

ELIMINATION ENDPLAYS

My favourite book on bridge is 'Endplays in Bridge: Eliminations, Squeezes and Coups' by George Coffin. In my humble opinion it is the bible of endplays, my fourth edition copy was published in 1950. All other books and writings on the subject cover just a small subset of the endplays described in this book. Although modern terminology will sometimes differ from the terminology used in the book.

An endplay is defined in Wikipedia as 'An **endplay** is a tactical play where a defender is put on lead at a strategic moment, and then has to make a play that loses one or more tricks.' I must confess to my (almost sadistic) pleasure when I achieve an endplay and then watch my opponent's expression as the realisation of what I have achieved dawns on them. It is of course impossible for mere mortals to remember every one of the plays identified in the book but knowledge of the basic structure of an endplay is vital. Not only for declarer but for defenders who wish to attempt to avoid being endplayed.

Every one to two weeks I aim to produce a few examples from this book so that you can build up your understanding of endplays. All endplays are divided into three large groups: negative, positive, and neutral. Eliminations are negative because one lead, that is, one trick unit at the crucial point loses a trick; squeezes are Positive because the crucial lead gains a trick; overruffing finesses (true coups) are neutral because they neither gain nor lose tricks not ordinarily available by normal trump finesses.

The book starts with a collection of eliminations. They are described as 'Endplays of Position' since the crucial play requires a degree of knowledge of the position of key cards and this in turn requires vigilance in counting the cards in all four suits and observation of players showing out in a suit.

First Basic Position:-Fork Strip

Consider the hand below. South is declarer, has the lead and needs to win three tricks. Notice how both west and south hold a tenace over the other depending on who has to lead (the fork). Many players will think that south should have tried to finesse the king of spades at some point whilst dummy was on lead. It would of course have failed but 'that is bridge' right? WRONG. Or having reached this position some would cash the two aces and concede the final two tricks. WRONG.

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 654	
	♥ 4	
	♦	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K8		♠ J109
♥ 10		♥
♦ 10		♦ 6
♣		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ AQ	
	♥ 6	
	♦ A	
	♣	

The correct way to play this is to start with the ace of diamonds to remove west's exit card (the strip) then play the six of hearts to put west on lead (the throwin) and now west has to lead into south's tenace (the leadaway). This endplay is therefor called the Fork Strip Throwin Leadaway or simply a Fork Strip. To fully appreciate the endplay take a look at the full (somewhat improbable) deal and ask yourself how you would play 6NT by south.

<i>North</i>		
♠ 6 5 4 3 2		
♥ Q 4 3 2		
♦ 2		
♣ 4 3 2		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K 8		♠ J 10 9 7
♥ J 10 9 8		♥ 7
♦ 10 9 8 7		♦ 6 5 4 3
♣ J 10 9		♣ 8 7 6 5
<i>South</i>		
♠ A Q		
♥ A K 6 5		
♦ A K Q J		
♣ A K Q		

First Basic Position:-Jettison Throwin

The second endplay for these notes is known as the Jettison Throwin. A Jettison end play occurs when a player deliberately throws away a sure winner to avoid being thrown in forced to make a disadvantageous lead. In no trumps south is declarer and has the lead and needs to make two out of the final three tricks.

<i>North</i>		
♠ 3 2		
♥		
♦		
♣ A		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠		♠ 6 4
♥		♥ 6
♦ 10		♦ 6
♣ Q 10		♣
<i>South</i>		
♠		
♥		
♦ 2		
♣ K J		

In this example south leads the two of diamonds to throw west in and at the same time jettisons the ace of clubs from dummy to avoid winning the next trick in dummy and having to lead a spade to east's winner.

Second Basic Position:-Entry Strip

As their name implies, the Entry Eliminations make it possible to re-enter the dummy, which is apparently devoid of entries, by means of forcing one adversary to put dummy in the lead. In this example south is again leading in no trumps and needs to win 2 of the last three tricks. The correct play is for south to lead the ace of clubs to remove west's exit card (the strip) before throwing west in with a heart lead (the throwin) forcing west to give a trick in spades to dummy (the entry)

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ J	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 8	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ 10		♠
♥ 10		♥
♦		♦ 10 9
♣ J		♣ 9
	<i>South</i>	
	♠	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 5	
	♣ A	

Second Basic Position:-Double-Entry Strip

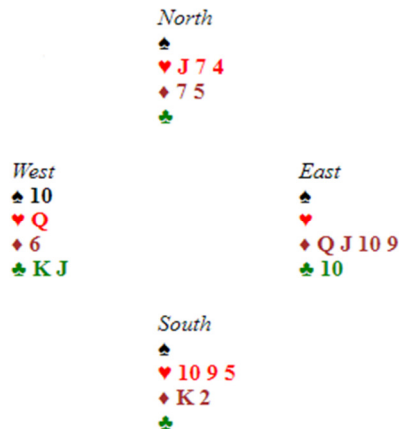
	<i>North</i>	
	♠ J 8 6	
	♥ K	
	♦ Q J 10	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ 5 4 3		♠ A 10 7
♥ 8 3		♥ J 10
♦		♦ 9 8
♣ 10 9		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ K Q 9	
	♥	
	♦	
	♣ 5 4 3 2	

In this example south needs to win six out of the last seven tricks. The tricks are there for the taking in dummy, but south has no direct entry to dummy. The clubs in south's hand are obvious losers so south must take care in playing the spades. Leading a small spade towards the jack will give east 2 tricks so south must lead the king of spades. East will need to duck or all the remaining tricks are forfeited. So south now leads queen of spades which east again ducks. But when south now throws east in with the third spade round poor east has no option but to lead a red card towards dummy's masters.

Third Basic Position:- Crossruff Strip

The first two basic positions are applicable to no trump contracts or trump contracts after all of the trumps have been eliminated. The third basic position is only applicable to trump contracts. Later on I will describe more interesting Ruffing Eliminations but I will include the two most basic here for completion. They are truly basic and ones that you must learn to adopt.

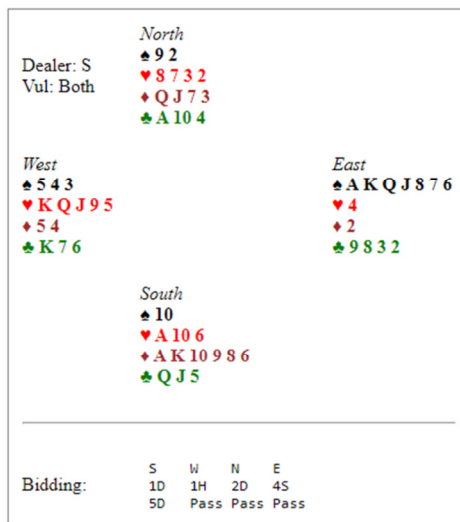
In this next example south is playing in a heart contract and has to win 4 tricks. This is unfortunate as south appears to have a losing trump and a losing diamond.



South starts by playing the diamond king which strips out west's exit card. South next throws west in with a heart and the endplay is complete. West must lead a black card allowing south to trump in dummy and discard the losing two of diamonds.

Third Basic Position:- Crossruff Throwin

In this second crossruff example there is an important lesson about listening to the bidding and calculating what you can deduct from the opponents bidding. This is called visualisation.



West led the king of hearts. With two heart losers and spade loser the game looks hopeless. For west to bid 1H vulnerable you would expect at least five hearts, so with seven hearts between dummy and declarer east can have at most one heart. East on the other hand has pre-emptively bid 4S suggesting a seven card suit and little else. So south wins the first trick with ace of hearts, pulls two rounds of trumps and then successfully finesses the king of clubs for 3 tricks. Next south throws east in with a spade. Now comes the really clever coup de grace, when east continues with a second spade honour south does not ruff but instead discards a heart. The hapless east has no choice but to lead a black card and south can discard the final heart whilst ruffing in dummy.

Played well, there is no defence against a perfect elimination but not all eliminations are perfect and next time I will take a look at some of the things defenders can do to avoid being endplayed. But against a perfect elimination defence's best tactic is a poker face and bold unhesitating discarding.

IMPERFECT ELIMINATIONS-DEFENCE

As the name implies when the defence have a means of escape the endplay has a weak spot that defenders need to learn to identify and take advantage of. But if the defender fails to make the required defensive play then the endplay will succeed and a trick will be forfeited.

Exit Fork Strip

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 9 6 3	
	♥	
	♦ 10 9 6	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K 10 8		♠ J 5 4
♥		♥
♦ K 5		♦ Q J 4
♣ J		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ A Q 7	
	♥	
	♦ A 8 7	
	♣	

In this example south is on lead in a no trump contract and needs to make 3 of the last 6 tricks. This seems like a simple Strip Throwin Leadaway end play where south cashes the ace of diamonds and throws west in with another diamond. After west cashes the jack of clubs west is forced to lead a spade towards south's tenace giving south the required two tricks in spades. But clever old west will throw away the king of diamonds under south's ace. Thus east wins the diamond lead and after cashing a second diamond leads a spade towards west's king. This is a simple unblocking play but one that is frequently missed.

Jettison Exit

	<i>North</i> ♠ 8 6 2 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ A J 3	
<i>West</i> ♠ A 10 9 7 4 ♥ J 8 2 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ 10 5		<i>East</i> ♠ Q 5 ♥ A 4 ♦ J 10 7 3 ♣ Q 9 6 4 2
	<i>South</i> ♠ K J 3 ♥ K Q 10 6 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ K 8 7	

In this hand south is in 3NT. West leads the seven of spades which east wins with the queen, south playing low. On the return of the five of spades west wins with the ace of spades. In this simple double dummy problem 3NT looks certain. After winning the third round of spades you cross to dummy and lead a heart. East must duck or you have nine top tricks. So you win with the queen and play a small heart to east's ace. Now east must lead a diamond or you win a free club finesse for ten tricks. You now have one spade trick, three heart tricks, three diamond tricks and two club tricks. But watch what happens if on the third spade lead east jettisons the ace of hearts.

Now try and make three no trumps.

False Elimination

A false elimination is in fact no elimination at all. Based on deception it makes players think that they are stripped and induces them to make a mistake that will cost a trick. This play is so effective because we have all been conditioned to avoid giving our opponent a ruff and discard at, virtually, all costs when first learning to play bridge.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 3 ♥ 3 ♦ ♣ 4 3	
<i>West</i> ♠ ♥ 10 9 ♦ ♣ K 10		<i>East</i> ♠ 4 ♥ 4 ♦ ♣ J 8
	<i>South</i> ♠ J ♥ 8 ♦ ♣ A Q	

In this instance spades are trumps and south (Declarer) needs to make three of the last four tricks. South hands the lead to west with a heart lead. West will realise that the nine of hearts is the 13th

card and will be wary of giving declarer a ruff and discard, not realising that east can over ruff north. In this instance west may be fooled into leading a club in the hope that the ace of clubs is with east.

RUFFING ELIMINATIONS

As the name implies ruffing eliminations involve a trump suit. These eliminations are more complex extensions to the Crossruff Strip described previously. One type of added complexity is a force avoiding elimination. The other type of complexity is the trump reducing elimination.

Force Avoiding Entry Throwin

<i>North</i>		
♠		
♥		
♦ 7 6		
♣ 10 9 7 4		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠		♠ 8 7
♥ J 10 9 8		♥ 3
♦		♦ J
♣ Q J		♣ 8 6
<i>South</i>		
♠ J 10		
♥ K Q 7		
♦		
♣ 5		

In this example spades are trumps and south needs four tricks. It all looks quite simple except that the defence are clever and have just given the lead to dummy. A diamond lead will be disastrous so declarer is forced to lead a club from dummy. This throws west in who will surely lead another club. South must not trump this card, instead throwing away a small heart. Now when west leads a heart south can win the trick, clear the remaining trumps and claim the last heart.

Force Avoiding Crossruff Throwin

<i>North</i>		
♠ 6		
♥ 6		
♦		
♣ 7 2		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ 7		♠ 9
♥ 4 2		♥ Q J
♦		♦
♣ 3		♣ A
<i>South</i>		
♠ A		
♥		
♦		
♣ K Q J		

In this example south is on lead with spades as trumps and needing three tricks. If south clears the trumps and leads a club all is lost so south must start with a club. East now is in a similar predicament. Leading a trump will give south a laydown three tricks so east must lead a heart. Now south must not trump this winning heart or the opponents will be able to cross ruff on the club lead. So south must discard a club. Then when east leads a second heart it can be ruffed in dummy giving south the required three tricks.

Grand Coup Fork Strip

When a player reduces their excess in trumps by trumping partner's winning card the strip is called a Grand Coup.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 6 4 2 ♥ ♦ A ♣ A	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K Q 9		♠ 3
♥		♥
♦ 9		♦ J 7
♣ 10		♣ 6 2
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ A J 10 8	
	♥	
	♦ 6	
	♣	

In this simple example south is playing a spade contract and needs to make four tricks whilst being on lead. Clearly any attempt to draw trumps or enter dummy to finesse the trumps will fail. So south enters the dummy with a diamond and then trumps the ace of clubs with the eight of spades. South now leads the ten of spades which is won by west who must now lead up to south's tenace.

Something For Nothing

When declarer can force an opponent to ruff with a sure winner one of declarer's sure losers then surely declarer is getting something for nothing. In this next example we might open 2NT using modern methods but 70 years ago, with a six loser hand south opened 1C, west doubled for a take-out and after north passed and east with five trump tricks and nowhere to go also passed hoping for a penalty score.

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ Q 7 6 5	
	♥ 9 7 6 3	
	♦ 8 6 5 4	
	♣ 6	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ A K J 10		♠ 9 8
♥ Q J 10 8		♥ 5 4
♦ Q J 9 3		♦ 10 7
♣ 5		♣ Q J 10 8 7 4 3
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ 4 3 2	
	♥ A K 2	
	♦ A K 2	
	♣ A K 9 2	

West starts of by play ace and king of spades and encouraged by east leads another spade which is ruffed by east when declarer covers with the queen of spades. When east now leads a red suit card, south wins and cashes all four red suit winners leaving east with only trumps. When south now leads a small diamond east is forced to trump their partner's winner. East leads queen of clubs which south wins with the king and then south leads a small heart and again east is forced to trump their partner's winner. No when east leads to jack of clubs south must duck. This leaves east on lead with south holding A & 9 over east's 10 & 8. Giving south 7 tricks.

COMPOUND ELIMINATIONS

In the previous notes the eliminations worked with a single basic position. In compound eliminations are compounded to work with two or more basic positions. Again the group is split into two into two sub-groups. These are eliminations that act on one opponent and eliminations that act on both opponents. This is quite a large chapter in the book that I will split over two sets of notes to help you keep pace.

Crossruff Fork Strip

This is the commonest form of compound elimination. The full hand as dealt is:-

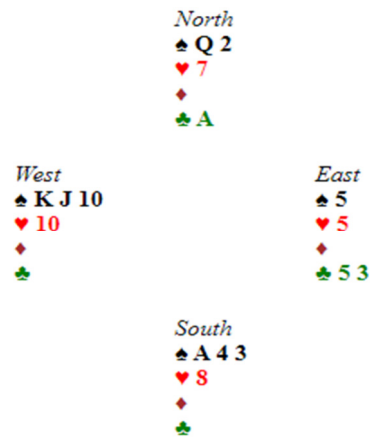
	<i>North</i> ♠ 10 7 5 ♥ A J 9 ♦ A ♣ K 9 7 4 3 2	
<i>West</i> ♠ K J 9 4 ♥ 8 5 4 2 ♦ K Q J 10 ♣ Q	<i>East</i> ♠ 6 3 ♥ Q 10 7 6 ♦ 9 8 7 6 5 2 ♣ 6	
	<i>South</i> ♠ A Q 8 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A J 10 8 5	

South is declarer having bid six clubs! Declare, by drawing trumps, ruffing a heart in hand and a diamond in dummy can count 1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 7 club tricks for a total of 11 tricks. Ending up in the dummy, south could play a spade and try to finesse the king with a 50% chance of success. This I suspect is the line all beginners and most club level players would take. So here is the position after south has pulled a round of trumps and played three rounds on each of the red suits, north having to lead.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 10 7 5 ♥ ♦ ♣ K 9 7	
<i>West</i> ♠ K J 9 4 ♥ 8 ♦ Q ♣	<i>East</i> ♠ 6 3 ♥ Q ♦ 9 8 7 ♣	
	<i>South</i> ♠ A Q 8 2 ♥ ♦ ♣ 10 8	

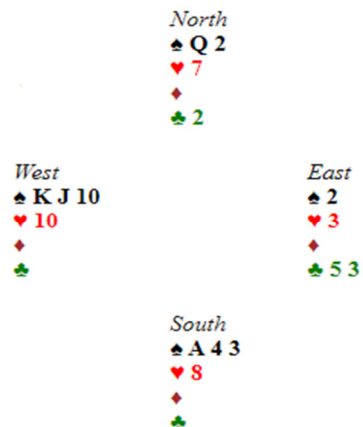
The correct play is to lead the ten of spades from dummy and simply cover any honour that east plays. But when east plays low south lets the ten run to west who wins with the jack. Now the contract is assured. If west leads a red card south can discard a losing spade in dummy and ruff in hand. Or if west choses to lead a spade they will be leading into south's tenace.

Entry Fork Strip



In this example south is playing in no trumps and needs to win three tricks. South, on lead, plays the eight of hearts giving the lead to west whilst stripping out west's exit card. Now west is endplayed, if west leads the spade they gives entry to north's hand and if west leads a club they lead into south's tenace.

In this next example the fork and entry elements are compounded into one suit.



Again in no trumps south is on lead and needs to make three tricks. South leads the eight of hearts to strip out west's exit card and now the end play is complete. For south holds a tenace (split between the two hand) over west's king of spades. If west leads the king of spades south will win with the ace and cross to the queen to enjoy dummy's ace of clubs. Or if west plays a lower ranking card entry is immediately given to north's queen, the club cashed and then a spade return to south's ace.

Entry Crossruff Strip

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 3	
	♥ 7	
	♦ K	
	♣ 4 3	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠		♠
♥ Q 10		♥
♦ Q J 10		♦ 9 8 6
♣		♣ K Q
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ J 10 9	
	♥ 8	
	♦	
	♣ 2	

In this example spades are trumps and south needs to win four tricks. South starts by stripping west of the exit card by leading the eight of hearts throwing Weston lead. Now if west leads another heart south can ruff in dummy and discard the losing club. Alternatively if west leads a diamond dummy wins with the king and south again discards the losing club.

Entry Crossruff Fork Strip

In this next elegant example the endplay incorporates all three basic positions. Spades are trumps and south needs four tricks.

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 2	
	♥ 9 7	
	♦	
	♣ 9 3 2	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠		♠
♥ 10 6		♥
♦ 4		♦ 5 3 2
♣ K 8 6		♣ J 10 7
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ J 10	
	♥ 8	
	♦	
	♣ A Q 5	

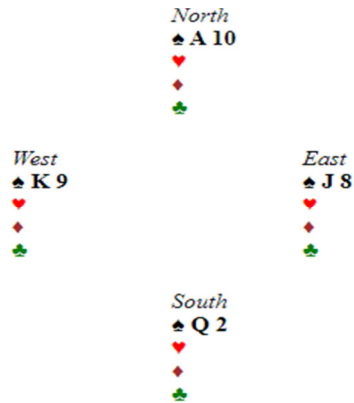
South leads the eight of hearts to strip an exit card from west and set up the endplay. West wins the trick and now west's choices are:

- Lead a heart which is won by north and south discards a losing club;
- Lead a diamond giving south a ruff and discard;
- Lead a club into south's tenace.

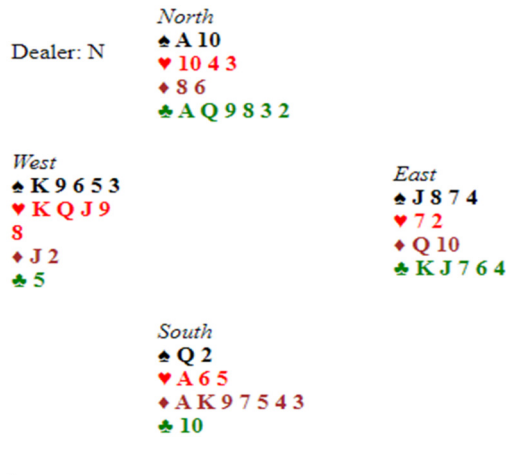
Note that if west ducks the first trick, south can overtake with the nine of hearts, lead another heart discarding the small club. Now west is endplayed into giving south 5 tricks.

Balanced Split Guard

An elimination is said to be split whenever either opponent is forced to sacrifice a trick by leading away from a suit commonly held by both opponents.



It matters not if east or west has the lead, with proper finessing north and south are sure to win two tricks. This endplay comes from an actual tournament played ¾ of a century ago. Reproduced below is the full hand.

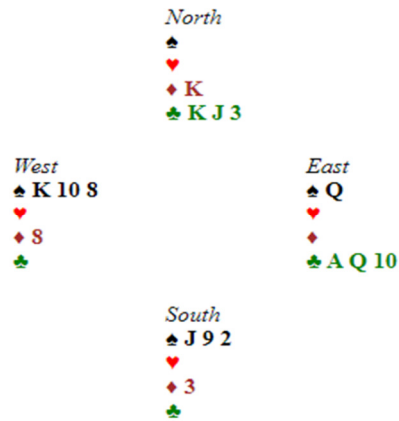


Bidding:	N	E	S	W
	1C	P	1D	1S
	2C	P	5D	

For a bit of fun, after west leads the king of hearts try and work out how you would get to the endplay shown above. There are two distinct ways to make 5D one based on what you already know and one leading to the endplay above. After you find one solution try and find the alternative. If you are really struggling to find an answer message me and I will send you the solutions.

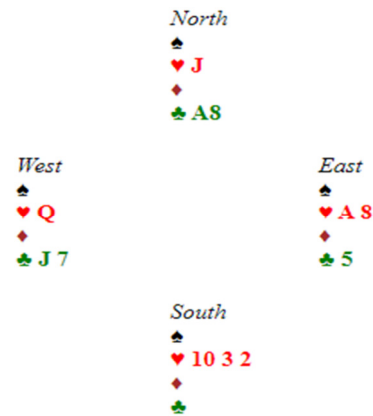
One-way Jettison Double Strip

Double Eliminations are endplays where either opponent may take the lead when declarer exits, but whichever opponent gets the lead is endplayed. On the throwin lead declarer's play is doubly automatic but there is one Double Elimination wherein the dummy's discard is only decided after the lead passes through the dummy's right hand opponent. Such as in this example where dummy has to wait upon west's play before making the proper discard.



In a no trump contract south needs to win two tricks and leads a low spade. If west plays low and east wins with the queen of diamonds east will have to lead clubs towards north's tenace. But if west plays high, north simple jettisons the king of diamonds to avoid being thrown on lead. Now after cashing the eight of diamonds west must lead towards south's tenace.

Fork Double Strip



The contract is no trumps and south as declarer needs to win two tricks with the lead in dummy. North leads the jack of hearts. If east wins then a heart return gives two tricks to south and a club return gives two tricks to north. Yet if west ducks, the trick is won by west's queen and now west must lead towards north's tenace again giving south the required two tricks.

Crossruff Double Strip

	<i>North</i> ♠ A 7 4 ♥ 2 ♦ ♣	
<i>West</i> ♠ Q 8 ♥ ♦ Q 8 ♣		<i>East</i> ♠ K 10 9 ♥ ♦ J ♣
	<i>South</i> ♠ J 6 2 ♥ 6 ♦ ♣	

With hearts as trumps, south needs to win three tricks. South starts by leading a small spade to the ace of spades. West has a problem, if west holds on to the queen of spades, the queen will either fall under east's king or win the trick. If the queen falls under the king, south's jack becomes the master or if east ducks and the queen wins, west is forced to lead a diamond giving declarer a ruff and discard. So west tries to jettison the queen of spades and now north leads a low spade towards south's tenace again either establishing the spade jack or getting a ruff and discard when east leads a diamond.

Now for some more homework...

Consider this hand which way played in competition in the early days of bridge.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 4 ♥ K 8 6 ♦ A K J 9 4 3 ♣ 10 6 3	
Dealer: S		
<i>West</i> ♠ K J 10 7 2 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ Q 4		<i>East</i> ♠ - ♥ J 10 7 5 4 3 ♦ 10 2 ♣ A 9 8 7 5
	<i>South</i> ♠ A Q 9 8 6 5 3 ♥ 2 ♦ 6 5 ♣ K J 2	

	S	W	N	E
Bidding:	1S	P	2D	P
	2S	P	3D	P
	3S	P	4S	P
	P	X	P	P
	5D	P	P	P

West's double was a fatal error, sounding alarm bells for south and allowing south to flee into the 5D contract to be played by north. East led a low heart and the trick was won by west's ace. West returned a second heart hoping to shorten dummy's trumps. Try and find a play that will give north 11 tricks using one of the endplays from this session. Answers can be provided if you get stuck.

BASIC SQUEEZES

Squeezes are endplays of mass. They depend on three elements: a quick entry into the partner's hand, a forcing card which is a winner which is led to force the opponent to discard a busy suit and finally guards which are masters or suit stoppers. The terminology here was developed by Ely Culbertson, an American player from the 1930s who is regarded as the man who popularised Bridge in the USA. Ely differentiated idle cards from busy cards as cards which may be discarded without reducing the trick taking value of the hand. That is they are not potential winners or essential guards to winning cards.

According to squeeze theory the partnership hands must be able to win all but the one trick that they are trying to develop by the squeeze. By this token, if you hold more than one losing trick, you must lose a trick early in the play in order to develop the squeeze. This principle is fundamental. The only variation is when you may develop two extra tricks by a repeated squeeze, in which case you must adjust your winners to number two less than the total left unplayed.

First Basic Position

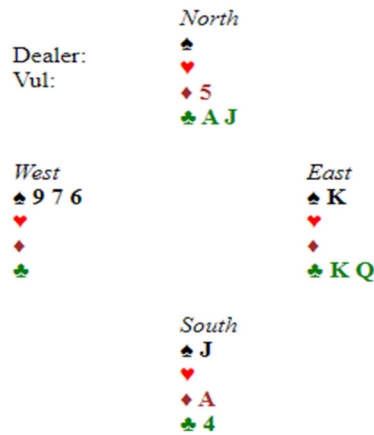
<i>North</i>		
♠		
♥ K		
♦		
♣ A 10		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠		♠
♥ A		♥ J 8 7
♦		♦
♣ K Q		♣
<i>South</i>		
♠		
♥ 10		
♦ 2		
♣ 9		

Diamonds are trumps and south needs to win all three tricks. West holds three busy cards but is sitting in front of north. When south leads the final trump (D2) west must throw away either the ace of hearts or a club. As soon as west makes a discard south can safely discard the idle card in the opposite suit from that discarded by west.

Second Basic Position

The automatic squeeze by comparison does not have a positional disadvantage. Leading the forcing card automatically squeezes one opponent regardless of the order of discard.

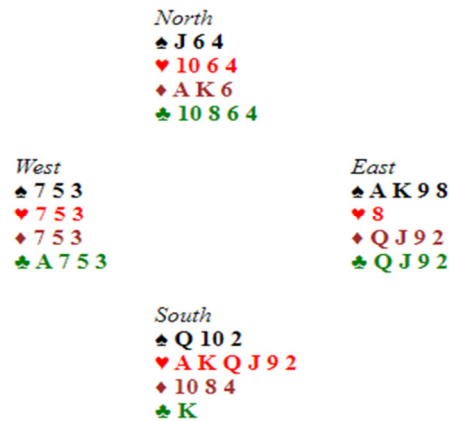
In this next example there are no trumps and south, on lead, needs all three tricks.



South leads the ace of diamonds and no matter which card east decides to discard, south can now claim two more tricks. Notice that the same result will occur if east and west hands are exchanged, but these cards must all be massed in one hand.

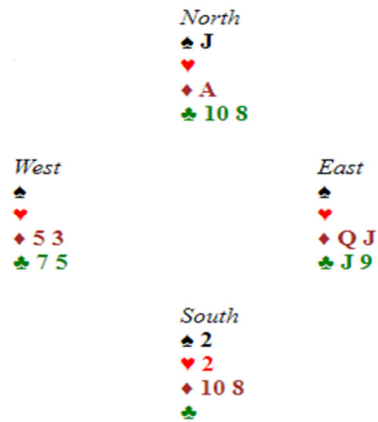
Third Basic Position

The third basic squeeze position is the trump squeeze, so called because one or more trump cards are vital to trump out a suit and establish it, if the opponents unguard that suit. Basic trump squeezes are always automatic.



In this hand, south is the declarer in a four hearts contract. South can easily count 6 heart tricks, 2 diamond tricks and a spade trick for a total of nine tricks.

West leads S7 (top of nothing) and east wins with the SK. Next east leads the SA and south jettisons the SQ to give an entry to dummy. At this point east could defeat the contract by switching to the DQ but is drawn to playing through south's perceived strength and leads the CQ instead. South's singleton king falls to west's ace. Now west switches to a diamond but it is too late. Dummy wins with the DK and south runs five trumps leaving the position below.

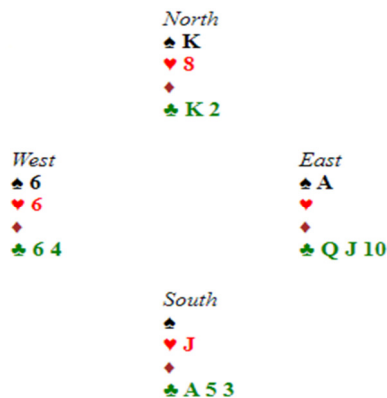


Now when south crosses to the SJ east is automatically squeezed. If east plays a diamond, south can cash DA in dummy, ruff a club and claim the last diamond trick. Else, if east plays a club, south leads a small club from dummy, ruffing east's last club and then crosses to dummy with a diamond and cashes the winning club.

Criss-Cross Squeeze

In this variation, two opposite entries are both in the same suit, thus enabling an automatic squeeze to develop whenever the forcing card and quick entry, accompanied by its squeeze card are all in one hand.

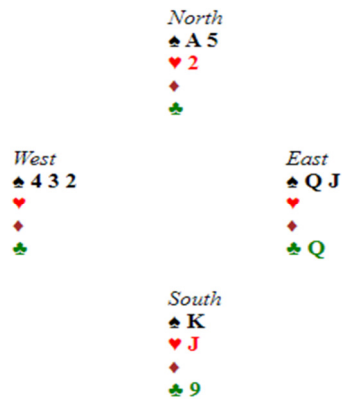
In this simple variation on the second basic position south is in no trumps, has the lead and must make all four tricks.



South leads the jack of hearts and east is forced to discard one of the four busy cards being held. If east discards the ace of spades south will cross to north's king of clubs, discard a losing club on the king of spades and then cross back to hand to enjoy the ace of clubs. Should east hold on to the ace of spades and discard a club, then south will cross to the king of clubs, cross back to the ace of clubs and then claim the fourth trick with the three of clubs.

Overtaking Automatic Squeeze

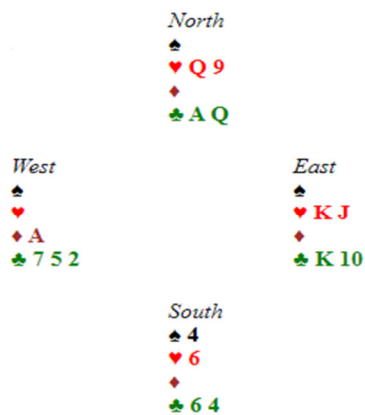
It often happens that a player has all the remaining tricks but a lack of entries prevents claiming them. A squeeze ending will sometimes make up for this shortfall in entries.



At no trumps south holds three winners in the two hands but the spade situation would make this impossible if it were not for the jack of hearts to force east into making an unfortunate discard. After south plays the jack of hearts, if east discards the queen of clubs south can continue with the nine of clubs and then claim a winning spade. On the other hand if east discards a spade south must overtake the king of spades with the ace of spades and claim the last trick with the five of spades.

Squeeze Fork Strip

A squeeze strip is an elimination play that has been prepared by a squeeze play.



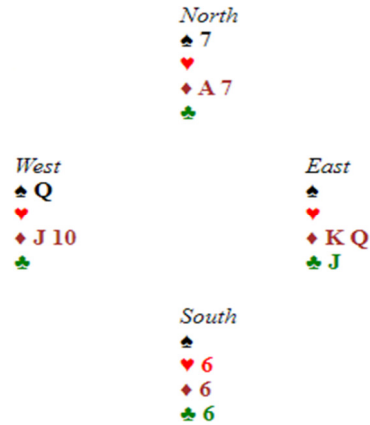
Spades are trumps and south needs three tricks. South leads their final spade, north discarding the nine of hearts and east must also discard a heart to protect the king of clubs. Now south simply hands the lead to east who is forced to lead a club into north's tenace.

BASIC DOUBLE SQUEEZES

Compound Squeezes comprise endplays in which every squeeze forms part of another squeeze, elimination or coup. One compound squeeze is the Double Squeeze, so called because it operates on both opponents, forcing one to discard so as to make discarding disastrous for the other.

One Way Double Squeeze

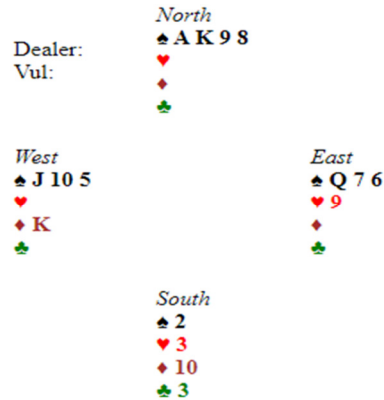
This is in effect a single squeeze on three suits, depending on the discarding of both opponents for its success.



Here, hearts are trumps and south needing all three tricks leads the heart. West cannot discard the SQ without promoting the S7 in dummy so must discard a diamond. This puts a secondary squeeze on east. If east also discards a diamond dummy will have two winning diamonds but if east discards the CJ south now holds the winning club.

Automatic Double Squeeze

In the Automatic Double Squeeze both squeezing Operations are simultaneously automatic. Even if either defender be given the opportunity to discard before their partner, they have no escape because, 'whichever defender discards first leaves their partner in trouble.



At no trumps south requires all four tricks and leads the thirteenth club. Neither east nor west can afford to throw away their top red card and each will discard a spade leaving north with the remaining three tricks.

The most famous Automatic Double Squeeze (*well up to 1950 at least*) occurred in the following classic deal.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 10 6 5 ♥ 6 ♦ K 8 3 2 ♣ A Q 9 6 3	
<i>West</i> ♠ J 9 8 2 ♥ 10 9 3 2 ♦ J ♣ 10 8 7 2	<i>East</i> ♠ Q 7 4 3 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ 10 9 6 5 ♣ K	
	<i>South</i> ♠ A K ♥ A Q 7 5 ♦ A Q 7 4 ♣ J 5 4	

In a rather adventurous auction south ended up playing in 6 no trumps. West led the S2 (*I guess by then fourth from longest and strongest was an established practice*). East played the SQ which marked west's lead as four cards from the jack. South won the trick and played the DA followed by a small diamond to the DK whereupon west showed out. This discard was the key which unlocked a grand slam for south since it marked west with four small hearts and four small clubs. Had west held five cards in either suit or a four card suit headed by the king it would have been led instead of S2. Declarer played a small club to dummy's CA capturing the singleton king, returning to hand with a small club to the CJ. South next cashed in the DQ and Sa to unblock in preparation for the squeeze, finally leading a club to capture two club tricks with club Q 9 6 sitting over club 10 8. This left the following position.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 10 ♥ 6 ♦ 8 ♣ 6	
<i>West</i> ♠ J ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ ♣	<i>East</i> ♠ ♥ K J 8 ♦ 10 ♣	
	<i>South</i> ♠ ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 7 ♣	

When the C6 is led from north south will win all four remaining tricks.

Split One-way Double Squeeze

When the preparatory squeeze occurs on a trick previous to the final squeeze trick, the squeeze is termed split, because the two squeezing leads have split the endplay into two separate operations.

North
 ♠ 4
 ♥ A 4
 ♦
 ♣ 4

West
 ♠ K 9
 ♥ K 9
 ♦
 ♣

East
 ♠ Q 8 2
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣ A

South
 ♠ A 6
 ♥ 6
 ♦ J
 ♣

When south playing no trumps leads the winning DJ west is squeezed into yielding a spade, north now discards the now useless H4. Leading to the HA now automatically squeezes east who must either discard the CA or a second spade giving south two winning spades.

Split Automatic Double Squeeze

In the following game, north and after a swift round of bidding south landed in 7 no trumps.

Dealer: N

North
 ♠ A K Q 7 6 5
 ♥ K Q
 ♦ 4
 ♣ K 6 5 4

West
 ♠ J 9 8 4
 ♥ 7 6 5 4
 ♦ J 8 2
 ♣ 7 3

East
 ♠ 3 2
 ♥ 9 3 2
 ♦ Q 7 6 5
 ♣ J 10 9 2

South
 ♠ 10
 ♥ A J 10 8
 ♦ A K 10 9 3
 ♣ A Q 8

Bidding:

	N	E	S	W
	1S	P	6NT	P
	7S	P	7NT	P
	P	P	P	

The declarer was the American writer Ben Ames Williams with the hand being described in the Boston Herald. West led the H4 and the trick was won by dummy's HQ. South now played three rounds of spades to discover west holding a stopper. South discarding two diamonds and east discarding a heart. The king of hearts, queen of clubs and ten of hearts won the next three tricks leaving the position below:-

<i>North</i> ♠ 7 6 ♥ ♦ 4 ♣ K 6 5		<i>East</i> ♠ ♥ ♦ Q 7 6 ♣ J 10 2
<i>West</i> ♠ J ♥ 7 ♦ J 8 2 ♣ 7		
	<i>South</i> ♠ ♥ J ♦ A K 10 ♣ A 8	

South now led the HJ, discarding S6 and forcing east to discard a diamond to protect the clubs. Now the play of the CA followed by CK automatically squeezed west who had to choose between discarding SJ promoting dummy's S7 or discarding a diamond leaving south with three winning diamonds.

Next time I will take a look at triple squeezes and some defensive manoeuvres to avoid getting squeezed.

TRIPLE SQUEEZES

Triple squeezes occur when one opponent is guarding three suits. Unlike the basic and double squeezes which yield a single extra trick, triple squeezes may yield two extra tricks when the squeezed opponent discards from the first suit which can then be used to squeeze again.

When the triple squeeze can win two extra tricks, it is said to be perfect; but when the opponent can escape a second squeeze by proper discarding, it is said to be imperfect.

Imperfect Triple Squeeze

<i>North</i> ♠ A 7 ♥ ♦ J ♣ 2		<i>East</i> ♠ ♥ 7 6 5 4 ♦ ♣
<i>West</i> ♠ K Q ♥ ♦ Q ♣ K		
	<i>South</i> ♠ 4 3 ♥ A ♦ 9 ♣	

When south leads the ace of hearts in no trumps west must hold onto the queen of diamonds or south will discard the jack of diamonds in dummy and repeat the squeeze thus gaining all four tricks.

So when west discards a black card south discards a card from the other black suit to ensure winning three tricks.

Criss-Cross Repeating Squeeze

The term criss-cross refers to the criss-cross play back and forth between the north and south hands.

This squeeze comes from a hand played in 1937 in the New Hampshire State Championship Finals. The hand as played shows a beautiful set of plays culminating in the criss-cross repeating squeeze. The full hand is displayed below with south playing in six no trumps. Follow along and marvel at the declarer's thinking.

West led the S10 (top of internal sequence) and when dummy went down, South noted that an overtaking play in clubs at the sacrifice of a club trick, was necessary to win three club tricks unless, and here came the first beautiful play of the hand, the dummy had a spade entry. South realized that if he won the spade opening with the jack, a club trick would have to be sacrificed to score all dummy's black suit winners. But if South sacrificed a spade trick by winning the spade opening with the ace, the forfeit would be counter balanced by the ability to score four club tricks. In other words, *it made no difference in the number of tricks declarer could win in the black suits whether he played the jack or the ace on the opening lead*, but the play of the ace retained more flexibility for the future development of the hand, offering two lines of entry to dummy. He played the ace.

<p><i>North</i></p> <p>♠ K 8 6</p> <p>♥ 10 8 3</p> <p>♦ 10 9 7</p> <p>♣ K J 9 8</p>		<p><i>East</i></p> <p>♠ 7 5 4 2</p> <p>♥ J 5</p> <p>♦ J 5 3 2</p> <p>♣ 7 6 5</p>	
<p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ Q 10 9 3</p> <p>♥ K 9 6 4</p> <p>♦ K</p> <p>♣ 10 4 3 2</p>			
	<p><i>South</i></p> <p>♠ A J</p> <p>♥ A Q 7 2</p> <p>♦ A Q 8 6 4</p> <p>♣ A Q</p>		

Declarer next observed that he couldn't get the lead in the dummy twice for the double finesse without badly impoverishing the black suits. So instead of sacrificing a sure black suit winner in the slim hope of getting it back in diamonds, he made a beautiful safety play, he led the ace of diamonds. He was delighted that this captured the singleton DK. Next he made a third fine play by playing the D9 to unblock the suit. The marked position of the DJ in east's hand meant that 12 tricks could easily be made. But south was hungry for another trick.

He played CA, overtook the CQ with dummy's king and cashed the CJ hoping for the ten to drop but it didn't and declarer discarded a heart. The ten, eight and then queen of diamonds won the next three tricks with west discarding two hearts and a spade. This left the following ending.

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ K 8	
	♥ 10 8	
	♦	
	♣ 9	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ Q 9		♠ 7 5 4
♥ K 9		♥ J 5
♦		♦
♣ 10		♣ 7
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ J	
	♥ A Q 7	
	♦ 4	
	♣	

And now for the squeeze, south led the last diamond West cannot avoid a second automatic squeeze regardless of what he discards north discards a heart. If West sheds the club, south plays to the king of spades and the now good nine of clubs from dummy squeezes west again automatically. If West discards a spade the second round of spades in dummy squeezes west again. And if west discards the king of hearts, south immediately cashes the two extra tricks in hearts.

Double-Trick Triple Squeeze

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ K Q	
	♥	
	♦ A K 5 4	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ A		♠ J 10
♥ K Q		♥ 3 2
♦ Q J 10		♦ 3 2
♣		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ 5	
	♥ A J 7	
	♦ 8	
	♣ J	

In order to win all six tricks at notrumps, South leads the good club. Squeezed in three suits, West must immediately yield in any one suit two crucial tricks. If west discards SA south can cash HA whilst discarding two small diamonds in dummy before crossing to the DA and claiming four more tricks; if west discards a diamond south can again cash the HA whilst discarding two spades and then crossing to dummy to enjoy four diamond tricks; and finally if west discards a heart south will cash three heart trick discarding two spades and two small diamonds before crossing to the two top diamonds in dummy.

Great Vienna Coup

This next example actually predates the game of bridge and occurred in about 1864 when after the game had been played the hand was published as a double dummy problem. As the game is whist, the dealer gets to lead. South is playing with clubs as trumps and can make 13 tricks.

<i>North</i>		
♠ J 10 3		
♥ A K Q J 3		
♦ 5 2		
♣ 7 4 2		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K 6		♠ 9 8 7 5 4 2
♥ 10 9 7 6 5		♥ 8 4
♦ J 10 8		♦ K 9
♣ 8 6 5		♣ J 10 9
<i>South</i>		
♠ A Q		
♥ 2		
♦ A Q 7 6 4 3		
♣ A K Q 3		

STOP. Before I present the solution in the next chapter try and find the solution.

Finesse by Discovery

In chess, the term “check by discovery” is used to denote the play of a piece to one side uncovering direct line of attack upon the enemy’s King, thereby “checking” it. In Bridge a finesse may be discovered either by declarer, or by one defending partner whose bad discard discovers a finesse against the partner.

Jettison Squeeze Finesse

<i>North</i>		
♠ A		
♥ K		
♦ K		
♣		
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ K		♠ 6 4
♥ A		♥
♦ A		♦
♣		♣ 6
<i>South</i>		
♠ 7 5		
♥		
♦		
♣ 5		

Playing in no trumps south needs two more tricks. South leads the losing C5 and west must choose a discard. Unable to discard a red ace without establishing a winning king for north, west must discard the SK. Now south simply discards the SA from dummy to discover the winning spade tenace over east.

Squeeze Pick-up

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 8 6	
	♥ A 6	
	♦	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ 7 5		♠ 10 4 2
♥ 9 8		♥
♦		♦
♣		♣ J
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ A 3	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 8	
	♣	

In no trumps, south requires all four tricks and leads the D8. West cannot discard a heart without giving north two winning tricks in hearts and is forced to discard the S5. North now discards the useless H6. A small heart to the ace now puts dummy on lead and declarer plays the S8. If east plays low south also plays low and the S8 wins leaving declarer with two winning aces. But if east covers with the S10 south wins with the ace, west's final spade the seven tumbles and north is left with the S6 which becomes biggest card in Malaysia.

Hexagon Squeeze

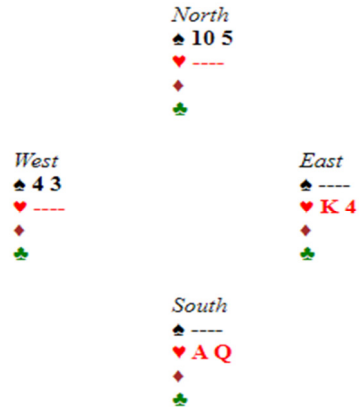
	<i>North</i>	
	♠ 6	
	♥ A J	
	♦ 6	
	♣	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ J		♠ 9
♥ K 4		♥ Q
♦ Q		♦ K 4
♣		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠	
	♥ 6	
	♦ A J	
	♣ J	

Needing to win all four tricks in no trumps south leads JC, triple squeezing west into discarding the SJ. North now discards the useless D6. East is also triple squeezed and the best defence is to discard HQ and hope that south does not take the heart finesse through west's king. Because both opponents are triple squeezed the squeeze here is on six points hence the name Hexagon Squeeze.

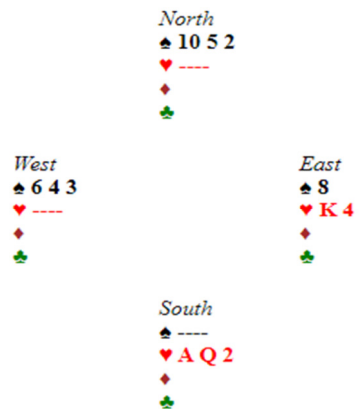
BASIC COUPS

From the early days of Whist, the term coup has been used loosely in connection with any unusual play of significance. Such famous coups as the Bath Coup and Vienna Coup were named after the places where they first occurred, as in Bath, England, and Vienna, Austria. The Deschappelles Coup was named after a famous French Whist player, Guillaume le Breton Deschappelles, who first discovered and used it. And the Grand Coup is so called because it is a highly spectacular play wherein a player trumps his partner's plain suit winner in order to capture eventually an adverse trump honour.

Overruff Finesse Endplay



With hearts as trumps south can't win both tricks unless north has the lead at the twelfth trick. North leads a spade and east is forced to trump in front of south. But suppose the end position was this:-

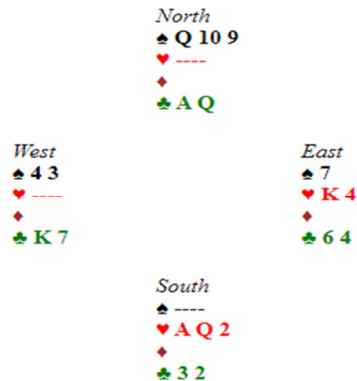


North leads his top spade, but South has couped himself and has to trump. In order to avoid getting locked in the lead prematurely, the stage for the coup is frequently set by the preliminary reducing of superfluous trumps. This peculiar phenomenon of the all-vital time element and other tricky preparatory plays in accurate time sequence account for the divisional classification of the True Coups as "Endplays of Time." The timing must be perfect. Whenever the dominant hand trumps partner's plain suit winners to keep this element of time in its proper sequence, the coup is said to be "grand".

Therefore, with superfluous trumps two steps are required to consummate a True Coup.

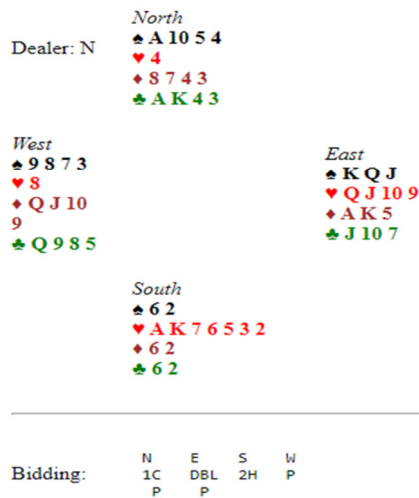
1. Declarer strips the hand down to a few cards, often by trumping, in order to be rid of excess trumps to avoid the ending shown in the last diagram.
2. He captures an adverse trump honour by leading a plain suit at the end, as in the first diagram

Grand Coup



South, requiring all five tricks with hearts trumps, finesses the Queen of clubs. If north now cashes the ace of clubs, the unfortunate ending shown in the second diagram will develop. To avoid this catastrophe, south instead trumps a good spade (grand coup), and another club lead completes the correctly timed preparation for the endplay.

The Houdini Coup



Played in competition 2H was the prevalent contract and at all but one table declarer conceded two diamond tricks, a spade trick and two trump tricks. The score at the table where 9 tricks were made was challenged and the player stated "I am no Houdini but I know a thing or two about bridge". Here is his play:-

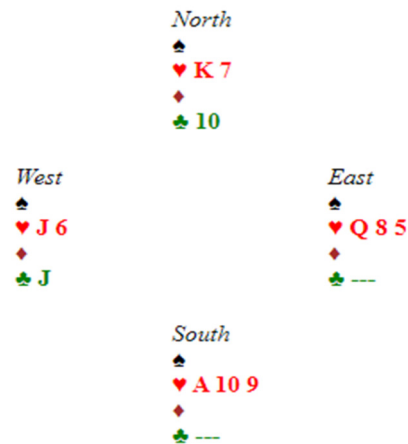
West opened with the queen of diamonds, and south trumped the third round of the suit. When south played the ace and king of hearts, he learned the bad news in trumps. Up to this point the play was the same at all tables, but declarer next put dummy in with a club and trumped a diamond, re-

entered dummy with a club and trumped a club. East had to discard, or south would shed his losing spade if east trumped high. Dummy was re-entered again with the ace of spades, and the last losing club led to promote that extra trick in trumps.

It should be noted that east can prevent this play by overtaking the lead and immediately returning a heart preventing declarer from enjoying four ruffs.

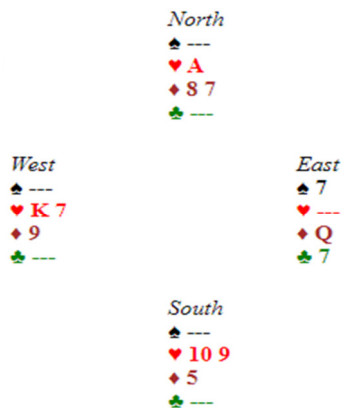
Double Coup

A double coup, like a double elimination or a double squeeze, is played when both opponents are compromised at the same time.



With hearts trumps the combination held by east and west is usually considered a sure trick winner. But note how their trump honours can be picked up if declarer has timed his play to end up in dummy. North leads a club. If east trumps low, south simply overruffs and if East puts up the Queen of hearts, south plays the ace and finesses through west's jack on the return lead.

Forced Coup



Hearts are trumps and south requiring two tricks, throws east in with the diamond. This exit forces east return a black card so that north can discard or overtrump west and capture the apparently impregnable guarded king of hearts with the singleton ace.

Bath Coup

	<i>North</i> ♠ x x ♥ ♦ ♣	
<i>West</i> ♠ K Q x x x x ♥ ♦ ♣		<i>East</i> ♠ x x x ♥ ♦ ♣
	<i>South</i> ♠ A J x ♥ ♦ ♣	

This very famous coup can occur at any time during play but most notably seems to occur on the opening lead against a no trump contract. It is not so much a coup for taking an extra trick as a means of discouraging the opponents from continuing to attack a weak suit. West leads the SK hoping for some support to establish the long suit. If south wins this trick a spade will be returned as soon as east gets in and west will enjoy 5 winning spades. When south holds off and plays low west must find another lead to try and get to east for a spade lead. If west persists with a second spade, south has two spade tricks and east no way to lead the suit back.

Le Coup En Blanc

This play is very well known in France. There is no finesse involved it is a simple ducking play.

	<i>North</i> ♠ 8 6 4 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ 6 ♣ A K 8 7 6 4	
<i>West</i> ♠ J 10 9 7 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ Q J 10 9 ♣ 3		<i>East</i> ♠ 5 3 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 8 7 5 4 3 ♣ Q J 5
	<i>South</i> ♠ A K Q 2 ♥ A K 2 ♦ A K 2 ♣ 10 9 2	

South has contracted to make six no trumps and west leads a red queen which south wins. If south now plays for the drop on the clubs there is a 48% chance of making 13 tricks but if the missing clubs do not split 2-2 south will lose an additional 3 tricks. The correct play is to duck the first club lead allowing east to win the trick. Now no matter what card east plays south is guaranteed 12 tricks.

Deschappelles Coup

The play consists of leading a king or other high card when the next lower ranking card of the same suit is absent from the leader's hand, for the purpose of creating an entry with the leader's partner, whom it is vital to get in the lead. Usually, it is a defending player who takes his life in his hands and makes the mad-looking lead of an unsupported King or Queen through or up to an exposed ace, often accompanied by its jack. This play is daring and is best played when partner has signalled interest in the suit rather than when you just hope partner has the missing honour.

<i>North</i>	
♠ A K J 7	
♥ 9 8 7	
♦ 8 7 5 3	
♣ A J	
<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 10 9 8 5	♠ Q 4 3 2
♥ K Q J 10 5 3	♥ 2
♦ ---	♦ J 10 9 2
♣ Q 7 4	♣ K 5 3 2
<i>South</i>	
♠ 6	
♥ A 6 4	
♦ A K Q 6 4	
♣ 10 9 8 6	

In this actual hand south won the auction with a 3NT bid. West opened with the king of hearts, which South ducked. West continued with the ten of hearts which south won with the ace. The game looks sure to make, until west discarded a spade when South led a diamond honour. In order to preserve a diamond entry to his own hand and thus to score the long diamond later, south played another honour then low in diamonds, throwing in east. At this point east played the Deschappelles Coup, he led his unsupported king of clubs up to the teeth of dummy's Ace-Jack. Naively believing this lead to be from King-Queen, declarer won the trick with dummy's Ace of clubs (it would have done him no good to duck), and in order to set up all his own clubs, he returned the dummy's Jack. But West pounced upon the jack with the Queen, and scored four more heart tricks, defeating the contract by three tricks.