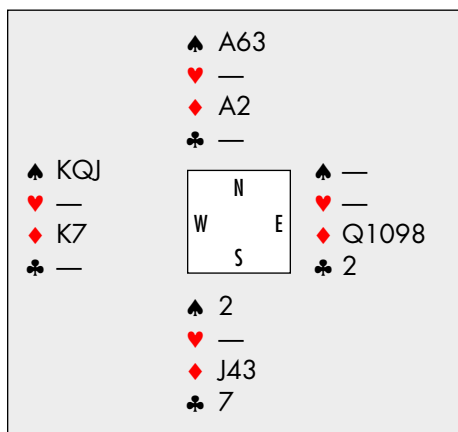
Position N-1. There are three double menaces. This squeeze is positional. West cannot discard a spade, so dummy sheds a spade. If West discards a heart, declarer cashes three spades and takes the heart finesse. If West discards a diamond, East is squeezed when dummy cashes the third spade.

Compound guard squeeze



Position N-1. There are three double menaces. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West cannot discard a spade because it is needed to protect his partner's ♠J from the finesse. Suppose he discards a heart; dummy throws a spade and East a heart. On the second club, West must now discard his diamond. Dummy throws the ♥J and East is squeezed. If West discards his ♦K and East his ♥A on the first trick, the second club executes a simple squeeze on East.

The forgotten squeeze



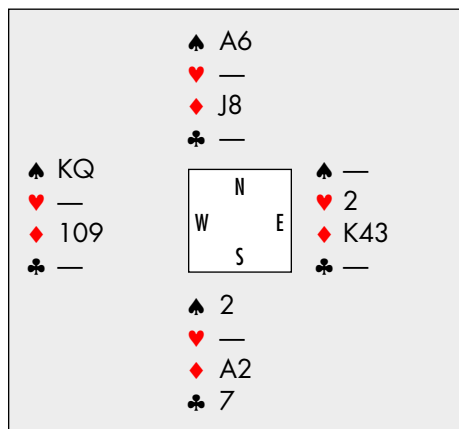
Position N-2. This squeeze is positional. West cannot discard a spade, because then a simple duck would suffice to set up the long spade. However, if he discards a diamond, declarer crosses to the ♦A and then leads the ♦2 towards the jack.

Don Kersey, *The Bridge World*, June 1987.

Finesse squeeze

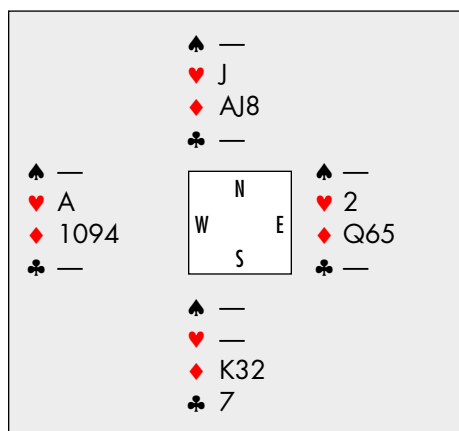
The difference between this and a guard squeeze lies in the fact that the finesse is not simple. It is the second part of an intra-finesse, involving pinning a critical intermediate. There is no need for two menaces, because only one opponent is squeezed. However, this menace must be extended, or reinforced: in our examples, the ♦8 plays this role.

Simple finesse squeeze



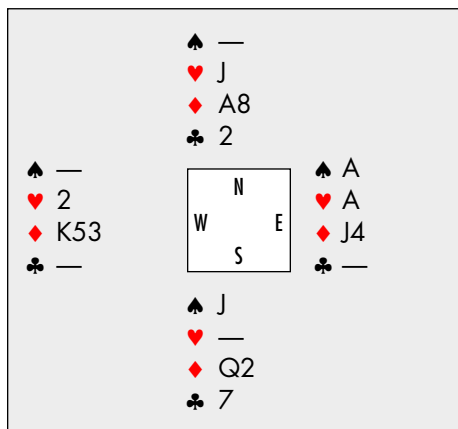
Position N-1. Note the communicating menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. West can only discard a diamond, exposing East's king to a finesse. After crossing to dummy with the ♠A, declarer leads the ♦J, setting up the ♦8. Note that should the lead be in dummy in the diagram, the diamond menace should be transferred by leading the ♦J, leading to a simple positional squeeze against West.

Finesse squeeze, blocked position



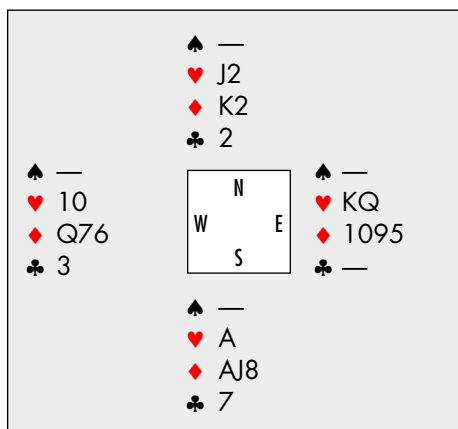
Position N-1. This time there is a blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. West must discard a diamond, exposing East's queen to a finesse. Note that should the lead be in dummy in the diagram, the diamond menace should be transferred by leading the ♦J, leading to a simple positional squeeze against West.

Finesse squeeze, N-2 position



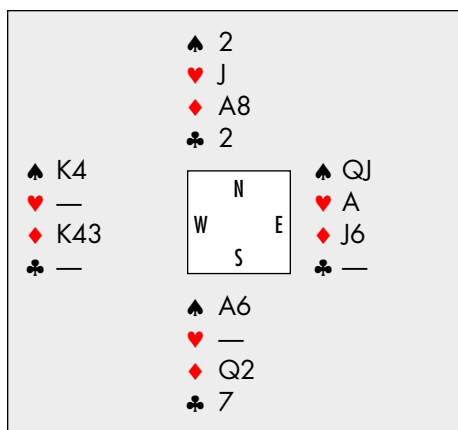
Position N-2. This time there is a blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. There are three menaces against East, who is triple-squeezed. East must discard a diamond and that exposes West's king to the finesse.

Criss-cross finesse squeeze



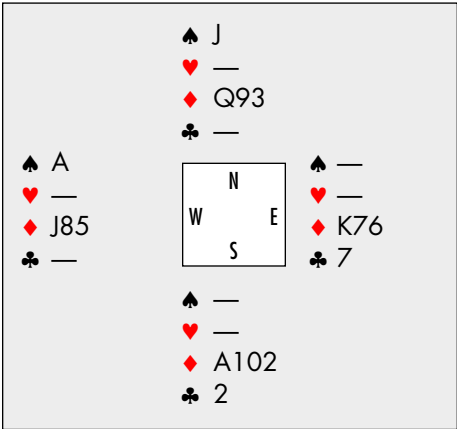
Position N-1. Again there is a blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. East has to discard a diamond. Declarer now leads the ♦ J, and if West does not cover, the ♥ A allows a re-entry to hand to reach the ♦ A.

Finesse squeeze, followed by a throw-in with a menace



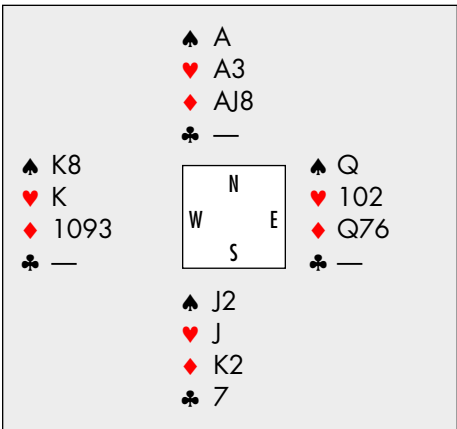
Position N-2, with a blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. There are three menaces against East, who is triple-squeezed. If East discards a diamond, declarer runs the ♦ Q for two tricks. If East discards a spade, the ♠ A is cashed and West is thrown in with a spade to give up a diamond trick. If East discards a heart, dummy's ♥ J is high.

Finesse squeeze — throw-in with the squeeze card



Position N-2, with a blocked menace in dummy. This time the squeeze card is a loser. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. The ♣2 squeeze card throws East in. West can only discard a diamond, while dummy parts with a spade. Three tricks are then scored in diamonds — East's exit runs to dummy's ♦9 and then the ♦Q is led, pinning the ♦J.

Barco Squeeze



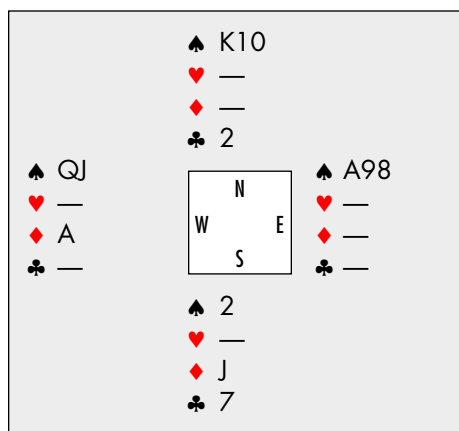
Position N-1. There are three menaces against both opponents. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. West can only discard a diamond, so dummy parts with a heart. Declarer crosses to dummy with a spade, and then leads the ♦J. If East doesn't cover, the ♥A is an entry to get to the ♦A.

George Coffin, *Endplays in Bridge*.

Vice squeeze

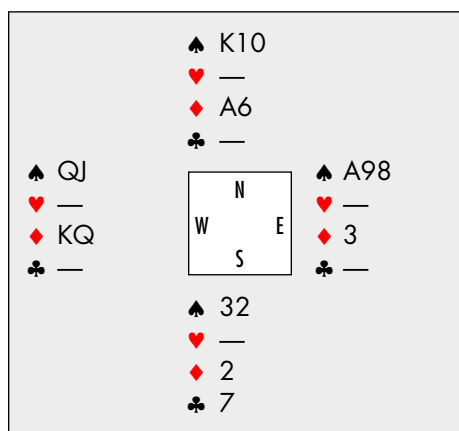
This type of N-2 squeeze was described by Terence Reese in *The Expert Game*. The squeeze applies the same principle as the finesse squeeze, with two differences: (a) it is not necessary to be in the right hand to take the finesse; (b) this time the finesse loses, but establishes a lower card. The vice forces an opponent to discard from a double guard which protects his partner against the finessing play.

Vice squeeze



Position N-2, with a blocked menace in dummy. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West can only discard a spade, allowing the ♠10 to be set up — poor East will have to allow dummy to score a spade trick.

Vice squeeze



Position N-2, with two menaces in dummy, one communicating. This squeeze is positional. West must discard a spade, so the ♠10 will become a trick with the ♦A as an entry.

Double vice squeeze

	♠ 32	
	♥ —	
	♦ A6	
	♣ —	
♠ A9		♠ QJ
♥ —		♥ —
♦ KQ		♦ J10
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ K10	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, with two menaces in dummy. West can discard a diamond and dummy parts with a spade. However, East, saddled with guarding diamonds, must then discard a spade and the ♠10 will score.

Stepping-stone vice squeeze

	♠ A	
	♥ —	
	♦ J2	
	♣ —	
♠ 2		♠ —
♥ —		♥ A
♦ A3		♦ Q10
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ J	
	♦ K	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, with two menaces in dummy. This squeeze is positional. Declarer potentially has two tricks, but cannot reach the ♠A. On the squeeze trick, West discards a spade to avoid becoming a stepping stone to dummy's ♠A, and the ♠A is thrown from dummy! East must discard a diamond and the ♦K again forces West to act as a stepping stone, this time to the ♦J.

Double stepping-stone vice squeeze

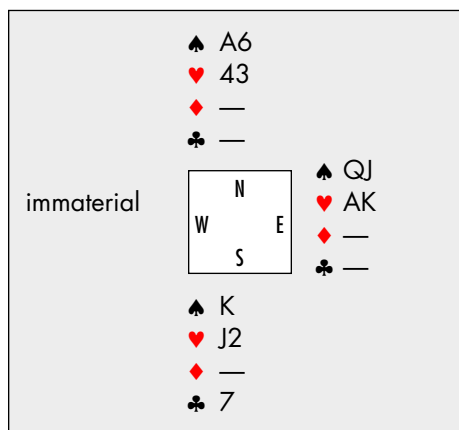
	♠ AQ	
	♥ —	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ —	
♠ —		♠ KJ
♥ —		♥ —
♦ K954		♦ AJ
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ 102	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, with two menaces in dummy. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. East must discard the ♦A to avoid being thrown in with it to lead a spade. A low diamond is discarded from dummy and next the ♦2 is led towards the queen (now singleton), forcing West either to duck or to give declarer the stranded ♦10.

Stepping-stone squeeze

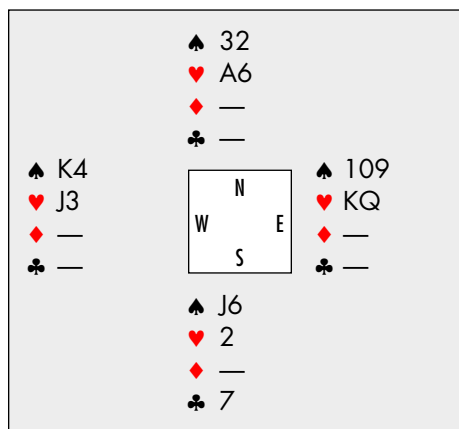
This is another type of N-2 squeeze described by Terence Reese in *The Expert Game*. The tricks are there, but could not be scored earlier, and now declarer lacks the communications to cash them.

Basic stepping-stone squeeze



Position N-2, with a blocked menace. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards a heart, declarer cashes the ♠K and East will be a stepping stone to reach the ♠A. If East discards a spade, declarer overtakes the ♠K with the ace and the ♠6 scores.

Double stepping-stone squeeze



Position N-2, with two blocked menaces. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. West can safely discard a heart to avoid easy establishment for declarer's ♠J, and both dummy and East discard spades. The ♥A now extracts West's second heart and declarer can set up the ♠6 by force.

Double stepping-stone squeeze with the discard of a winner

	♠ K2	
	♥ 43	
	♦ A	
	♣ —	
♠ Q10		♠ A9
♥ J8	N	♥ K7
♦ 2	W	♦ 3
♣ —	S	♣ —
	♠ J3	
	♥ A2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, with two double menaces. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. No one can discard a spade and since neither opponent is willing to be thrown in to play a spade or give access to the ♦A, West and East discard their diamonds. However, the ♥A follows, and the ♥2 (on which declarer discards dummy's ♦A) throws in either West or East to play spades.

Crocodile stepping-stone squeeze

	♠ AQ	
	♥ 3	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ —		♠ KJ
♥ AJ10	N	♥ Q
♦ —	W	♦ —
♣ —	S	♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ K2	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Position N-2. Two single menaces and no squeeze card. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer leads the ♥2. Either West gobbles up his partner's queen in a Crocodile Coup and concedes a trick to the ♥K, or East takes the trick and is endplayed in spades.

(See 'Winkle', p. 339)

Boomerang stepping-stone squeeze

	♠ —	
	♥ A109	
	♦ —	
	♣ J	
♠ Q10		♠ K65
♥ KQ	N	♥ —
♦ —	W	♦ —
♣ —	S	♣ 6
	♠ AJ74	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Position N-1. Again, no squeeze card! This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer plays ace and another spade. West can win and then act as a stepping stone to dummy. Alternatively, East can win and lead a club to dummy or a spade to declarer. The defenders can choose their poison!

(See 'Winkle', p. 339)

Position discovered by Alain Gavalda.

Alternate stepping-stone squeeze

	♠ 953	
	♥ —	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ —	
♠ J1064		♠ K7
♥ —		♥ —
♦ K		♦ 432
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ AQ82	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. This squeeze is positional. Declarer does not actually need to play the ♣7 here! Instead he can play the ♠A and East must discard the king to avoid becoming an immediate stepping stone. Now declarer exits with the ♠2. West has the choice of being a stepping stone to dummy's diamonds, or else setting up declarer's spades by exiting with an honor.

New President's Squeeze (entry-shifting)

	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ J	
	♣ A6	
♠ A		♠ K
♥ A		♥ —
♦ A		♦ —
♣ —		♣ QJ
	♠ J	
	♥ J	
	♦ —	
	♣ K	

Position N-2. There are three isolated menaces. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. Declarer plays the ♣K and West can only discard the ♠A. Now East is thrown in with a spade and he acts as a stepping stone to the ♣A.

Entry-shifting stepping-stone squeeze

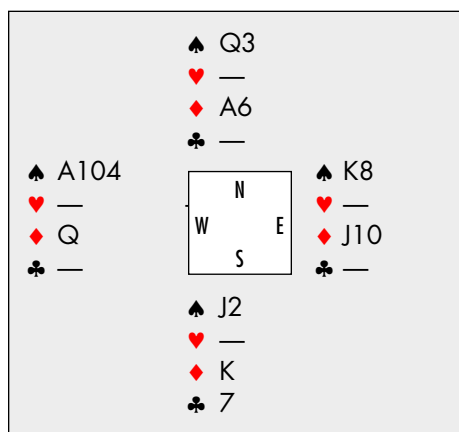
	♠ J	
	♥ J	
	♦ —	
	♣ A6	
♠ A		♠ —
♥ A		♥ —
♦ KQ		♦ J10
♣ —		♣ QJ
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ A76	
	♣ K	

Position N-2. Two isolated menaces in dummy. This squeeze is positional, the continuation depending on the opponent's play. Declarer plays the ♣K. If West discards a spade or a heart, declarer overtakes with dummy's ♣A and cashes the established jack. Then leading the other jack (or the ♣6) allows the ♦A to be reached using a defender as a stepping stone. If West discards a diamond, declarer lets the ♣K hold, cashes the ♦A and then throws East in with a diamond to reach the ♣A via a stepping stone.

Winkle

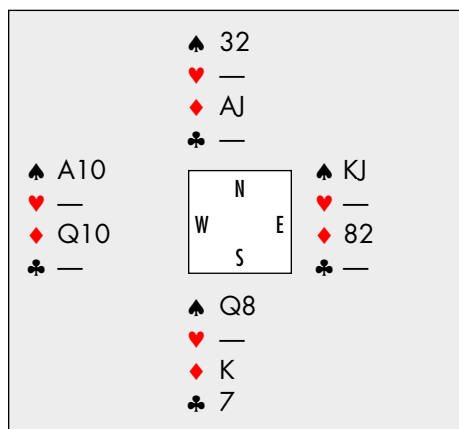
The winkle is another variety of an N-1 squeeze described by Terence Reese in *The Expert Game*. Like the stepping-stone squeeze, the winkle allows declarer to score a trick to which he is entitled, but which he cannot reach by himself. Thanks to a blockage, it allows declarer to 'winkle out' a winner, generally in a suit guarded by both opponents.

Winkle (basic position)



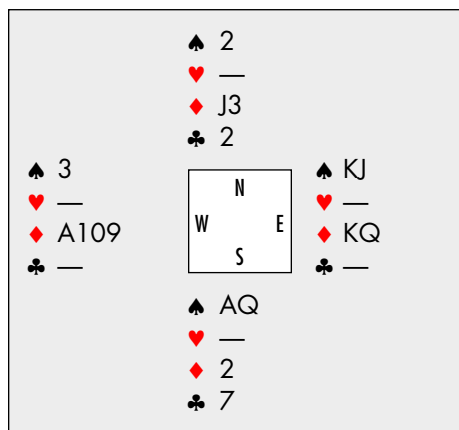
Position N-1. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards the ♠K to avoid acting as a stepping stone to the diamonds, then leading the ♠2 towards the queen sets up the ♠J. If East discards the ♠8, the ♦K is cashed and declarer again leads the ♠2. He will score either the ♦A or the ♠J, depending on which opponent takes this trick.

Winkle



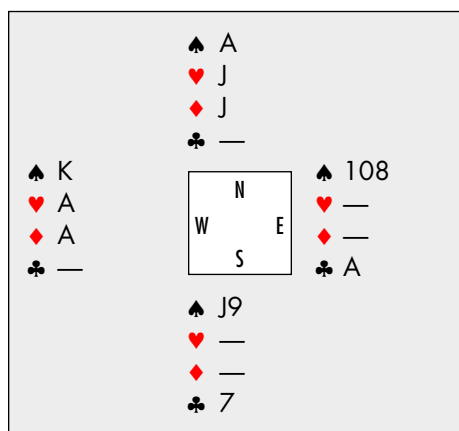
Position N-1. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. The ♠Q must be behind the tenace that remains intact. West cannot discard a diamond, or declarer can overtake the ♦K and score the ♦J. If he discards the ♠10, he will become a stepping stone to the ♦A. If he discards the ♠A, the ♦K can be overtaken with the ace and then declarer leads a spade from dummy towards the queen.

Winkle (position with a tenace)



Position N-1. This squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. The ♠Q must be behind the tenace that remains intact. East cannot discard a spade, so he discards a diamond honor. Now a diamond towards dummy endplays one opponent or the other.

Jettison winkle



Position N-1. This squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. The squeeze card is a loser. Dummy keeps whichever red jack West sets up. If West discards his spade, the ♠A is thrown from dummy and East is endplayed in spades.

Winkle for two tricks

	♠ AQ10	
	♥ 764	
	♦ 1043	
	♣ A52	
♠ K976		♠ 542
♥ QJ		♥ 8532
♦ KQ85		♦ J96
♣ Q74		♣ 1093
	♠ 83	
	♥ AK109	
	♦ A72	
	♣ KJ86	

The Bridge World, July 1979.

South plays 6NT (!) after West has opened 1NT (weak); West leads the ♦ 8 (!).

The club suit cannot be touched by either opponent without surrendering a trick. Declarer plays the ♦ 10, topped by the jack and the ace. Now comes the ♥ A, a spade finesse, the ♥ K and two more hearts. On the first heart, West can discard a diamond honor, and on the second, he must discard another diamond. If he keeps his ♦ K, a second spade finesse is followed by a throw-in in diamonds. Now if West opens up clubs, it is for four tricks. However, if he gives declarer another spade finesse, East is squeezed into releasing a club and the backward finesse in clubs sets up the ♣ 8.

If West instead throws his second diamond honor on the fourth round of hearts, declarer takes another spade finesse and leads a diamond from dummy. If East plays the ♦ 9, the ♦ 7 is set up and will squeeze West in the black suits. If East ducks, declarer plays the ♣ A, the ♠ A and the ♠ Q, throwing West in to play into the club tenace.

Winkle in a trump contract

	♠ —	
	♥ 75	
	♦ —	
	♣ 6	
♠ —		♠ —
♥ K		♥ AJ
♦ KQ		♦ —
♣ —		♣ 2
	♠ —	
	♥ Q2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. This squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard.

Clubs are trumps.

Declarer leads the ♥ 2. Either West gets the lead and concedes a ruff and sluff, or East overtakes and sets up the ♥ Q. If hearts were trumps, the ♥ Q would score *en passant* if declarer led either a heart or a club, but it would not be a winkle squeeze any longer.

Delayed duck squeeze (squeeze without the count)

The delayed squeezes occur in an N-2 position, even sometimes in N-3, giving up the lead once to the opponents. An opponent is forced to discard in a suit where a duck sets up one trick for declarer.

Delayed duck squeeze (basic position)

	♠ A6	
	♥ 32	
	♦ 2	
	♣ —	
♠ 43		♠ KQ
♥ 75		♥ KQJ
♦ A		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ A64	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two split one-way menaces. The squeeze is non-positional. When East discards a heart, ducking a heart sets up the ♥6.

Delayed duck squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ J4	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ KQ		♠ KQ
♥ KQ		♥ KQ
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two grouped one-way menaces. The squeeze is positional. When West discards a heart, ducking a heart sets up the ♥J.

Delayed duck squeeze (twin-entry, blocked menace)

♠ K2

♥ J43

♦ —

♣ —

immaterial

N

W

E

S

♠ QJ10

♥ KQ

♦ —

♣ —

♠ A63

♥ 2

♦ —

♣ 7

Position N-2. There are two menaces against one opponent, one with transportation. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). When East discards a heart, declarer ducks a heart to set up the ♥J.

Delayed duck squeeze (twin-entry, blocked menace)

♠ A62

♥ 43

♦ —

♣ —

immaterial

N

W

E

S

♠ QJ10

♥ KQ

♦ —

♣ —

♠ K3

♥ J2

♦ —

♣ 7

Position N-2. There are two menaces against one opponent, one with transportation. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). When East discards a heart, ducking a heart sets up the ♥J.

Criss-cross delayed duck squeeze

♠ 632

♥ A3

♦ —

♣ —

immaterial

N

W

E

S

♠ KQJ

♥ KQ

♦ —

♣ —

♠ A4

♥ J2

♦ —

♣ 7

Position N-2. There are two criss-cross menaces against the same opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). When East discards a spade, declarer cashes the ♠A and then gives up a spade to set up the ♠6.

Delayed duck squeeze in a N-3 position

♠ KQ	♠ A43
♥ KQJ	♥ A64
♦ A	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —
	immaterial
	♠ J2
	♥ 32
	♦ J
	♣ 7

Position N-3. Three menaces threaten West. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a spade). Ducking a spade right away fails because there is no way back to hand to score the ♣7. When declarer plays his squeeze card in the diagrammed position, West must discard a heart. Now declarer can set up an extra heart trick.

Delayed duck squeeze to set up an intermediate

♠ KQ	♠ J2	
♥ Q108	♥ AJ3	
♦ —	♦ —	
♣ —	♣ —	
	immaterial	
	♠ 43	
	♥ K65	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
	♠ A	
	♥ 942	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There is a single menace against West and one double menace. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponents' plays. In fact, only West is squeezed, even if East is the one to make a trick. The squeeze card forces West to discard a heart and East a spade, while dummy discards a spade. Now a small heart towards the ace-jack allows declarer to set up the ♥9.

Delayed duck double squeeze

♠ 109	♠ J6	
♥ QJ10	♥ A3	
♦ —	♦ —	
♣ —	♣ 2	
	immaterial	
	♠ K3	
	♥ 987	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
	♠ 2	
	♥ K62	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two double menaces. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponents' plays. Neither West nor East can discard a spade, or else declarer can set up the ♠J or the ♠6 via a simple duck. However, if they both discard hearts, then the ♥6 will score the fourth trick.

Strip squeeze

The basic strip squeeze forces an opponent to discard either a winner or a card that would allow him to reach partner's winner. Declarer subsequently safely ducks a trick to that defender to establish an extra trick.

Automatic strip-squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ 2	
♠ 43		♠ KQ
♥ 5		♥ KQ
♦ AK		♦ 2
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ A64	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two split menaces against one opponent. The squeeze is non-positional. East is forced to release his diamond, severing the communication with his partner's winner. Now declarer can discard the ♠6 and duck a heart, setting up the ♥J.

Positional strip-squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ J4	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ KQ		♠ 43
♥ A		♥ —
♦ 2		♦ AK
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 2	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two grouped menaces against one opponent. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponents' plays. West is forced to release his diamond, severing the communication with his partner's ace. Now declarer can duck a heart, setting up the ♥J.

Strip squeeze (twin-entry, blocked menace in dummy)

♠ 54	♠ K3	♠ QJ10
♥ —	♥ J53	♥ A
♦ AK5	♦ —	♦ 2
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A62	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two menaces against one opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). East is forced to release his diamond, severing the communication with his partner's ace. Now declarer can duck a heart, setting up the ♥J.

Strip squeeze (twin-entry, blocked menace with the squeeze card)

♠ 54	♠ A62	♠ QJ10
♥ —	♥ —	♥ A
♦ AK5	♦ 43	♦ 2
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ K3	
	♥ J2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two menaces against one opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a diamond). East is forced to release his diamond, severing the communication with his partner's ace. Now declarer can duck a heart, setting up the ♥J.

Criss-cross strip-squeeze

♠ 32	♠ A	♠ KQ
♥ 5	♥ 632	♥ KQ
♦ AK	♦ —	♦ 2
♣ —	♣ 2	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ J4	
	♥ A4	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. There are two twin-entry menaces against one opponent. The squeeze is non-positional. East is forced to release his diamond, severing the communication with his partner's ace. Now declarer can play ace and another heart to set up the ♥6.

Strip squeeze in N-3 position

	♠ Q3	
	♥ 1093	
	♦ A	
	♣ —	
♠ J8		♠ K9
♥ KQ7		♥ J63
♦ 3		♦ 2
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 104	
	♥ A84	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

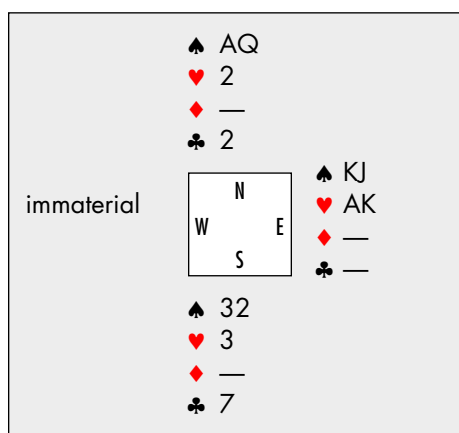
Played by Ron Gerard (Spingold, 1981).

Position N-3. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). The ♦A could not be cashed earlier and now cannot be reached. Thus, only two tricks are immediately available. On the squeeze card, neither West nor East can discard a spade. In addition, neither can discard a heart without allowing a throw-in that would lead to surrendering a spade or a diamond. Therefore, each opponent has to discard the losing diamond. Declarer now plays the ace and another heart, throwing dummy's ♦A as the defenders cash their long heart. Eventually, the opponents have to lead a spade.

Strip squeeze and endplay

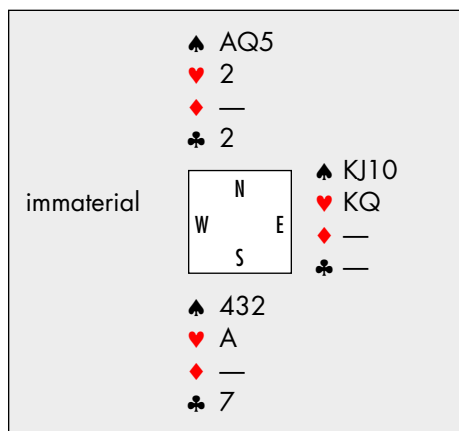
The basic strip squeeze forces an opponent to discard either a winner or a card that would allow him to reach partner's winner. He is then endplayed into giving declarer an extra trick.

Strip squeeze and throw-in to lead into a tenace



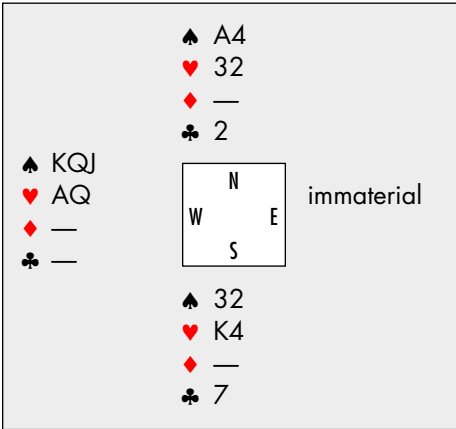
Position N-2. There are two menaces against a single opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). East has to discard a heart, after which he is thrown in with the ♥A to lead into the spade tenace.

Strip squeeze and throw-in with an extended tenace



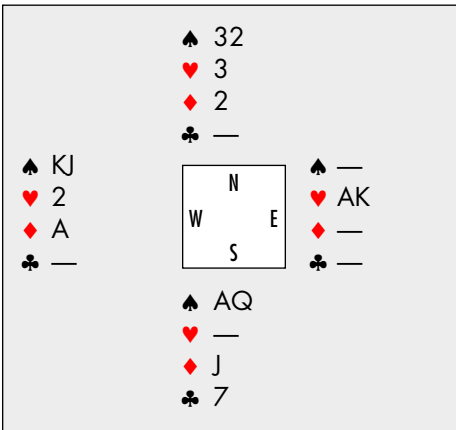
Position N-2. There are two menaces against a single opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). If East discards a spade, declarer simply ducks a spade. If East discards a heart, the ♥A is cashed and a spade ducked to East, who is endplayed.

Strip squeeze and throw-in to lead away from an honor



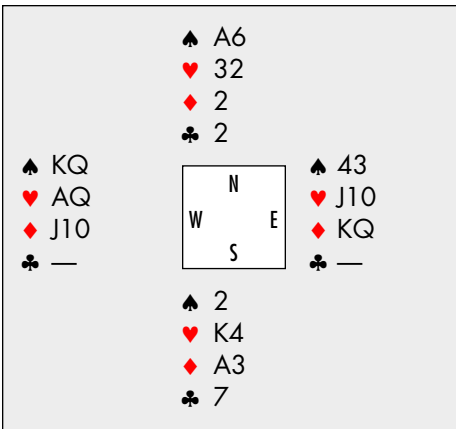
Position N-3. The two one-way menaces against West are split. This squeeze is non-positional. West must discard a spade. Now declarer plays ace and another spade, endplaying West, who has to allow the ♥K to score.

Strip squeeze to cut communications followed by a throw-in



Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a heart). The two menaces against West are in the same hand as the squeeze card. West is forced to discard a heart, after which he can safely be thrown in with the ♦A to lead a spade.

Strip squeeze to cut communications followed by a throw-in



Position N-3. The two single menaces are split and the double menace is in the hand with the squeeze card. This squeeze is non-positional. West must release a diamond. Declarer cashes the ♦A and the ♠A and then West is thrown in with a spade to lead away from the ♥A.

Strip squeeze and double stepping stone

♠ KQJ		♠ 54									
♥ ♣4		♥ J32									
♦ —		♦ —									
♣ —		♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ ♣65									
		♦ —									
		♣ 65									
		♠ 2									
		♥ AQ									
		♦ —									
		♣ 72									

The question mark represents the ♥ K.

Position N-3. The two single menaces are split and the double menace is in the hand with the squeeze card. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a spade). If West discards a spade, he is thrown in with a spade to lead a heart into the A-Q. If he discards a heart, the ♥ A is cashed and now if West has the ♥ K, it drops, establishing the queen. If East has the ♥ K, declarer exits with the ♥ Q and East becomes a stepping stone to the ♥ J.

Strip squeeze with Morton's Fork

♠ K7		♠ 32									
♥ AJ10		♥ K65									
♦ —		♦ —									
♣ —		♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ AQJ									
		♥ Q									
		♦ —									
		♣ 7									

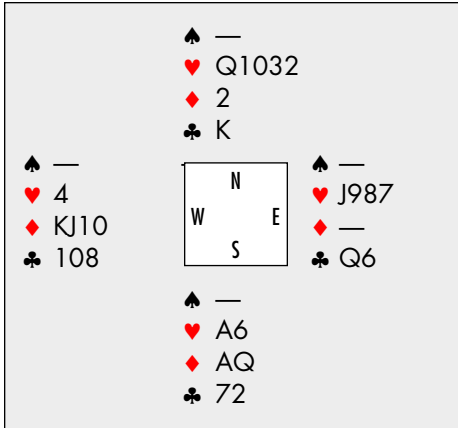
Position N-2. There are two split menaces against a single opponent. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard (here, a spade). On the squeeze card, West has to discard a heart. Declarer then leads the ♥ Q. If West takes his ace, he has to lead a spade to declarer or allow dummy to score two hearts. However, if he ducks, declarer overtakes with the ♥ K and throws West in with a heart to lead a spade into the A-Q.

Strip squeeze with suit establishment and throw-in

♠ —		♠ —									
♥ K109		♥ A2									
♦ K109		♦ Q43									
♣ —		♣ 2									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ —									
		♥ Q43									
		♦ A2									
		♣ 7									

Position N-3. This squeeze is non-positional. After playing the squeeze card, declarer cashes the ace of whichever suit West has discarded, followed by a lead of the two. This sets up a long card, but it also puts West on lead to give up a trick in the other suit.

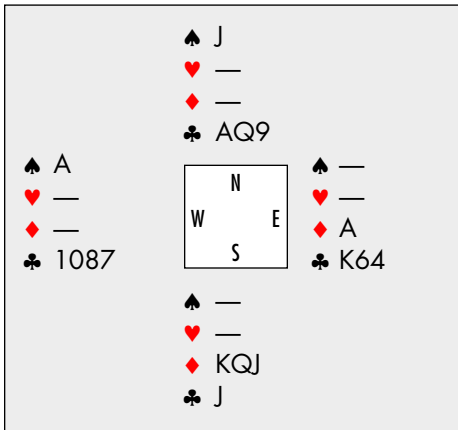
Strip squeeze and choice of throw-ins



Don Kersey, *The Bridge World*, August 1989.

Position N-2. There are two single menaces. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponents' plays. Declarer plays to the ♣K. If East keeps his ♣Q, the ♥A and the ♦A are cashed and East is thrown in with a club to lead away from the ♥J. If East discards his ♣Q, then the ♥Q and ♥A are cashed. West is then thrown in with a club to lead away from the ♦K.

Throw-in squeeze

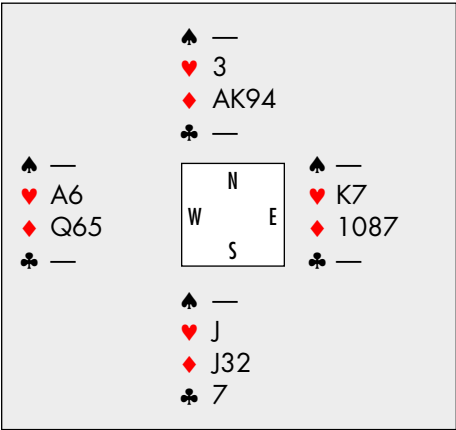


The Bridge World, August 1983.

This very special squeeze has no element of delay, only of throw-in. In our diagram, West gets squeezed and then East is thrown in.

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponent's play. Declarer plays the ♦K and West is squeezed. If he discards a club, the ♠J is thrown from dummy and East is in with the ♦A; he has to give declarer either three club tricks by leading the ♣K or a club and two diamonds by leading a small club. If West discards his ♠A, the ♣9 is thrown from dummy and East is endplayed — dummy scores the last three tricks.

Double strip squeeze and throw-in, with a pin

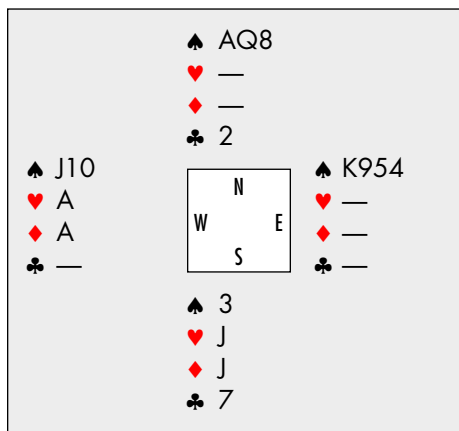


Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard depending on the opponents' plays. Declarer plays the ♣7 and West is squeezed. He obviously cannot release a diamond; however, if he discards the ♥6, he is thrown in with the ♥A and has to lead a diamond from the queen. If he discards the ♥A, it is East's turn to suffer. If East discards the ♥7, he gets thrown in with a heart and he too must broach diamonds for declarer. East cannot discard the ♥K, because that sets up declarer's ♥J, so he has to let a diamond go. Now, however, declarer leads the ♦J, and when West covers this, the ♦9 gets established.

Mole squeezes

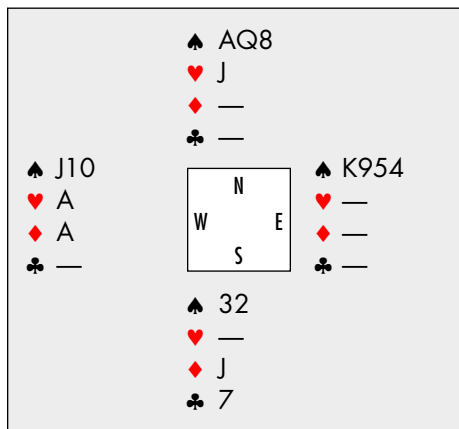
Named and analyzed by Julian Pottage (*The Bridge World*), these squeezes are a kind of a double strip squeeze. In simple strip squeezes, only one opponent is really involved: he is squeezed out of a communication card and then thrown in, his partner remaining out of the contest. Here, however, one opponent is squeezed out of a guarding card and his partner is the one thrown in later. Pottage identified eight types, all positional in essence.

1.



Position N-2. The non-communicating menaces are with the squeeze card. When the ♣7 is played, West has to discard a spade. Then the ♠3, the ♠J, the ♠Q and the ♠K make up the next trick. East is now endplayed to lead into dummy's spade tenace.

2.



Position N-2. Here the non-communicating menaces are split, but the squeeze works all the same.

3.

♠ KJ6	♠ 32	♠ 109
♥ 3	♥ A6	♥ KQ
♦ —	♦ J	♦ A
♣ 2	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ8	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. The menace arrangement is again different, with a communicating menace and the single menace against East both in dummy. When East discards a spade, declarer must cash the ♥A before playing spades and throwing West in.

4.

♠ J10	♠ K94	♠ AQ65
♥ A	♥ —	♥ —
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ 2	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ J	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

Position N-3. This is like the first example, but the spade holding is weaker. Nevertheless, the ♠9 will score the last trick.

5.

♠ J10	♠ AQ4	♠ K8765
♥ KQ	♥ AJ	♥ —
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 932	
	♥ —	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. The spade position is split between the two hands. When West discards a spade, dummy throws the ♥J. Now a spade to the queen leaves East without resource.

6.

♠ 109	♠ AQ8	♠ KJ65
♥ KQ	♥ AJ	♥ —
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 2
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ 2	
	♦ J32	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. Even with a void in the spade suit, the squeeze works! When West discards a spade, dummy throws the ♥J. Now declarer plays a heart to the ace and the ♠Q, pinning the ♠10.

7.

♠ Q	♠ AJ	♠ K65
♥ QJ10	♥ K62	♥ A
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 2
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ 43	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

Position N-3. A diamond discard by West would be immediately fatal, while on a heart discard, a simple duck would set up the ♥6. However, on a spade discard, dummy throws a heart and a heart is now played to East, who has to lead a spade to dummy.

8.

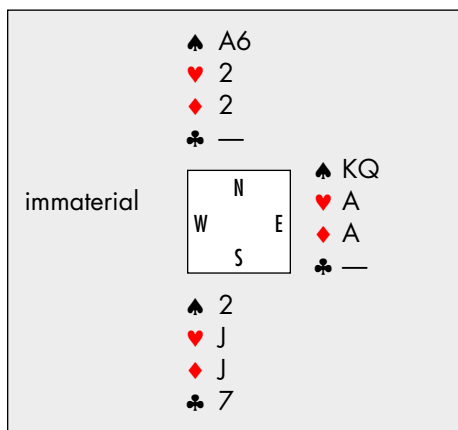
♠ Q	♠ AJ	♠ K6
♥ QJ	♥ K6	♥ A2
♦ KQ	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ 2	♣ 3
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ 3	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ 7	

Position N-3. A heart discard by West would set up the ♥6, and a diamond is out of the question. After a spade discard, declarer plays the ♦A, throwing the ♥6 from dummy; East must also throw a heart. Now East gets thrown in with the ♥A.

Triple squeeze (three-suit squeeze)

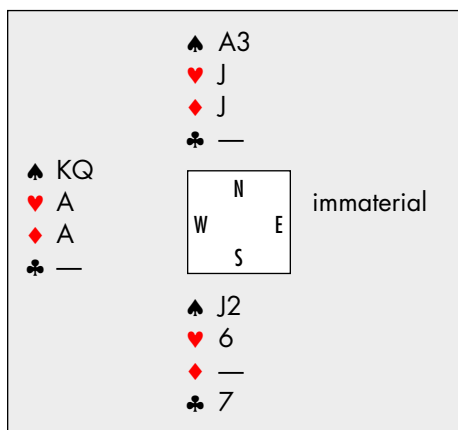
All simple squeeze positions with an added menace against the same opponent lead to triple squeeze positions with N-2 winners. As I stated earlier, calling them 'three-suit squeezes' would make more sense.

Triple squeeze (ideal position)



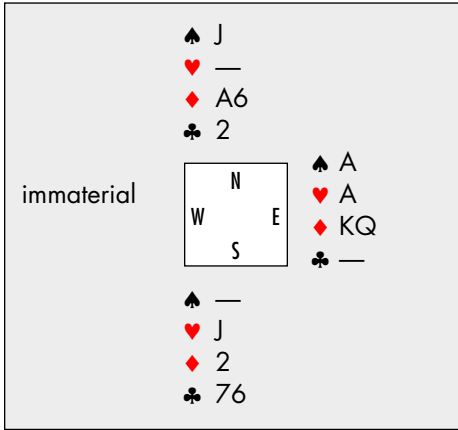
Position N-2. Two grouped one-way menaces in the South hand and a communicating menace in dummy. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. This squeeze produces only one trick — East first discards a spade and then discards the ace of whichever suit was discarded from dummy on the squeeze card.

Positional triple squeeze



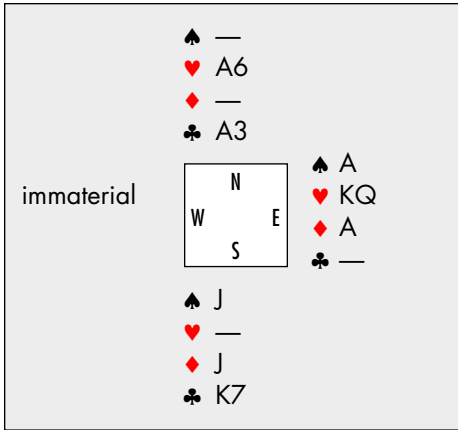
Position N-2. Two grouped one-way menaces in the same hand and a communicating menace opposite. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. This squeeze brings only one trick — West discards a spade and then keeps the ace of the suit in which South holds a card. Of course, it is possible that West will misread the position and discard the wrong ace. After dummy discards the ♥J, cash the ace and jack of spades. West could be tempted to throw the ♥A, setting up the ♥6.

Triple squeeze with a communicating menace



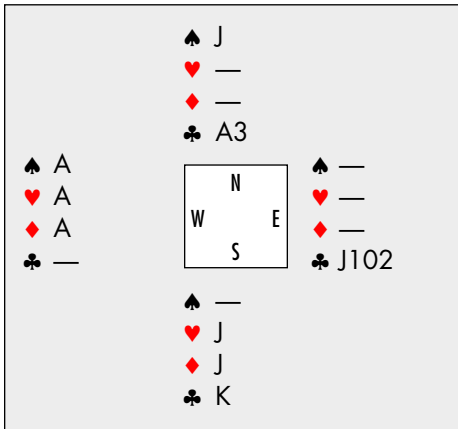
Position N-1. This time the one-way menaces are split. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. The squeeze card brings an immediate reward.

Triple squeeze with communication in the squeeze-card suit



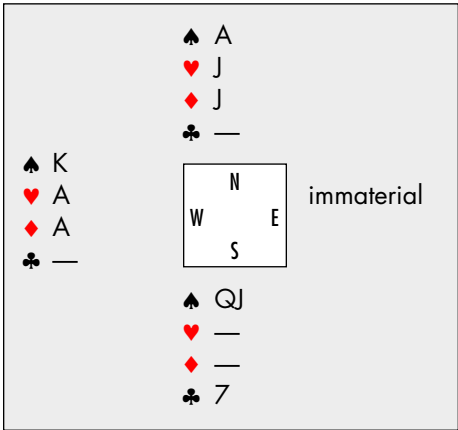
Position N-1, with grouped one-card menaces. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. We can start by cashing either the king or ace of clubs.

Triple squeeze with an entry shift



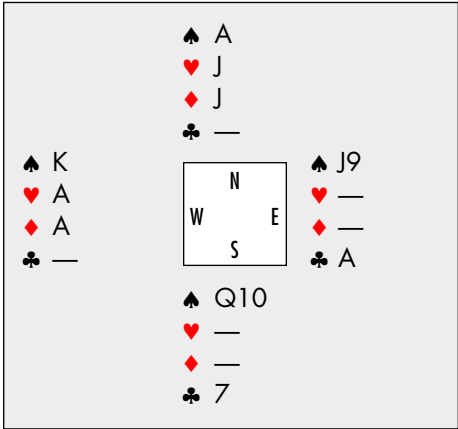
Split one-card menaces. Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. If West discards a spade, declarer overtakes the ♣K. Otherwise, South remains on lead to cash whichever jack has just been established.

Triple squeeze with jettison



Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. If West discards an ace, dummy keeps the corresponding jack. If West discards his ♠K, the ♠A is thrown from dummy.

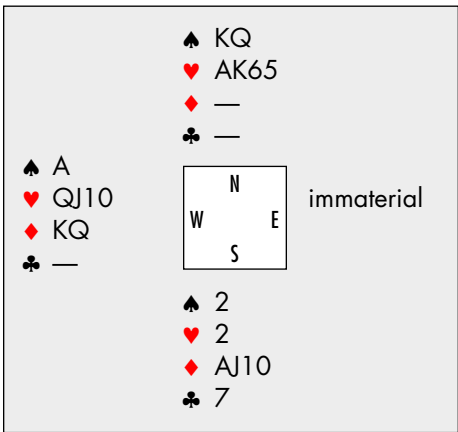
Coffin triple squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play, and the squeeze card is a loser. If West discards an ace, dummy keeps the corresponding jack. If West discards his ♠K, the ♠A is thrown from dummy and East must play into the spade tenace.

George Coffin.

Super triple squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. Any discard costs West two tricks.

Giant triple squeeze

♠ K2	♠ J103	♠ 987654
♥ 109876	♥ AKQJ3	♥ 54
♦ J109	♦ 32	♦ K8
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ	
	♥ 2	
	♦ AQ7654	
	♣ 7	

In theory, Position N-3. In fact N-2, thanks to the winning diamond finesse. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. If West discards a spade, two tricks are gained. If West discards a diamond, South scores all the tricks. If West discards a heart, the fifth heart squeezes him again in spades and diamonds.

Triple squeeze for suit establishment

♠ J9876	♠ 2	
♥ KQJ	♥ A10987	
♦ QJ109	♦ K87654	
♣ —	♣ —	
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	immaterial
	♠ AKQ10543	
	♥ 32	
	♦ A2	
	♣ 7	

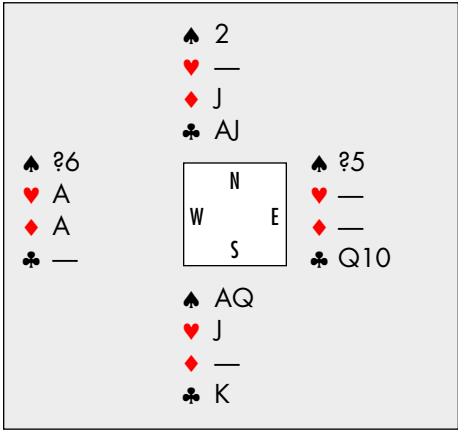
Position N-4. If you don't like the ♣7 being the squeeze card, just call it the ace, because East has all the other clubs. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. Whichever suit West discards, a simple duck in that suit wins three tricks.

Three-suit double squeeze

♠ Q107	♠ A32	♠ J98
♥ K8	♥ A10	♥ J9
♦ 1093	♦ AJ8	♦ Q76
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ K65	
	♥ Q	
	♦ K2	
	♣ 76	

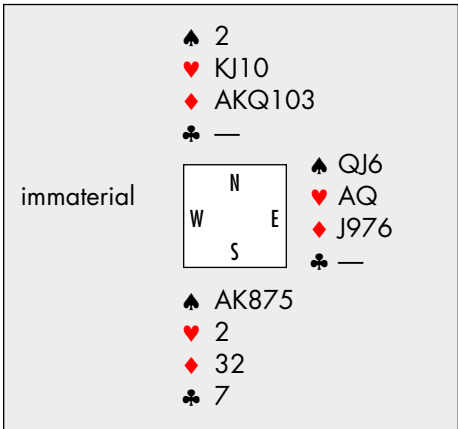
Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. On the first club, West must keep his diamonds to protect East's ♦Q from a backwards finesse which would set up the ♦8. He must also keep his spades in order to allow East to discard one. West therefore discards a heart, while dummy and East discard spades. On the second club, West is guard-squeezed in diamonds and simple-squeezed in the major suits.

Two-way triple squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. The question mark represents the ♠K, whose position is unknown. The ♣K forces West to discard a spade. The ♠A and the ♠Q are then cashed. If West has the ♠K, this is a pure triple squeeze. If East holds the ♠K, it is a stepping-stone squeeze.

Triple stepping-stone squeeze



Position N-3. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. All the menaces are extended. On the squeeze card, the ♠2 is thrown from dummy and East can only discard his ♥Q. Declarer now takes the ♠A, discarding a diamond from dummy, and throws East in with the ♥A. If East plays a diamond back, the play is over. If East returns a spade, dummy discards another diamond and takes the rest of the tricks.

Terence Reese and David Bird, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*.

Triple throw-in squeeze

♠ 532

♥ 10832

♦ 10652

♣ K7

♠ 109

♥ J976

♦ J987

♣ QJ10

N

W E

S

♠ J876

♥ 54

♦ 43

♣ 85432

♠ AKQ4

♥ AKQ

♦ AKQ

♣ A96

Robert Gray, *The Bridge World*, 1979.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣Q.

Position N-1. South takes the ♣A and cashes his nine winners outside clubs, disappointed to see no jack coming down in any of the three suits.

♠ —

♥ 10

♦ 10

♣ K

♠ —

♥ J

♦ J

♣ J

N

W E

S

♠ J

♥ —

♦ —

♣ 85

♠ 4

♥ —

♦ —

♣ 96

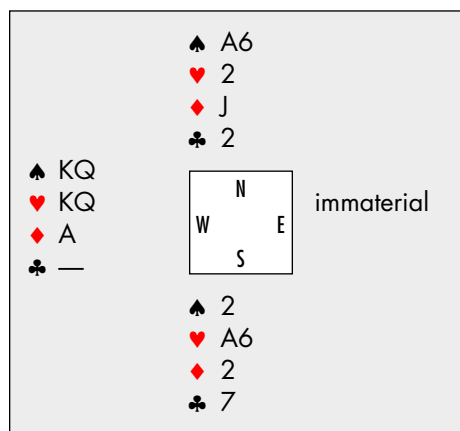
Rather than conceding one down, he thinks about the remaining cards and exits with the ♠4 in this position:

If West discards a red jack, the ten from the other suit is thrown from dummy and East acts as a stepping stone to dummy, which is now high. If West discards the ♣J, the ♣K is discarded from dummy and East has to play into South's club tenace.

Progressive (repeating) squeeze

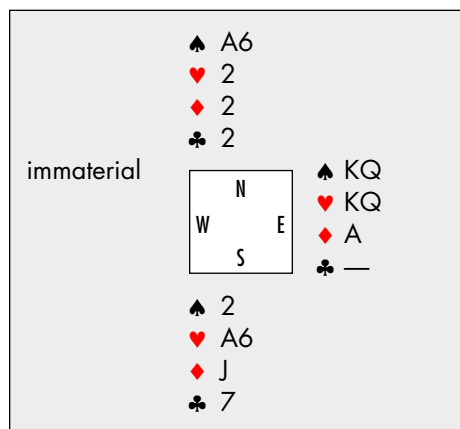
This is a triple N-2 squeeze that produces two tricks thanks to the established card, which applies a second squeeze.

Progressive squeeze against West



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. Whatever West discards, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again.

Progressive squeeze against East



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. Whatever East discards, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again.

Progressive squeeze (non-positional)

immaterial

♠ A6

♥ 2

♦ J

♣ 2

N

W E

S

♠ 2

♥ AJ6

♦ —

♣ 7

♠ KQ

♥ KQ

♦ A

♣ —

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards a spade or a diamond, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again. If East discards a heart, the play is over.

Progressive squeeze (ideal position)

immaterial

♠ AJ10

♥ —

♦ —

♣ 2

N

W E

S

♠ 2

♥ J

♦ J

♣ 7

♠ KQ

♥ A

♦ A

♣ —

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards a heart or a diamond, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again. If East discards a spade, the play is over.

Progressive twin-entry squeeze

immaterial

♠ K2

♥ J

♦ J

♣ 2

N

W E

S

♠ A983

♥ —

♦ —

♣ 7

♠ QJ10

♥ A

♦ A

♣ —

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards a heart or a diamond, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again. If East discards a spade, the play is over.

Progressive squeeze

immaterial

♠ K83	♠ QJ10
♥ A6	♥ KQ
♦ —	♦ A
♣ 2	♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A92	
♥ 2	
♦ J	
♣ 7	

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional. Whatever East discards, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again.

Progressive criss-cross squeeze

♠ KQ	♠ J107	
♥ KQ	♥ A	
♦ KQ	♦ A6	
♣ —	♣ —	

	N	
W		E
	S	

immaterial

♠ A	
♥ J2	
♦ 32	
♣ 7	

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. If West discards a heart or a diamond, cashing the newly established card squeezes him again. If West discards a spade, the play is over.

Progressive squeeze for the defenders

♠ —	♠ —	
♥ A6543	♥ —	
♦ —	♦ 5432	
♣ —	♣ A	

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A	♠ J
♥ KQ	♥ 2
♦ KQ	♦ A6
♣ —	♣ 7

Position N-3. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with declarer's play, and the squeeze card is a loser. East plays his club and the defenders win the remaining four tricks. If declarer discards a spade, he is squeezed again when East cashes the ♠J. If he discards a diamond, he is squeezed when East follows with the the ♦A and the ♦6. If he discards a heart, the play is over. Poor declarer can win only one trick — the one that squeezes him!

Entry squeeze

This is a squeeze type described by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. It is a triple squeeze that forces an opponent to discard a 'useless' card, not creating a winner but giving declarer an additional entry.

Entry squeeze (basic position)

immaterial	♠ J102	♠ KQ									
	♥ 43	♥ AJ10									
	♦ A9	♦ QJ									
	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		
		N									
	W		E								
		S									
	♠ A										
	♥ KQ2										
♦ K2											
♣ 7											

Position N-1. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is getting to dummy twice to play hearts towards his honors. East cannot discard a spade, and if he lets go a heart, one lead from dummy followed by a duck will establish the ♥Q. However, if East discards a 'useless' diamond, two dummy entries become available, first by overtaking the ♦K with the ace and then by crossing to the ♦9 to play hearts a second time.

Positional entry squeeze

	♠ AJ										
	♥ J32										
	♦ 43										
	♣ —										
♠ K8											
♥ K8											
♦ KQJ											
♣ —											
	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		immaterial
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q2										
	♥ A										
	♦ A62										
	♣ 7										

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is to get to dummy twice to set up and reach the ♥J. If West discards a heart, the ace is cashed and the jack established. If West discards a diamond, a simple duck establishes the ♦6. If West discards a 'useless' spade, the ♥A is cashed and two dummy entries are available: first overtaking the ♠Q with the ♠A to duck a heart, and then reaching the established ♥J via the ♠J.

Entry squeeze with throw-in

immaterial	♠ Q3		♠ AJ									
	♥ 432		♥ KQ5									
	♦ 2		♦ KJ									
	♣ 2		♣ —									
		<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		
		N										
	W		E									
		S										
	♠ K2											
	♥ A10											
♦ AQ												
♣ 7												

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is getting to dummy to take the diamond finesse. East, obviously, cannot discard a diamond. If East discards a spade, then leading the ♠K sets up the ♠Q as an entry. If East discards a 'useless' heart, the ♥A is cashed and then East is thrown in with a heart. He has to allow declarer to reach the ♠Q, either directly or after the ♠K is discarded under the ♠A. Now the diamond finesse can be taken.

Entry squeeze with a finesse

immaterial	♠ A6	♠ QJ									
	♥ 1032	♥ K965									
	♦ —	♦ —									
	♣ 7	♣ —									
	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		
		N									
	W		E								
		S									
♠ K3											
♥ AQJ8											
♦ —											
♣ —											

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is to finesse twice in hearts. He must first sacrifice a trick, overtaking the ♠K with the ace, and then the squeeze card is cashed. If East discards a heart, the single entry is enough to pick up the suit, starting with the ♥10. If East discards his 'useless' spade, a first finesse is taken against the ♥K, starting with the ♥10, which is covered; then back to dummy with the ♠6, to finesse against the ♥9.

Double entry squeeze

	♠ A6											
	♥ 1032											
	♦ J2											
	♣ —											
♠ QJ	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 109	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ Q87		♥ K65										
♦ 109		♦ KQ										
♣ —		♣ —										
	♠ K2											
	♥ AJ9											
	♦ A											
	♣ 7											

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is getting to dummy to finesse twice in hearts. If West discards a heart, a small heart towards the ♥10 allows declarer to score two heart tricks. If West discards a diamond, the ♦A is cashed, and then the ♠K and ♠A. Now a single play towards the hearts in the closed hand suffices, because West must play one back himself when he wins his ♥Q. If West discards a 'useless' spade, East also has to discard one. Declarer can now go twice to dummy in spades, overtaking the ♠K with the ♠A on the first round, to play towards the heart tenace twice.

Compound entry squeeze

♠ K10

♥ A

♦ KQ

♣ —

♠ AJ

♥ 2

♦ A6

♣ —

♠ Q2

♥ J

♦ 2

♣ 7

N

W

E

S

immaterial

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is to set up a simple squeeze. West cannot discard from either red suit, so he lets go a 'useless' spade. However, now the ♠A is cashed and the ♠Q allows declarer to return to hand while simultaneously squeezing West in the red suits.

Jettison entry squeeze

♠ AQ

♥ KQ

♦ QJ10

♣ —

♠ K2

♥ —

♦ AK654

♣ —

♠ J3

♥ A6

♦ 32

♣ 7

N

W

E

S

immaterial

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer's problem is to set up a simple squeeze. West cannot discard from the red suits, so he lets go his 'useless' ♠Q. However, now a small spade is led towards dummy and the ♠K is discarded under the ace. Declarer wins the diamond return and crosses back to hand with the ♠J, which squeezes West in the red suits.

Twin-entry entry squeeze

♠ K109

♥ KQ

♦ KQ

♣ —

♠ AJ3

♥ 2

♦ A6

♣ 7

♠ Q42

♥ AJ

♦ 2

♣ 2

N

W

E

S

immaterial

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard; the squeeze card is in dummy. Declarer's problem is to set up a simple squeeze. West cannot discard from the red suits, so he lets go a 'useless' spade. Declarer crosses to hand with the ♥A, finesses the ♠J, cashes the ♠A and comes back with the ♠Q, which squeezes West in the red suits.

Alternating entry squeeze

♠ A
 ♥ AQ
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ —

♠ J
 ♥ K32
 ♦ K32
 ♣ —

immaterial

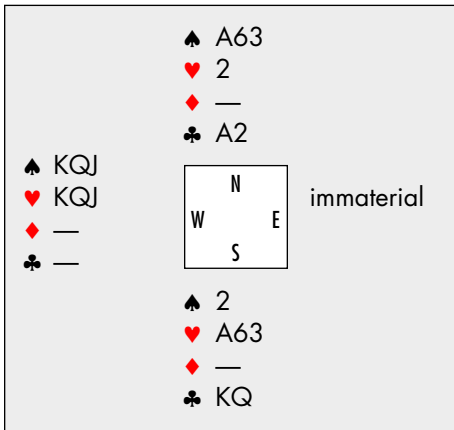
♠ —
 ♥ 654
 ♦ 654
 ♣ 7

Position N-5. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. The problem is to play up to both red kings. If West discards a spade, a diamond is discarded from dummy. Then a heart to the king allows declarer to score the established ♠J and West must later concede a trick to the ♦K. If West discards his 'useless' heart, a diamond is thrown from dummy and a small heart led towards the ♥K. The ♥6 permits a re-entry to the closed hand to play up to the ♦K. West can score only three tricks.

Overtaking (entry-shifting) squeeze

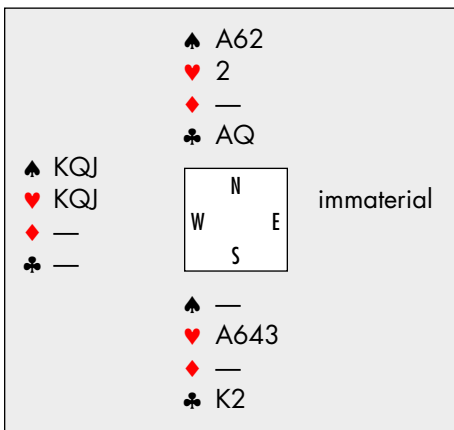
The entry-shifting mechanism consists of the option to overtake the squeeze card, thereby placing the lead either in declarer's hand or in dummy, depending on the opponent's discard. A very nice study of this type of squeeze is performed by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*.

Entry-shifting squeeze (Position 1)



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. Declarer plays the ♣K. If West discards a spade, the ♣2 is played from dummy on this trick; next the ♠2 is played to set up a spade trick. If West discards a heart, declarer overtakes the ♣K with the ♣A and plays the ♥2 to set up a heart trick. Declarer has to keep the late club entry in the correct hand.

Entry-shifting squeeze (Position 2)



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. The club matrix is different from Position 1, and the spade menace in dummy is blocked. Declarer leads the ♣2. If West discards a spade, the ♣Q is played from dummy and then declarer ducks a spade. If West discards a heart, declarer wins with dummy's ♣A and then ducks a heart.

Entry-shifting squeeze (Position 3)

	♠ A643	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ K2	
♠ KQJ		immaterial
♥ KQJ		
♦ —		
♣ —		
	♠ 2	
	♥ A62	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. The club matrix is different from Positions 1 and 2 and the menace in hand is blocked. Declarer leads the ♣A. If West discards a spade, the ♣2 is played from dummy and then declarer ducks a spade. If West discards a heart, dummy's ♣K is played under the ace and a heart is ducked.

Entry-shifting criss-cross squeeze

	♠ A	
	♥ 1032	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	
♠ KQJ		immaterial
♥ KQJ		
♦ —		
♣ —		
	♠ 1032	
	♥ A	
	♦ —	
	♣ KJ	

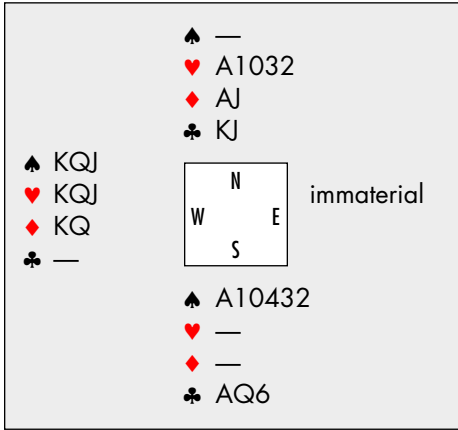
Position N-2. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. This time both menaces are blocked. Declarer leads the ♣J. If West discards a spade, declarer wins dummy's ♣A, cashes the ♠A, returns to hand with the ♣K and ducks a spade. If West discards a heart, declarer wins dummy's ♣Q, cashes the ♥A, returns to dummy with the ♣A and ducks a heart.

Entry-shifting triple squeeze

	♠ J652	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	
♠ AK		immaterial
♥ KQ		
♦ KQ		
♣ —		
	♠ —	
	♥ A6	
	♦ A6	
	♣ K2	

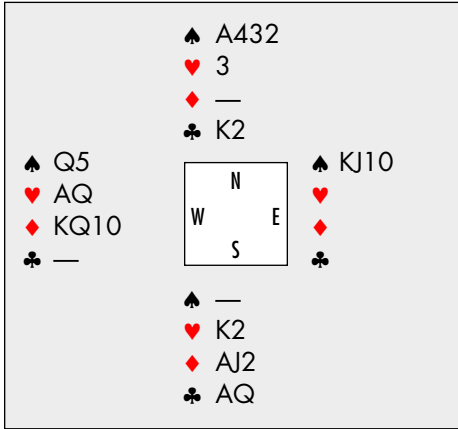
Position N-2. All three menaces are blocked. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. Declarer leads the ♣2. If West discards a spade, the ♣Q is played from dummy and a spade is ducked. Now the ♣A is an entry to reach dummy's good spades and the red aces are not used. If West discards a heart or a diamond, declarer wins the trick with dummy's ♣A and comes back to hand with the ♣K to score whichever red six has been established.

Entry-shifting triple squeeze with suit establishment



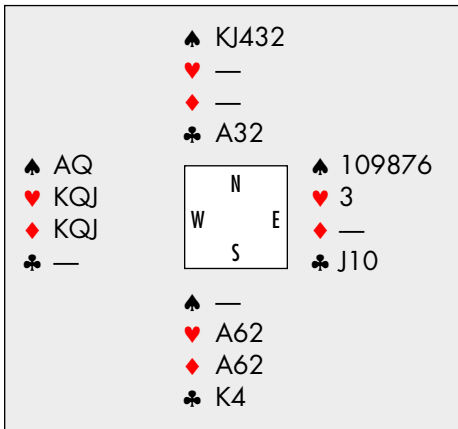
Position N-2. All three menaces are blocked. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. Declarer leads the ♣Q. If West discards a diamond, declarer wins the trick with the ♣K and cashes three red-suit winners before returning to hand for his black-suit tricks. If West discards a spade, the ♣J is played under the ♣Q and a spade is ducked. If West discards a heart, the trick is won with the ♣K and now a heart is ducked to set up the ♥10.

Entry-shifting squeeze with throw-in



Position N-3. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defensive play. Declarer leads the ♣Q. If West discards a spade, declarer plays the ♣K from dummy and cashes the ♠A, after which West is thrown in to concede a trick in one of the red suits. If West discards a heart, declarer plays the ♣2 from dummy and ducks a heart to set up the ♥K. The ♠A will score later via a stepping stone. If West discards a diamond, declarer again retains the lead in hand and ducks a diamond to set up the ♦J; the ♠A will score later.

Entry-shifting triple squeeze with a sacrifice



Position N-4. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. Declarer leads the ♣K. If West discards a red card, declarer retains the lead in hand and ducks a trick in the suit West has unguarded. If West discards the ♠Q, declarer overtakes with the ♣A, setting up East's ♣J, and then ducks a spade. West has to lead a red suit back to declarer, who wins the trick and cashes his other red ace. Now East is thrown in with declarer's last club to act as a stepping stone to dummy's spades.

Count squeeze (discovery squeeze)

This type of squeeze brings no additional tricks, but forces a discard which allows declarer to count the adverse hands, thus guiding the decision in another suit.

Simple count squeeze

♠ 2	♠ J	♠ A
♥ A	♥ J	♥ —
♦ Q4	♦ K2	♦ 1098
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ AJ3	
	♣ 7	

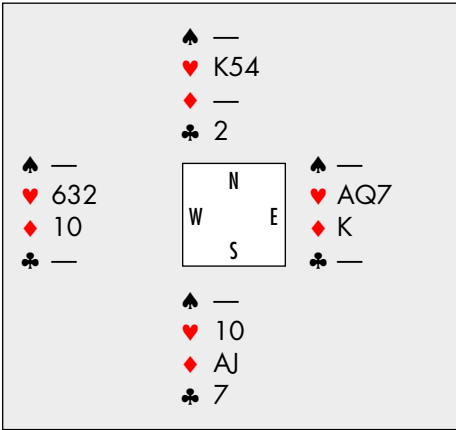
Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. On the squeeze card, West discards his spade and declarer can discard dummy's heart knowing that if West has the ♥A, he cannot have more than two diamonds. East must discard a diamond. Declarer now knows that he can cash the diamonds instead of attempting to finesse against the queen.

Double count squeeze

♠ —	♠ —	♠ A
♥ 43	♥ A6	♥ KQ
♦ A	♦ J	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ J	
	♥ 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defensive play. On the squeeze card, West discards a heart and declarer can release dummy's diamond knowing that West has the ♦A. East must also discard a heart and declarer now knows that when he cashes the ♥A, the ♥K will fall. The other double squeeze positions give similar count squeeze positions.

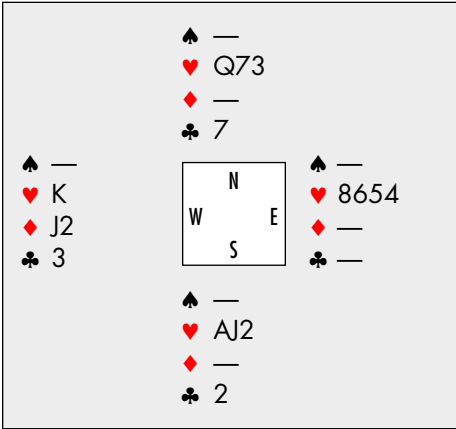
Discovery squeeze



Terence Reese and David Bird, *Miracles of Card Play*.

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. At this point, declarer does not know that East has bared his ♦K. On the squeeze card, West cannot discard his diamond without exposing the situation, so he discards a heart. East cannot discard his ♥7 without also exposing the situation, so he discards the ♥Q. Declarer can now score either two diamonds or two hearts, as he chooses.

Discovery squeeze



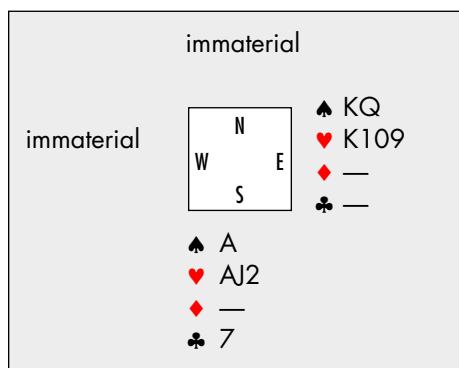
Terence Reese, *The Hidden Side of Bridge*

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. Declarer goes to dummy with the ♣7, and East discards (perforce) a heart. If he had another card, and say ♥Kx or ♥Kxx, he would not discard a heart, so declarer can infer that the ♥K is singleton and cash the ace.

One-threat squeeze

This squeeze forces an opponent to discard a winner, so that a single suit remains in play, the only one where declarer has a menace. Then the lead is given up to the opponent to set up a trick.

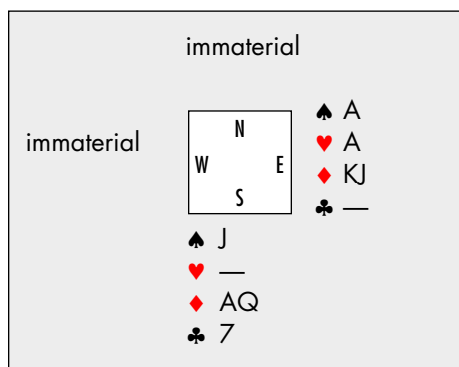
One-threat squeeze (basic position)



Don Kersey, *Bridge World*, December 1990.

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional. If East discards a spade, declarer cashes the ♠A and then throws him in with the ♥2 to play into the heart tenace. If East discards a heart, the ♥A is followed by a heart duck, setting up the jack.

Three-suit one-threat squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional. The squeeze card forces East to discard his master heart. He is then thrown in with the ♠A to give up a free finesse in diamonds.

Double one-threat squeeze

♠ J98
♥ —
♦ —
♣ 43

♠ Q32
♥ —
♦ 2
♣ 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K76
♥ —
♦ KQ
♣ —

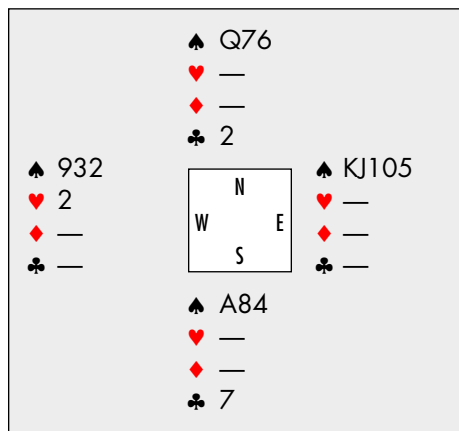
♠ A104
♥ —
♦ A
♣ 7

Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional. The squeeze card forces East to discard a diamond; otherwise declarer simply ducks a spade. Now the $\spadesuit A$ is cashed and West cannot afford to discard a spade either. Finally, a small spade is ducked, allowing the opponents to choose who will get endplayed in spades.

One-suit squeeze

This squeeze is based on the rank of the card that an opponent must discard in a specific unique suit. It was first described by Jean Besse of Switzerland.

One-suit squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is non-positional. If East discards the ♠5, a simple duck endplays him. If East discards the ♠J or the ♠10, then declarer leads a low spade, covering West's ♠9 if he plays it, otherwise ducking in dummy; either way, East is endplayed.

One-card squeeze

Whether the opponent keeps or discards this card, the further developments are bad for him.

One-card squeeze

	♠ QJ	
	♥ —	
	♦ AJ2	
	♣ 2	
♠ A		♠ K9
♥ AQ		♥ —
♦ 987		♦ Q1065
♣ —		♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ K2	
	♦ K43	
	♣ 7	

Le Bridgeur.

Position N-3. The squeeze is positional. If West keeps the ♠A and discards a diamond, declarer cashes the ♦AK and then throws him in with a spade to lead a heart up to the king. If West discards his ♠A, declarer crosses to dummy with the ♦A and gives up a trick to the ♠K. East must either give declarer the ♠Q, or worse, a diamond finesse as well as the ♠Q. If West discards a heart in the first place, a simple duck sets up the ♥K.

Clash squeeze

These squeezes were described by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. A clash menace is like a 'reverse' guard menace. Hugh Darwen, in *Bridge* magazine (1968) discussed clash squeeze positions where one opponent is squeezed in two or three suits and the other opponent in three suits. He called them 'hedgehogs'.

Clash squeeze (basic position)

♠ K	♠ A2	♠ 103
♥ KQ	♥ AJ	♥ 43
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ J	
	♥ 2	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J, but West must also guard the classical menaces in the red suits. If he discards his ♠K, dummy releases a heart and the ♠J scores a trick.

Double clash squeeze

♠ K	♠ A6	♠ 109
♥ KQ	♥ AJ	♥ —
♦ KQ	♦ 2	♦ J10
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 2
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ J	
	♥ 2	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. West can discard a diamond, but then the ♥A squeezes East in diamonds and spades. If West discards his ♠K, the ♠J scores.

Double clash squeeze

	♠ A62	
	♥ A62	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ 109		♠ KQ
♥ 109		♥ KQ
♦ —		♦ KQ
♣ 32		♣ —
	♠ J	
	♥ J	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 87	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. The ♥K protects the ♥10 from the clash menace, the ♥J. East still must discard a spade and a heart on both club squeeze cards. West is now squeezed in the major suits when the ♦A is cashed.

Three-suit double clash squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ A6	
	♦ —	
	♣ 2	
♠ K		♠ 109
♥ 109		♥ K
♦ KQ		♦ J10
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ J	
	♥ J	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. The ♥K protects the ♥10 from the clash menace, the ♥J. West and East must both discard a diamond, and then the ♦6 scores.

Delayed duck clash squeeze

	♠ A2	
	♥ K10	
	♦ 2	
	♣ —	
♠ K		♠ 109
♥ QJ		♥ A3
♦ K4		♦ 3
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ J	
	♥ 2	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. West can only discard a heart, after which declarer plays hearts to establish the ♥10.

Non-simultaneous double clash squeeze

♠ K	♠ A6	♠ 109
♥ A	♥ —	♥ K
♦ QJ8	♦ K63	♦ 54
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ J	
	♥ J	
	♦ A2	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. West can only discard the ♥A, while both dummy and East release a diamond. Now the ♦K and the ♦A squeeze East in the majors.

Non-simultaneous back and forth double clash squeeze

♠ K	♠ J	♠ 109
♥ K4	♥ J2	♥ Q3
♦ KQ	♦ A6	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 2
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A6	
	♥ A	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 7	

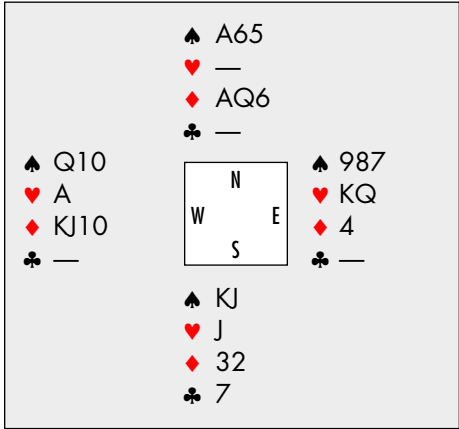
Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. West can only discard a heart and a diamond is thrown from dummy. The ♥A is cashed, and now the ♦A squeezes East in the majors.

Twin-entry double clash squeeze

♠ QJ	♠ A62	♠ 987
♥ K4	♥ A	♥ Q3
♦ A	♦ J	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ K10	
	♥ J2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

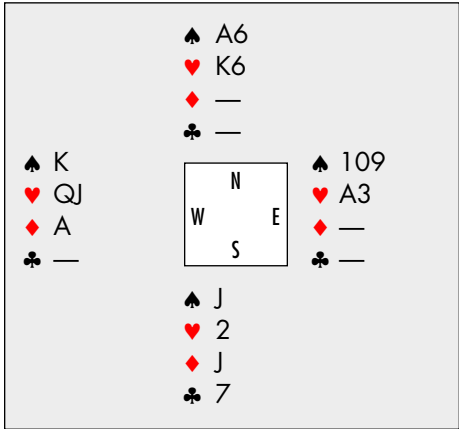
Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠Q protects the ♠9 from the clash menace, the ♠10. West can only discard a heart and a diamond is thrown from dummy. On the same trick, East is squeezed in the majors.

Twin-entry non-simultaneous double clash squeeze



Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠Q protects the ♠9 from the clash menace, the ♠J. West can discard a heart, but then the ♦Q and the ♦A squeeze East in the majors.

Stepping-stone clash squeeze



Position N-1. The squeeze is positional. The ♠K protects the ♠10 from the clash menace, the ♠J. If West discards a heart, dummy discards a spade and a heart play establishes the ♥6. If West discards a spade, dummy and East discard hearts. Then the ♠J is cashed and East is thrown in with the ♥A to act as a stepping stone to the ♠A.

A near-miss (almost a clash squeeze)

	♠ K43	
	♥ AKJ4	
	♦ A1062	
	♣ K4	
♠ Q1092		♠ 8765
♥ 3		♥ 875
♦ KJ94		♦ 87
♣ QJ109		♣ 8743
	♠ AJ	
	♥ Q10962	
	♦ Q53	
	♣ A52	

Jeff Acker, *The Bridge World*, June 1980.

South plays 6NT; West leads the ♣Q.

Declarer takes dummy's ♣K and immediately tries playing the ♦2 towards his ♦Q — but West has the king. Unlucky!

West continues with the ♣J, taken with the ace, and declarer cashes his hearts, arriving at this position:

	♠ K43	
	♥ —	
	♦ A106	
	♣ —	
♠ Q10		♠ 876
♥ —		♥ —
♦ J94		♦ 8
♣ 10		♣ 87
	♠ AJ	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 53	
	♣ 5	

On the last heart, West cannot discard a spade because of the clash menace, declarer's ♠J. However, he cannot weaken his diamonds either and must discard his club. East must hang on to his spades and a club guard. When declarer now takes a diamond finesse and then cashes the ♦A, East is squeezed in the black suits. He probably thought he could sleep through this deal with his yarborough!

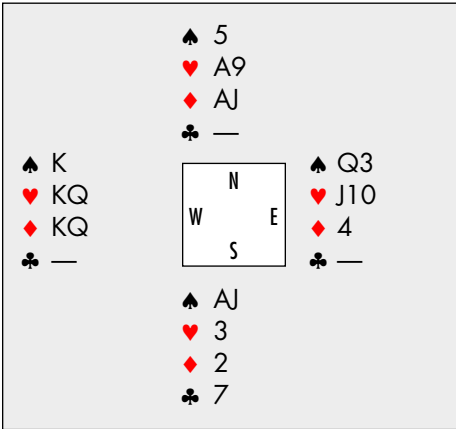
Simultaneous guard-clash hedgehog

	♠ A6	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ —	
	♣ 2	
♠ K		♠ 109
♥ Q10		♥ K
♦ KQ		♦ J10
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ J	
	♥ 2	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 7	

Hugh Darwen.

Position N-1. West's ♠K protects against the ♠J clash menace and East's ♥K protects against the heart finesse. When the squeeze card is played, West can only spare a diamond and East is now squeezed in three suits.

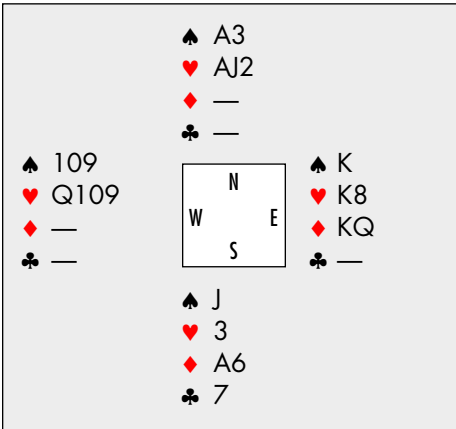
Progressive guard-clash hedgehog, Type 1



Position N-1. West's ♠K protects against the finesse and East's ♥J protects against the ♥9 clash menace. On the play of the club squeeze card, West can only spare a heart. Dummy must now throw a diamond, while East has no problem discarding a diamond. The ♦A now squeezes East in the majors.

Hugh Darwen.

Progressive guard-clash hedgehog, Type 2



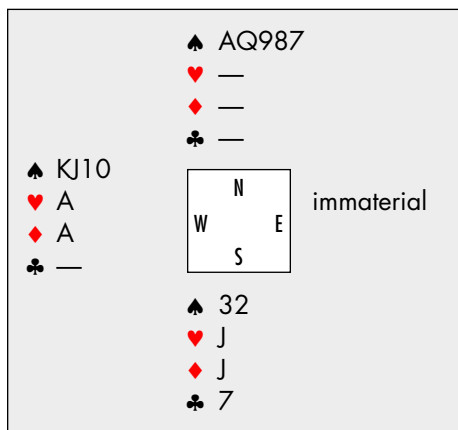
Position N-1. East's ♥K protects against the finesse and his ♠K protects against the ♠J clash menace. On the play of the club squeeze card, West has to discard a heart. Dummy must now throw a heart, while East has no problem discarding a heart. The ♦A now squeezes West in the majors.

Hugh Darwen.

Guard reduction squeeze

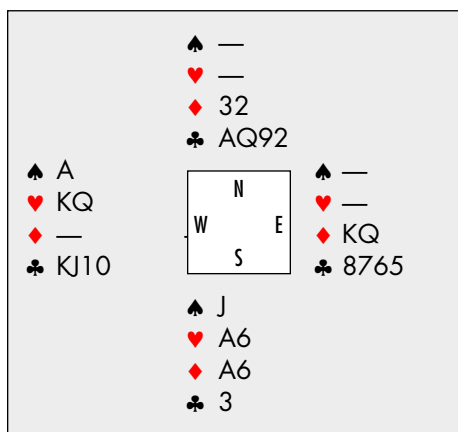
This type of squeeze forces an opponent to weaken his holding in a suit and later to become subject to a finesse.

Simple guard reduction squeeze



Position N-1, with a communicating extended menace. The squeeze is positional. West has to discard a spade, after which the finesse produces four tricks.

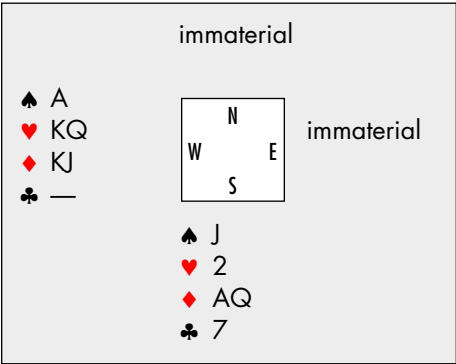
Reciprocal guard reduction squeeze



Position N-2. The squeeze is positional. All four suits are guarded by the defense. Declarer begins by cashing the ♥A. East cannot discard a diamond and therefore discards from his club guard. Now the ♦A triple-squeezes West, including a guard reduction in clubs.

Béguin and Besse, *66 Curiosities*.

Guard reduction strip squeeze and throw-in



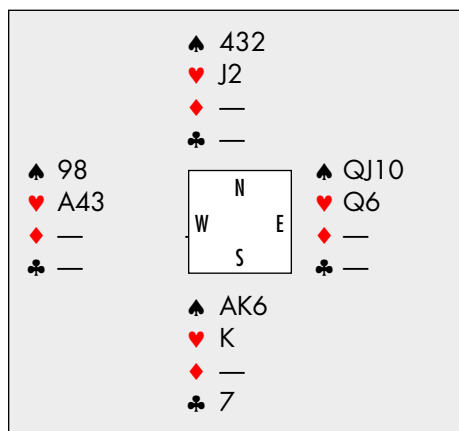
Vincent Labbé, *Plus Jamais Chuter 3 Sans Atout*.

Position N-3. The squeeze is non-positional. On the lead of the ♣7, West can only reduce his heart length. He is now thrown in with a heart or a spade to lead a diamond to declarer. In actuality, this is a pure triple squeeze where the idea of guard reduction is not essential.

Non-material squeeze

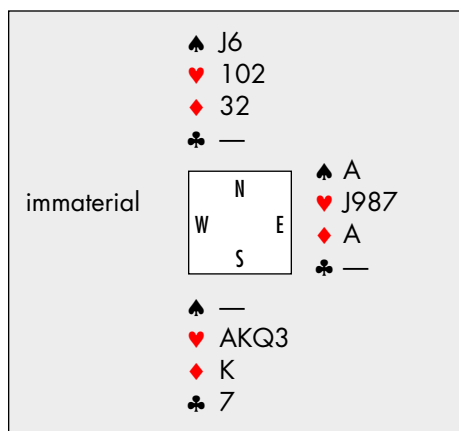
This type of squeeze was described by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. The squeeze does not produce an immediate trick, hence it is 'non-material', but surrenders a card that has a vital function, such as communications or protecting against a throw-in. These authors coined the term 'lunar' menace for a totally isolated menace, as distant as the moon, which cannot be reached without help from the opposition.

Non-material stepping-stone double squeeze



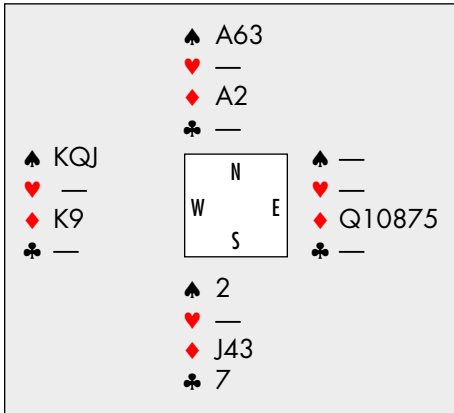
Position N-2, with a 'lunar' menace. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. East has to discard a heart. Now declarer cashes the top spades and leads the ♥K, pinning the queen. West is forced to act as a stepping stone to the ♥J.

Non-material squeeze with strip and throw-in



Position N-2, with a 'lunar' menace. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. East has to discard his ♠A. Now he is thrown in with a diamond to give back either four tricks in hearts or two tricks in each major, depending on the card he returns.

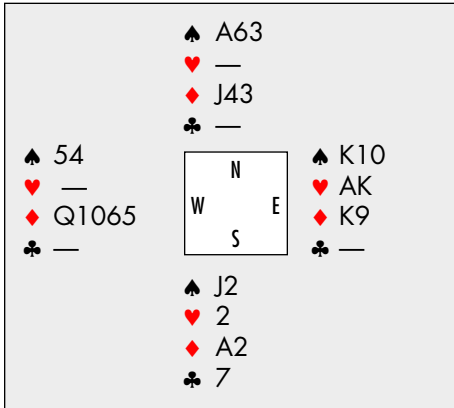
Non-material squeeze to set up a finesse



The Bridge World, 1987.

Position N-2, with a 'lunar' menace. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. If West discards a spade, a diamond is thrown from dummy and then a simple duck establishes the ♠6. If West discards a diamond, declarer discards a spade from dummy. Now he crosses to the ♠A, cashes the ♦A and leads a low diamond towards the jack.

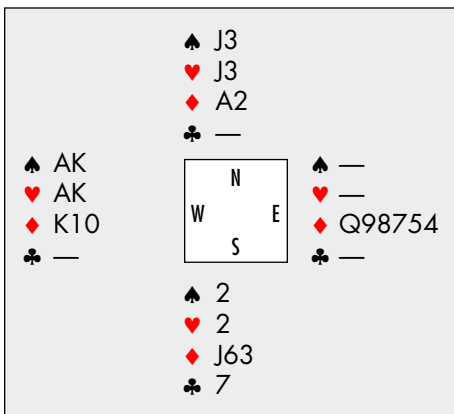
Non-material strip squeeze with a repeated throw-in



The Bridge World, 1987.

Position N-3, with a 'lunar' menace. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. If East discards a spade, the ♠J is set up at once. If East discards a heart, he is thrown in with a heart. Now he cannot exit with a spade, so he plays a diamond. If his exit card is the ♦K, it is taken with the ace and declarer leads up to the ♦J. Alternatively, the ♦9 is taken with the ace and East is thrown in again (this time in diamonds) to lead away from the ♠K. If East discards a diamond initially, declarer plays ace and another diamond to set up the ♦J.

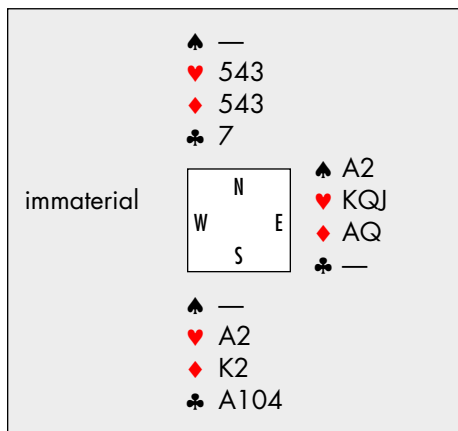
Non-material stepping-stone squeeze with a finesse



The Bridge World, 1987.

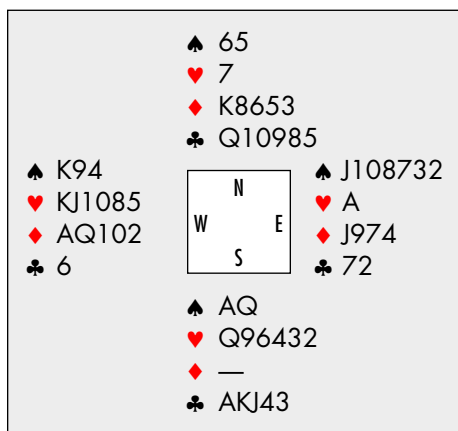
Position N-4, with a 'lunar' menace. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. If West discards from a major suit, declarer just leads a small card towards the corresponding jack. If West discards a diamond, declarer plays the ace and another diamond towards the ♦J, which East must concede either immediately or via a stepping stone.

Non-material entry-shifting squeeze



Position N-3. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. The ♣7 is led from dummy. If East discards a spade, declarer plays the ♣4 on this trick and then leads up to the ♦K. If East discards his ♦Q, declarer cashes three clubs and then ducks a diamond. Finally, if East discards a heart, declarer cashes three clubs and then plays ace and another heart to force East to concede a trick to the ♦K.

Non-material squeeze against an exit card



South plays 5♣; West leads his trump.

Declarer wins with the ♣K and plays a heart to East's ace. East returns a second trump, declarer plays the ♣J and West is squeezed. He should discard a spade, but now he has no exit card. Declarer can play the ♠A and ♠Q to throw him in and he must concede two tricks in a red suit.

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Non-material squeeze against defensive communications

	♠ 74										
	♥ A865										
	♦ Q3										
	♣ Q7										
♠ 3	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J1086
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J93		♥ Q1072									
♦ K965		♦ A4									
♣ J6		♣ —									
	♠ Q9										
	♥ K4										
	♦ J1087										
	♣ 104										

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

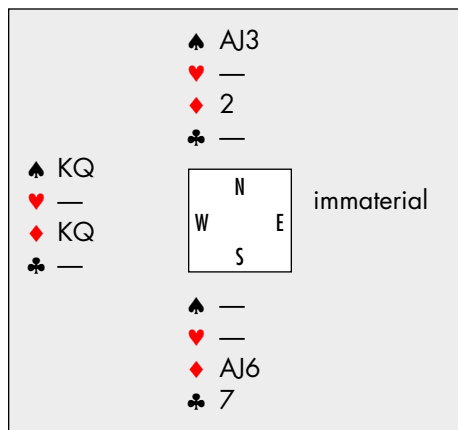
South plays in notrump and needs six more tricks.

Position N-4. If declarer leads a diamond, West will go up with his king and set up East's spades. Instead, declarer tries the ♣10. If East discards a spade on this trick, declarer can afford to go after diamonds. If East releases a heart, declarer can set up a heart trick in dummy. Finally, if East discards the ♦4, declarer can attack diamonds, since East will have to win the first round.

Pseudo squeeze

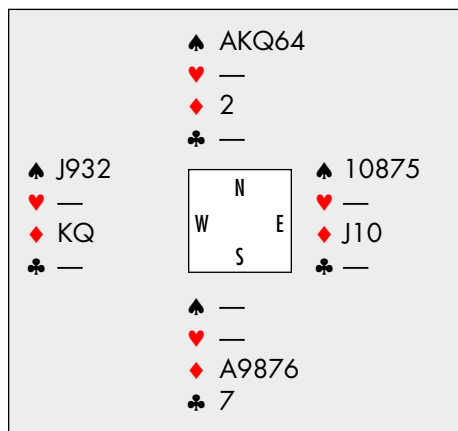
In this ending, an opponent is persuaded that he is squeezed, not knowing that a threat card is missing from declarer's (hidden) hand. Of course, this is not a true squeeze, but rather a misguess by a defender.

Simple pseudo squeeze (Dutch squeeze)



If West doesn't know declarer has no more spades, he could well discard a diamond.

Pseudo double squeeze



Neither East nor West knows that declarer has no spades, so they could easily both decide to discard a diamond in order to retain a spade guard.

Victor Mollo, *Bridge in the Menagerie*.

Suicide squeeze

This is not a specific position, but describes any type of squeeze that occurs when a card played by a defender squeezes his partner. We should perhaps call it 'murder' instead of 'suicide', but let's follow the customary nomenclature, because in essence the partnership is committing suicide.

Suicide squeeze with a loser

♠ KJ	♠ A3	♠ —
♥ A	♥ J	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 432
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Notrump.

If South were on lead, this would be a classical squeeze, but when East plays a club, he is the one squeezing his partner.

Suicide squeeze with a winner

♠ A8532	♠ J7	♠ K104
♥ 10	♥ A954	♥ QJ862
♦ 10876	♦ 93	♦ J42
♣ J94	♣ AK1065	♣ Q3
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q96	
	♥ K73	
	♦ AKQ5	
	♣ 872	

South plays 3NT; West leads the ♠3.

The ♠7, the ♠10 and the ♠Q make up the first trick. Declarer tries to cut the defensive communications by playing a spade back, but East wins and switches to a diamond. Declarer wins this and plays a third spade. Now if West does not cash out his spades, declarer has time to set up the clubs. However, if West takes all his spades, he rectifies the count against himself and will be squeezed in the minor suits — this one really is suicide!

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

Suicide throw-in squeeze

♠ A32	♠ KJ95	♠ 76
♥ AJ98	♥ Q432	♥ 1075
♦ Q105	♦ 87	♦ K632
♣ J65	♣ A32	♣ Q974
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q1084	
	♥ K6	
	♦ AJ94	
	♣ K108	

Terence Reese and Martin Hoffman, *Play It Again Sam*.

South plays 3♠; West leads the ♠2.

The first trick is won in dummy and declarer leads the ♦8 to West's ten. West plays ace and another trump, East discarding a club. Now comes a heart to the king and the ace, and a heart is returned to the queen. The ♦A, a diamond ruff and a heart ruff back to hand leads to a four-card ending with the lead in the South hand. When declarer exits with the ♦J to East's king, West must keep his heart. He discards the ♣5, while the ♥4 is thrown from dummy. Now whatever club East plays, declarer can score three tricks in the suit.

Double suicide squeeze

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ J10	♥ A7	♥ —
♦ 10	♦ 5	♦ KJ9
♣ J96	♣ A74	♣ Q108
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ 9	
	♦ AQ7	
	♣ K5	

Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey, *Adventures in Card Play*.

South plays 3NT and arrives at this N-1 position. East has the lead.

If East plays a club, declarer wins the ♣K and cashes the ♥A, obliging East to discard a club. Now a diamond to the queen followed by the ♦A squeezes West. If East plays a diamond in the diagrammed position instead, West is squeezed first. On the second round of diamonds, West must discard a club while the ♥7 is discarded from dummy and then the ♥A squeezes East.

SECTION 7

TRUMP SQUEEZES

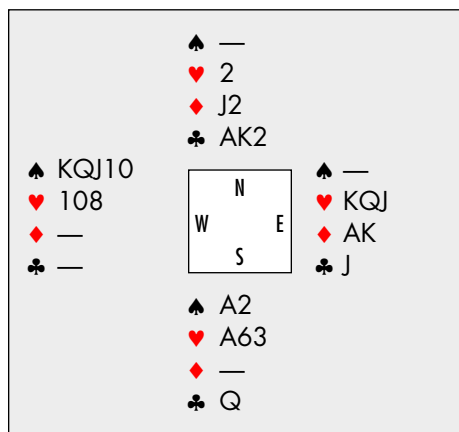
Trumps and squeezes: an explosive mixture



Simple trump squeeze

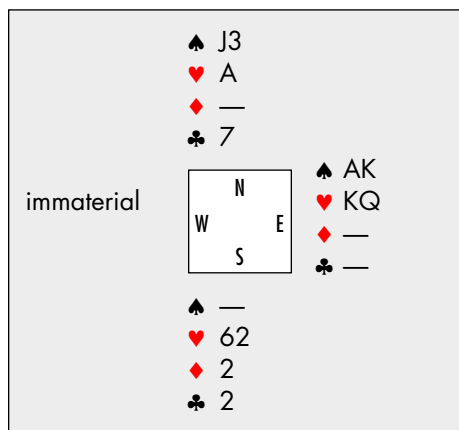
Trump squeezes take advantage of ruffing power mainly to set up the unguarded suit (this is called a 'ruffing menace'), but ruffs are also useful as a means of communication between the two hands.

Trump squeeze: ruffing menaces in both hands



Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The ♠2 is ruffed in dummy with the ♣A. East cannot undertruff, or a crossruff will follow. If East discards a diamond, one ruff sets up the jack. If East discards a heart, declarer cashes the ♥A, ruffs the ♥3 with the ♣K and returns to the established ♥6 by means of the trump queen.

Trump squeeze: squeeze card in same hand as ruffing menace



Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is non-positional. The club squeeze card puts the lead in dummy. If East discards a spade, the ♠3 is ruffed, setting up the jack. If East discards a heart, the ♥A is cashed and declarer ruffs a spade back to hand to reach the ♥6, which is now high.

Trump squeeze: squeeze card opposite ruffing menace

immaterial	♠ J3	♠ AK
	♥ AK	♥ QJ10
	♦ —	♦ —
	♣ 2	♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ 632	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is non-positional. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. On the ♣7, if East discards a spade, the ♠3 is ruffed to set up the jack, with the heart honors providing the entries. If East discards a heart, declarer cashes the ♥AK and then comes back to hand by ruffing a spade to cash the ♥6, which is now high.

Criss-cross trump squeeze

♠ AK ♥ KQ ♦ — ♣ —	♠ J3	♠ AK
	♥ A	♥ QJ10
	♦ —	♦ —
	♣ A	♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ J2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 72	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. On the ♣7, if West discards a spade, the ♠3 is ruffed to set up the jack. If West discards a heart, declarer cashes the ♥A and then comes back to hand by ruffing a spade to reach the ♥J, which is now high.

En passant trump squeeze

♠ A ♥ — ♦ — ♣ —	♠ 2	♠ —
	♥ AQ4	♥ K10
	♦ —	♦ A
	♣ —	♣ A
	♠ —	
	♥ 32	
	♦ —	
	♣ 32	

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. The lead is in dummy and the losing ♠2 is played. If East ruffs, declarer has the rest. If East discards a heart, declarer ruffs, goes back to dummy with the ♥A and leads the now high ♥Q, scoring his last trump *en passant*. If East discards a diamond, declarer ruffs and throws East in with the last trump to play into the heart tenace.

Don Kersey, *The Bridge World*, October 1990.

Double trump squeeze

This type of squeeze involves a ruffing menace that threatens both opponents.

Double trump squeeze

	♠ A	
	♥ J	
	♦ AJ10	
	♣ —	
♠ KQ		♠ J10
♥ A		♥ —
♦ K7		♦ Q98
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 62	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 72	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer plays the ♣7 and if West discards his ♥A, the ♥J is set up. If West discards a diamond, declarer cashes the ♦A and takes a ruffing finesse against East's ♦Q. Finally, if West discards a spade, a heart is thrown from dummy and East is trump-squeezed in spades and diamonds on this same trick.

Double trump squeeze

	♠ A6	
	♥ A6	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	
♠ KQ		♠ 54
♥ KQ		♥ —
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ KJ
	♠ 32	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. With the lead in dummy, declarer plays the ♥A. If East discards a spade, the ♠A is cashed and declarer takes the last two tricks with a trump coup. If East ruffs the ♥A, declarer overruffs and then cashes the second trump to squeeze West in the majors.

En passant double trump squeeze

♠ —	♠ A	♠ —
♥ K75	♥ A6	♥ 43
♦ KJ	♦ 63	♦ Q
♣ —	♣ —	♣ A2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ —	♠ —
♥ J2	♥ —
♦ 2	♦ —
♣ 43	♣ —

Bernasconi, World Par Contest, 1990.

Position N-3, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. With the lead in dummy, declarer plays the ♠A. If East ruffs high, declarer has the rest. If East ruffs with the ♣2, declarer overruffs and leads a diamond. Now if West rises with the ♦K, declarer will score his ♥A and another trump *en passant*. If West allows East to win with the ♦Q and draw the last trump, West is squeezed in the red suits with the ♣A.

Double trump squeeze with suit establishment

♠ 4	♠ 2	♠ KQJ
♥ Q109	♥ AJ3	♥ K87
♦ QJ9	♦ A103	♦ K
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A63	♠ —
♥ 2	♥ —
♦ 2	♦ —
♣ 72	♣ —

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. Declarer plays the ♣7. If East discards a spade, one duck sets up the ♠6. If East discards a heart, the ♠A forces West to discard a red card, after which the weakened red suit is established by ruffing. If East discards a diamond, the ♠A forces West to discard a heart. Then declarer plays the ♥A and ruffs a heart to strip West of the suit. Now he leads a diamond, ducking when West plays the queen ([Bath Coup](#)), and makes the last two tricks in diamonds.

Compound trump squeeze

After the first discard of one opponent, the second opponent becomes victim to some kind of squeeze.

Compound trump squeeze (non-simultaneous double squeeze position)

♠ KQ	♠ A3	♠ J10
♥ K	♥ J	♥ A
♦ J43	♦ AQ10	♦ K98
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 62	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 732	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. If West discards a diamond, declarer plays the ♦AQ and takes a ruffing finesse, pinning the ♦J. If West discards a heart, dummy and East both release spades. Now a second trump squeezes West in spades and diamonds, which sets up the ♠6 or allows a ruffing finesse in diamonds. Finally, if West discards a spade, a spade is thrown from dummy and East discards the ♥A. A second trump now squeezes East in spades and diamonds.

An incredible double trump squeeze

♠ K107	♠ AJ62	♠ 983
♥ KQ9	♥ A62	♥ J10
♦ K10	♦ A	♦ Q54
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ Q4	
	♥ —	
	♦ J32	
	♣ 732	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. Declarer plays the ♣7. If West discards a heart, the ♥6 is set up via a ruff. If West discards a diamond, declarer takes the spade finesse, cashes the ♦A and the ♥A and ruffs a heart. Now playing the last trump executes a double squeeze with spades as the central suit. Finally, if West discards a spade, declarer plays a second trump and West obviously cannot afford to discard another spade. If he discards a heart, one ruff sets up the ♥6. However, if West discards a diamond, again a spade finesse is followed by the ♦A, the ♥A and a heart ruff, which squeezes East in spades and diamonds.

Compound trump squeeze (trump coup and positional simple squeeze)

♠ KQ	♠ A2	♠ 54
♥ KQ3	♥ AJ2	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ Q32
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 63	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ AKJ	

Robert Darvas.

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. The lead is in dummy and declarer starts with the ♥A. If East discards a spade, declarer does likewise, and then ace and another spade executes a trump coup. If East ruffs, he is overruffed and West is squeezed in the majors on the third round of trumps.

Lennon's purple cow (squeeze and trump coup)

♠ KQJ	♠ A85	♠ 43
♥ KQ	♥ AJ	♥ 54
♦ KJ10	♦ A64	♦ Q
♣ —	♣ —	♣ Q76
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ 32	
	♦ 2	
	♣ AKJ2	

George Coffin, *Endplays at Bridge*.

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. The ♣A is cashed. If West discards a heart, declarer plays the ♥AJ, followed by the ♠A and a spade ruff. Returning to dummy with the ♦A, he now leads through East for the trump coup. If West discards a diamond or spade initially, a card in the other suit is thrown from dummy and the weakened suit is set up by ruffing. Dummy is reached with a heart and East's trumps are again caught in a coup.

Trump guard squeeze

This type of squeeze works on the opponent placed behind the tenace, who is forced to discard the guard that protected his partner against a finesse.

Trump guard squeeze (with a blocked menace threatening West)

♠ A	♠ J6	♠ K2
♥ Q98	♥ AK	♥ 1076
♦ A	♦ J	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ J32	
	♦ —	
	♣ 72	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. He starts by playing the ♣7. West obviously cannot discard from a red suit. When West discards a spade, a diamond is thrown from dummy. East can discard a heart on this trick, but he is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades.

Trump guard squeeze (with a menace threatening both opponents)

♠ A	♠ J6	♠ K2
♥ Q98	♥ AK	♥ J76
♦ A	♦ J	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ 1032	
	♦ —	
	♣ 72	

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. He starts by playing the ♣7 and West obviously cannot discard his ♦A. If West discards a spade, a diamond is thrown from dummy; East can let go a heart, but he is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, a diamond is thrown from dummy and East is squeezed in the majors. This leads either to setting up a spade trick by ruffing or to establishing the ♥10, which is reached by ruffing a spade back.

Trump guard squeeze (with one menace threatening both opponents and a communicating guard menace)

♠ Q10	♠ AJ6		♠ K43
♥ Q9	♥ A		♥ K8
♦ A	♦ J		♦ —
♣ —	♣ —		♣ —
		N	
		W	E
		S	
	♠ 2		
	♥ J2		
	♦ —		
	♣ 72		

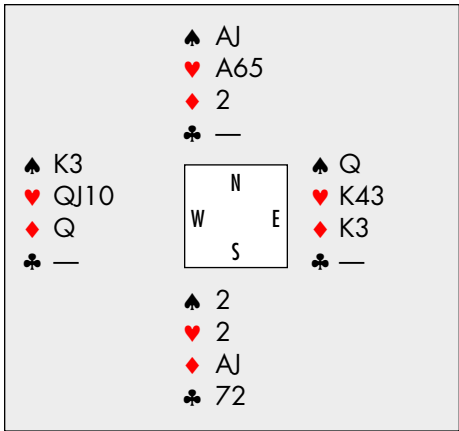
Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. He starts by playing the ♣7 and West obviously cannot discard his ♦A. If West discards a spade, a diamond is thrown from dummy; East can let go a heart, but he is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, a diamond is thrown from dummy and East is squeezed in the majors. This leads either to setting up a spade trick by ruffing or to establishing the ♥J, which is reached by ruffing a spade back.

Trump guard squeeze (with one menace threatening both opponents and a communicating menace against one opponent)

♠ A	♠ J6		♠ K32
♥ Q9	♥ A		♥ K8
♦ KQ	♦ A6		♦ 3
♣ —	♣ —		♣ —
		N	
		W	E
		S	
	♠ —		
	♥ J2		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 72		

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the ruffing menace. He starts by playing the ♣7 and West obviously cannot discard a diamond. If West discards a spade, a diamond is thrown from dummy; East can let go a heart, but he is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, a diamond is thrown from dummy and East is squeezed in the majors on the ♦A. This leads either to setting up a spade trick by ruffing or to establishing the ♥J, which is reached by ruffing a spade back.

Trump guard squeeze (double hexagonal squeeze or double guard squeeze)



Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer plays the ♣7. West cannot throw the ♦Q, which guards East against the finesse, so he must let go a heart. Dummy's ♦2 is now useless and can be released. East is squeezed at this point. His ♠Q guards his partner from a finesse and obviously he must keep his diamonds, so he must pitch a heart. Now one ruff sets up the ♥6.

Trump finesse squeeze

This is different from a guard squeeze in that it involves a ruffing finesse (and often also a pin). There is no need for two menaces, because only one opponent is squeezed. However, the guard menace must be extended, reinforced by a supporting card.

Trump finesse squeeze

♠ KJ	♠ 62	♠ Q10
♥ A2	♥ —	♥ 109
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ —
♣ —	♣ 2	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A	
	♥ J6	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional. Declarer needs only one entry to the finesse menace. He starts by playing the ♣7. If West discards a spade, East cannot do the same or else the ♠A will be cashed and the ♠6 established. However, when East discards a heart, declarer leads the ♥J, pinning the ♥10. If West discards a heart originally, the ♥A is ruffed out and the ♥J scores.

Trump finesse squeeze (blocked menace threatening West)

♠ 109	♠ J6	♠ A5
♥ Q98	♥ AK	♥ 1076
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ 2	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ J32	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 7	

Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional. Declarer needs two entries to the finesse menace. He starts by playing the ♣7. If West discards a spade, East can discard a heart, but is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, the ♥J can be reached via a spade ruff.

Trump finesse squeeze (blocked menace threatening both opponents)

♠ 109

♥ Q109

♦ —

♣ —

♠ J6

♥ AK

♦ —

♣ 2

♠ A5

♥ J87

♦ —

♣ —

♠ —

♥ 632

♦ 2

♣ 7

N

W

E

S

Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the discard varying with the defenders' play. Declarer needs two entries to the finesse menace. He starts by playing the ♣7. If West discards a spade, East can discard a heart, but is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, East is squeezed in the majors: either a spade is set up with a ruff or a heart is set up and reached via a spade ruff.

Trump finesse squeeze (communicating finesse menace)

♠ J87

♥ KQ

♦ —

♣ —

♠ AQ6

♥ A3

♦ —

♣ —

♠ K54

♥ J10

♦ —

♣ —

♠ 2

♥ 62

♦ 2

♣ 7

N

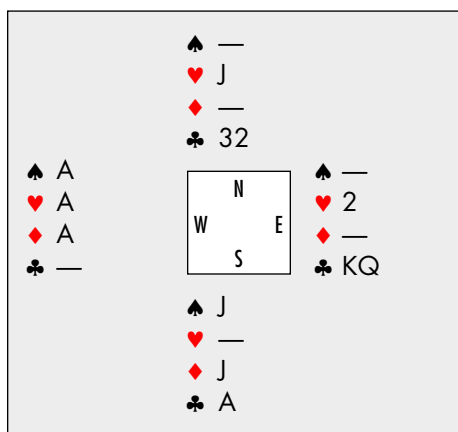
W

E

S

Position N-1, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer needs two entries to the finesse menace. He starts by playing the ♣7. If West discards a spade, East can discard a heart but is now subject to a ruffing finesse in spades. If West discards a heart, East is squeezed in the majors: either a spade is set up with a ruff or a heart is set up and reached via a spade ruff.

Schroeder squeeze (trump stepping-stone squeeze)

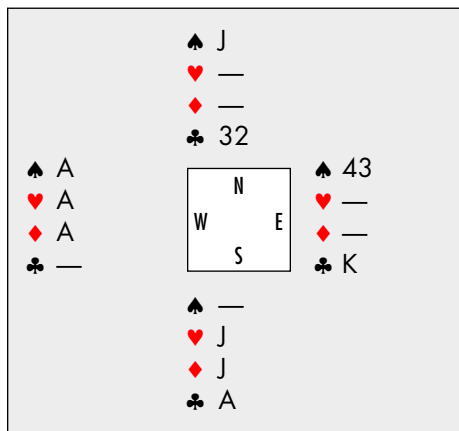


Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The ♣A is cashed and West cannot discard a spade or a diamond without setting up a jack. When West discards his heart, declarer ruffs a card in dummy and scores his ♥J if East overruffs.

Trump triple squeeze

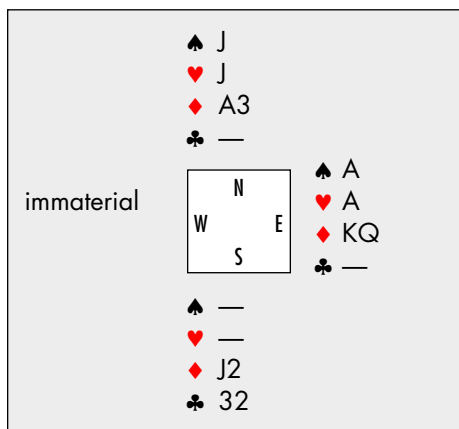
Here the trump acts as an entry.

Trump triple squeeze



Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer cannot simply crossruff due to East's trump. Instead, he cashes the ♣A, squeezing West. If West discards a spade, declarer can use a ruff to enter dummy and enjoy the ♠J.

Non-positional trump triple squeeze



Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. Declarer leads a club and discards the ♦3 from dummy. If East discards a diamond, declarer cashes the ♦A and then gets back to hand for the ♦J with his second trump.

Suicide trump triple squeeze

♠ —	♠ 2	♠ AKQJ
♥ A	♥ J	♥ —
♦ AK	♦ J	♦ —
♣ A	♣ 4	♣ —

♠ —		
♥ 10	N	
♦ 65	W	E
♣ 3	S	

Position N-4, clubs are trumps and East is on lead. The squeeze is non-positional, with an automatic discard. East leads a spade and declarer discards the ♥10. If West ruffs, declarer scores two trump tricks. If West discards a diamond, then declarer also discards a diamond on the second spade and West is triple-squeezed. The spade is ruffed in dummy and the established jack is led. Declarer again scores two trump tricks.

Edward T. Barco, *The Bridge World*,
January 1988.

Trump entry squeeze

In this squeeze, an opponent must discard a 'useless' card, allowing declarer a second entry.

Trump entry squeeze

♠ 9	♠ A3	♠ J10									
♥ A8753	♥ KQ104	♥ J96									
♦ K8	♦ 32	♦ QJ9									
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K2										
	♥ 2										
	♦ A104										
	♣ 32										

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the exact line varying with the defenders' play. West can score only one trick, but the problem is getting to dummy's heart winners. Declarer plays a trump and discards a diamond from dummy. If East discards a heart, declarer leads a heart to the king. Then he plays the ♥Q, pinning the jack and setting up the ♥10. If East discards a diamond, declarer plays a heart to the king, which West has to allow to hold. Declarer then ducks a diamond. Finally, if East discards a 'useless' spade, declarer plays a heart to the king and ruffs a heart. Now the two spade entries (king overtaken, and then the deuce to the three) allow him to pin the ♥J and then get back to the ♥10, which has now been established.

Trump entry-shifting (overtaking) squeeze

This type of squeeze was analyzed by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. The trump position can be balanced between the two hands for the two-suit squeezes or the triple squeezes with a throw-in. The trump position can also be unbalanced for the triple squeezes or for the two-suited squeezes without the count.

The entry-shifting mechanism resides in the option of overtaking a squeeze card, to place the lead in one hand or the other depending on the opponent's discard, so as to establish with a ruff the suit weakened by the discard.

Trump entry-shifting squeeze (balanced trump position)

♠ AK	♠ J2	♠ 32									
♥ AK	♥ —	♥ —									
♦ —	♦ —	♦ 2									
♣ —	♣ A2	♣ Q									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ J2										
	♦ —										
	♣ K3										

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. East's trump prevents a crossruff, so the ♣K is played. If West discards a heart, the ♥J is established via a ruff. If West discards a spade, declarer overtakes with the ♣A and establishes the ♠J with a ruff.

Trump entry-shifting squeeze (balanced trump position, extended menace)

♠ AKQ	♠ J432	♠ —									
♥ KQJ10	♥ —	♥ —									
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —									
♣ —	♣ A43	♣ Q									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ A632										
	♦ —										
	♣ K52										

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional, the continuation varying with the defenders' play. East's trump prevents a crossruff, so the ♣K is played. If West discards a heart, the ♥6 is established via two ruffs. If West discards a spade, declarer overtakes with the ♣A and establishes the ♠J with two ruffs.

One-suit trump squeeze

These positions are often simply called trump coups, but they are so closely related to one-suited squeezes at notrump that I believe a separate type should be created. The ruffing power adds to the other possibilities of the squeeze.

One-suit trump squeeze

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ —	♥ 2	♥ —									
♦ A	♦ —	♦ —									
♣ —	♣ Q63	♣ KJ108									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ 2										
	♣ A54										

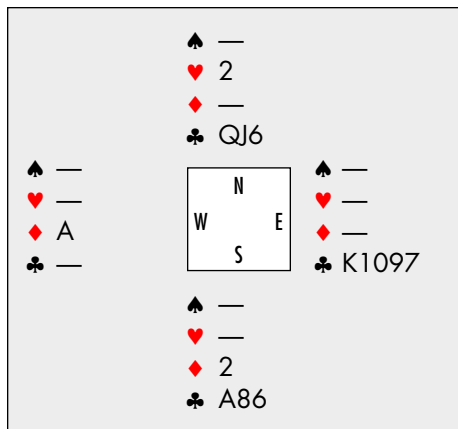
Position N-3, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The ♦2 is led and declarer can discard from dummy or ruff small. East is forced to win and concede a trick to the ♣Q.

One-suit trump squeeze

♠ A	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ A	♥ 2	♥ —									
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —									
♣ 97	♣ Q63	♣ KJ108									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ 2										
	♣ A54										

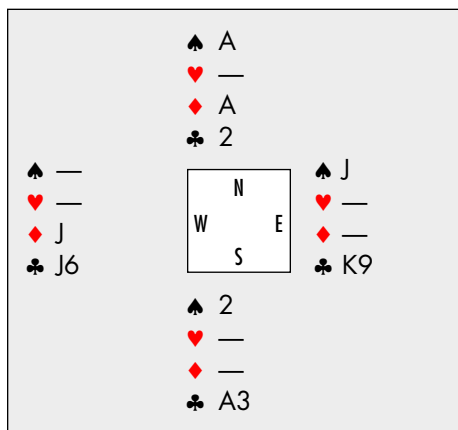
Position N-3, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The ♦2 is led and West can save his partner from a lethal immediate throw-in by rising with the ♣9. East can now underruff with the ♣8, as a heart is discarded from dummy. However, on any return, declarer plays a small club from both hands, leaving East on lead to concede a trick to the ♣Q.

One-suit trump squeeze



Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is non-positional. The ♦ 2 is ruffed with the ♣ Q and East can score only one trump whether or not he overruffs.

One-suit trump squeeze



Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is non-positional. Declarer leads the ♣ A. Depending on the cards played by West and East, declarer can guess which opponent will win the second club and can keep the right ace in dummy.

One-card trump squeeze (MacGuffin)

Whether the opponent keeps or discards this card, subsequent developments are bad for him.

One-card trump squeeze

♠ —	♠ A4	♠ KQ
♥ A	♥ J	♥ —
♦ 3	♦ —	♦ 2
♣ A	♣ —	♣ —
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ 32	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 2	

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. Declarer leads a small spade towards dummy. If West discards his diamond, declarer scores his small trump by ruffing a heart. If West discards his heart, the ♥J is established and played; West must ruff it and declarer again scores his small trump. Finally, if West ruffs the initial spade, declarer scores his small trump and a spade. We can say that only the ♣A is squeezed.

One-card trump squeeze

♠ J9	♠ —	♠ K
♥ —	♥ QJ10	♥ —
♦ 1092	♦ K7	♦ Q8
♣ —	♣ —	♣ Q9
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ J6	
	♣ AJ10	

Clubs are trumps and the ♥Q is led from dummy. East cannot ruff without surrendering the rest of the tricks. If he discards a spade, declarer discards a diamond, ruffs a heart, goes back to dummy with the ♦K and plays any red card to trump coup East. If East discards a diamond, declarer ruffs at once, goes back to dummy with the ♦K (setting up his ♦J) and leads a winning heart. Therefore, East can neither keep nor discard a diamond.

Don Kersey, *The Bridge World*, April 2000.

One-threat trump squeeze

These squeezes force an opponent to discard a winner, so that a single suit remains in play, the one where declarer has the unique menace. Then the lead is given up to the opponent in that suit.

One-threat trump squeeze

♠ AQ5	♠ KJ9	♠ 1076
♥ KQ	♥ 32	♥ AJ
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
	W	E
	S	
	♠ 432	
	♥ —	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional and the only menace is in spades. The problem is to play twice towards dummy's spades and at the same time prevent West from cashing heart winners. Declarer plays his club squeeze card. If West discards a spade, there is no need to lead twice towards dummy. If West discards a heart, declarer next leads a spade up: West has to duck, so the ♠J wins. Now a heart ruff eliminates West's hearts and another spade can be safely led towards dummy's king.

One-threat trump squeeze (losing squeeze card)

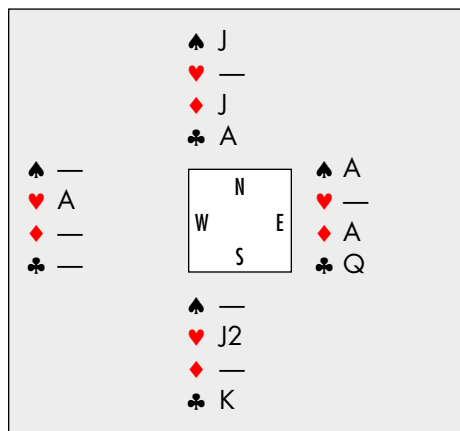
♠ AJ9	♠ Q43	♠ —
♥ AK	♥ 2	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 2	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ A6543
	W	E
	S	
	♠ K102	
	♥ —	
	♦ 3	
	♣ 7	

Position N-2, diamonds are trumps. The squeeze is positional and the only menace is in spades. The problem is to eliminate the hearts before playing on spades. Declarer plays his losing club. If West discards a heart, declarer ruffs in dummy, ruffs a heart back and leads the ♠K. If West takes it, he has to play into the spade tenace. If West discards a spade on the ♣7, declarer ruffs in dummy and plays the ♠Q.

Backwash squeeze

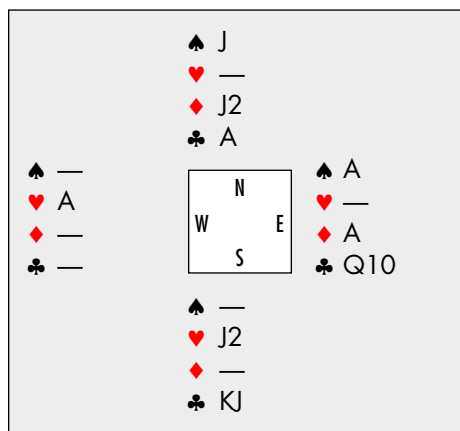
This type of squeeze was described by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. One opponent is caught in the whirlpool or eddy created by a winning ruff.

Sydney (N-1 backwash squeeze)



Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. When declarer's small heart is ruffed with the ♣A, East is caught in the backwash. If he underruffs, declarer ruffs a jack with the ♣K to reach the now high ♥J. If East discards one of his aces, leading the corresponding jack executes a trump coup.

Backwash squeeze (Position N-2)



Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. When declarer's small heart is ruffed with the ♣A, East is caught in the backwash. If he underruffs, declarer returns to hand with a ruff to score the now high ♥J. If East discards one of his aces, leading the corresponding jack executes a trump coup.

Backwash squeeze (position with a tenace)

♠ J
 ♥ —
 ♦ AQ10
 ♣ A2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AK
 ♥ J1093
 ♦ —
 ♣ —

♠ 2
 ♥ —
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ J109

♠ —
 ♥ AKQ2
 ♦ —
 ♣ KQ

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. When declarer's small heart is ruffed with the ♣A, East is caught in the backwash. If he underruffs, declarer draws trumps and his hand is high. If East discards his spade, declarer plays two rounds of trumps and then runs hearts. Whenever East ruffs in, he has to lead into the diamond tenace. If East discards a diamond, declarer cashes the ♦A and leads dummy's ♦Q, which is ruffed and overruffed. Then dummy's spade is thrown on a top heart and East can score only one trump.

Knockout squeeze

Another type of squeeze described by Géza Ottlik and Hugh Kelsey in *Adventures in Card Play*. An adverse trump prevents a crossruff; the squeeze gives the defender a choice between permitting the crossruff or setting up another trick.

Knockout squeeze (Position N-2)

♠ —	♠ 3	♠ AK									
♥ A1032	♥ 7	♥ —									
♦ —	♦ J	♦ A									
♣ —	♣ K	♣ 2									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J2										
	♥ —										
	♦ —										
	♣ AQ										

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The lead is in dummy, but leading a spade fails since East will win and play a trump, eliminating an essential ruff. Instead, the losing ♥7 is led. If East ruffs, declarer overruffs, gives up a spade and crossruffs. If East discards his diamond, declarer ruffs with the ♣A, crosses to dummy with the trump and cashes the ♦J, which is now high. If East discards a spade, declarer ruffs with the ♣Q and ducks a spade. East must either allow the crossruff or let the ♠J score.

Knockout squeeze (Position N-3)

♠ —	♠ 3	♠ AK									
♥ A	♥ 7	♥ —									
♦ 654	♦ J2	♦ AK									
♣ 3	♣ K	♣ 2									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J2										
	♥ —										
	♦ 3										
	♣ AQ										

Position N-3, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The lead is in dummy, but leading a spade fails, since East will win and play a trump, eliminating an essential ruff. Instead, the losing ♥7 is led. If East discards his diamond, declarer ruffs with the ♣A and gives up a diamond. If East discards a spade, declarer ruffs with the ♣Q and ducks a spade. East must either allow the crossruff or let the ♠J score. If East ruffs the ♥7, he can no longer prevent the crossruff.

Triple knockout squeeze

	♠ A10	
	♥ AK752	
	♦ A104	
	♣ KQ6	
♠ 43		♠ 8752
♥ J10983		♥ Q6
♦ 9852		♦ KQJ
♣ 109		♣ AJ83
	♠ KQJ96	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 763	
	♣ 7542	

South plays 4♠; West leads the ♦ 9, won with the ace in dummy.

The ♥A and ♥K are cashed to discard a diamond and the ♥2 is played next. If East doesn't want to weaken his minor suits, he will ruff and be overruffed. Now comes a club to the king and ace and East exits with another trump to dummy. The ♥5 is ruffed and overruffed. Dummy is entered with the ♣Q and another heart is ruffed and overruffed. East can score only one diamond and one club. If East had discarded from one of the minors instead of ruffing, declarer could have established a trick in the weakened suit.

Trump clash squeeze

A clash menace is like a 'reverse' guard menace. The opponent does not directly guard a clash menace because there is a higher card in the suit still out. However, if he discards his guard, the clash menace can score by itself.

Trump clash squeeze

♠ K	♠ A2	♠ 109									
♥ KQJ	♥ A63	♥ 74									
♦ A	♦ —	♦ 2									
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J										
	♥ 2										
	♦ J										
	♣ 72										

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The ♣7 is played, and West cannot discard his diamond. If West discards a heart, declarer establishes the ♥6 via a ruff. If West discards his ♠K, the ♠J can be cashed.

Double clash trump squeeze

♠ K	♠ A6	♠ 109									
♥ A4	♥ J2	♥ 3									
♦ K4	♦ A	♦ Q3									
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —									
	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J										
	♥ —										
	♦ J2										
	♣ 72										

Position N-1, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. The ♣7 is played, and if West discards a heart, declarer establishes the ♥J via a ruff. If West discards a diamond, declarer cashes the ♦A and then ruffs a heart, squeezing East in spades and diamonds. If West discards his ♠K, the ♠J can be cashed.

Trump suicide squeeze

	♠ 5										
	♥ —										
	♦ 95										
	♣ 86										
♠ —		♠ Q10									
♥ 10986	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♥ 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♦ —		♦ J10									
♣ Q		♣ —									
	♠ 97										
	♥ —										
	♦ K										
	♣ 95										

David Bird and Simon Cochemé, *Bridge with a Feminine Touch*.

Position N-2, clubs are trumps. The squeeze is positional. When West is thrown in with a trump, East can discard his heart. However, on the forced heart return, a ruff and sluff, declarer throws the spade from dummy. Now declarer sets up either a spade or a diamond, depending on the card discarded by East.

Congratulations on reading to the end! I wish you the best of luck in bridge. May the ♣7 and his brothers always smile upon you.

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To all contributors, even unaware: many thanks.

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