



ACCURATE CARDPLAY

PART I: ELIMINATION PLAY

TERENCE REESE & ROGER TRÉZEL



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INTRODUCTION

The play of the cards at bridge is a big subject, capable of filling many large books. In the 1970s, Roger Trézel, the great French player and writer, had the idea of breaking up the game into several small books, each dealing with one of the standard forms of technique. He judged, quite rightly as it turned out, that this scheme would appeal both to comparative beginners, who would be able to learn the game by stages, and to experienced players wishing to extend their knowledge of a particular branch of play.

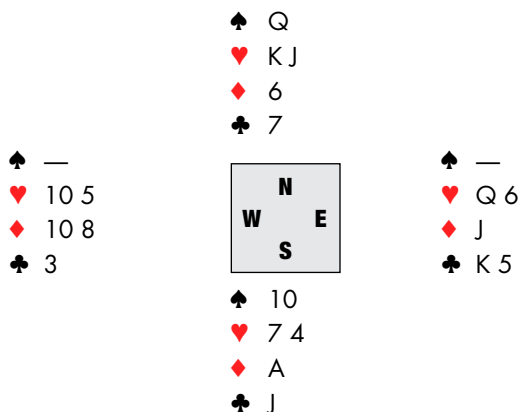
The English version was prepared in collaboration with Terence Reese, and appeared in eight small volumes. This new edition, updated and revised for the modern player, presents the eight original booklets as two larger compendiums, entitled *Accurate Cardplay* and *Imaginative Cardplay*.

PART I

ELIMINATION PLAY

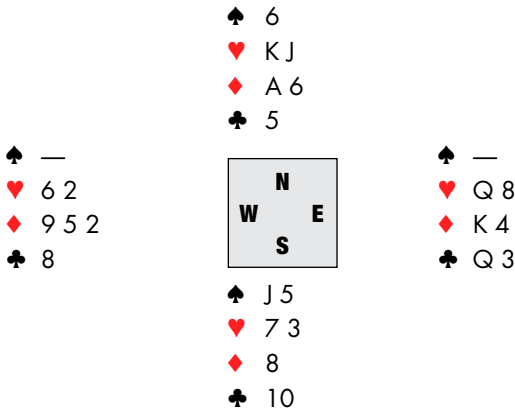
Of all forms of endplay, elimination is the most frequent and the most rewarding. The object of the play is to force an opponent to make a lead that is disadvantageous for his side. Such a lead may save declarer from the necessity of taking a finesse, or it may allow him, in a suit contract, to discard a loser from one hand while he ruffs in the other.

It follows that *the opponent must not be allowed to retain a safe exit card*. Elimination play is directed towards that end.



Spades are trumps and South, who has the lead, requires four of the last five tricks. If he simply finesses the jack of hearts, he will lose a heart and a club. But it is quite easy to circumvent one of these losers. South must first cash the ace of diamonds, *eliminating* East's card of exit. He follows with the jack of clubs, and East is in a classical dilemma: he must either lead a heart up to the KJ, or a club, which will allow declarer to discard a heart and ruff in dummy.

It can be seen that playing off the ace of diamonds accomplishes two purposes: as the cards lie, it extracts the only diamond held by East; it also creates a situation in which, even if the defender who won the club trick held another diamond, he could not lead it safely. In the next example the declarer must eliminate a side suit from dummy and from his own hand before he gives up the lead.



Again spades are trumps, and South can afford to lose only one trick. He must begin by playing a diamond to the ace and ruffing a diamond, *eliminating* this suit from his own hand and dummy. Then a club, as before, leaves East on play.

In the majority of textbooks the term ‘elimination play’ is used only of situations that arise in a suit contract where the declarer has a trump in both hands at the moment of the throw-in. The defender may be forced to concede a ruff-and-discard. More often he will have the alternative of opening up a suit to his disadvantage. There may be a simple finesse, as in the example above, or any ‘tenace position’, such as AJx opposite 10xx, where the prospects of losing only one trick are much improved if the defenders can be forced to lead the suit.

However, the elimination process also occurs in a notrump contract whenever the declarer executes a throw-in. The endplay will not succeed unless all safe cards of exit have been eliminated. So, our use of the term is not restricted to suit contracts: we give examples of elimination play in notrump contracts as well.

As you study the hands that follow, you will become familiar with several types of elimination. Before long you will see at a glance how to make contracts that, but for elimination play, would be impossible.

EXAMPLE 1

You are South, playing 4♠ with the following cards:

	♠ A Q 4 2											
	♥ J 4 3											
	♦ A K Q											
	♣ 6 5 3											
♠ J	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8 5	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ A K Q 5		♥ 10 8 7 6										
♦ J 10 9 8		♦ 7 5 2										
♣ K J 8 4		♣ 10 7 2										
	♠ K 9 7 6 3											
	♥ 9 2											
	♦ 6 4 3											
	♣ A Q 9											

West opens 1♣. North doubles, and, after a pass by East, South jumps to 2♠. North bids the game.

The defenders begin with three rounds of hearts, South ruffing. Since the king of clubs is offside, it may look as though two club tricks must be lost, but in fact South can make a certainty of the contract once everyone has followed to the first round of trumps.

After drawing trumps, South eliminates the diamonds by playing off ace, king and queen. Now dummy has the lead in this position.

	♠ 4											
	♥ —											
	♦ —											
	♣ 6 5 3											
♠ —	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ —		♥ 10										
♦ J		♦ —										
♣ K J 8		♣ 10 7 2										
	♠ 9											
	♥ —											
	♦ —											
	♣ A Q 9											

Learn from the Masters

In the 1970s, two of the best bridge writers of all time collaborated on a series of eight small books on a number of aspects of cardplay at bridge. These books have long been out of print, and are republished now in two combined volumes, edited and updated by BRIDGE magazine editor Mark Horton.

Accurate Cardplay is the first of these two books, and comprises the following titles from the original series: *Elimination Play in Bridge*; *When to Duck, When to Win in Bridge*; *Blocking and Unblocking Plays in Bridge*; and *Safety Plays in Bridge*.



TERENCE REESE (1913-1996, UK) was a world champion and one of the best-ever writers on the game. His *Reese on Play* and *The Expert Game* are classics of bridge literature.



ROGER TRÉZEL (1918-1986, France) was a multiple world champion. His partnership with Pierre Jaïs is regarded as one of the greatest in the history of the game.

