

# Play These Hands With Me



Terence Reese

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# Foreword

When one talks of bridge writers, the name Terence Reese is synonymous with excellence. Several of his books are landmarks in the development and understanding of bridge, especially in the field of cardplay.

He first introduced the idea of presenting hands in an 'over my shoulder' style in *BRIDGE Magazine*, and it was an immediate success. That a book should follow was inevitable, and the result was *Play These Hands With Me*.

A measure of the author's genius is that when the deals were checked using the double-dummy analyser Deep Finesse, it revealed only two minor flaws.

This book, more than any other before or since, allows you to see how an expert thinks, and to understand how you can add such methods to your own skills.

Including this title in the Better Bridge Now series was an easy decision to make. It instructs and entertains, and will surely inspire you to take another step up the bridge ladder.

*Mark Horton*  
Editor  
Better Bridge Now



# 1 When they die early

One aspect of declarer's play is seldom commented upon: this is that most part-score hands can be played more accurately than most game hands. When the bidding goes 1♠ – 4♠, very little is known about the defending hands, and even when a high contract is reached after a competitive auction there are extensions either way: one defender may have been sacrificing, the other may be hoping to defeat the final contract, one cannot always tell.

But when the contract is at the level of two or three, certain conclusions can be drawn even though both opponents may have passed throughout. For example, if you and your partner buy the contract with a combined 20 points or less, you may be sure that the outstanding strength is equally divided and also that the suits will break evenly. In a pairs you can take risks without fear of an unexpected ruff. Clearest of all are those hands where both opponents enter the bidding and drop out at a low level. The whole picture may then be clear after a trick or two.

Playing in a Pairs event against opponents who are reasonably sound bidders, I hold in second position:

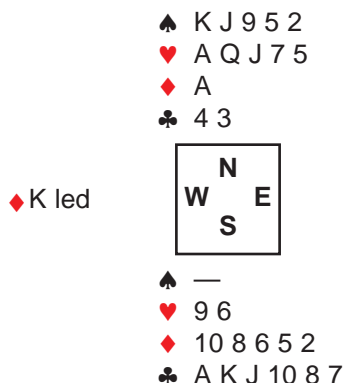
♠ —  
♥ 9 6  
♦ 10 8 6 5 2  
♣ A K J 10 8 7

Neither side is vulnerable and East, on my right, opens One Heart. As the clubs are so much better than the diamonds, I prefer Two Clubs at this point to an Unusual Two No-Trumps. Depending on how the bidding develops, I may be able to bid no-trumps later, to show that I can contest in either minor. Not so on this occasion, for West bids Two Diamonds. My partner joins in with Two Spades, which East doubles. I retreat to Three Clubs, which is passed out. The bidding has been brief but informative:

South	West	North	East
—	—	—	1♥
2♣	2♦	2♠	Double
3♣	All Pass		

West leads the king of diamonds and dummy is seen to have the best hand at the table:





The ace of diamonds wins the first trick, East playing the seven. If the diamonds are not worse than 5-2 I can ruff one round. Let's consider the likely distribution.

East opened One Heart and doubled Two Spades. West would surely have led a singleton of his partner's suit, so the hearts are probably 6-0. East must be credited with A-Q of spades, king of hearts, and probably queen of clubs, for his opening bid; that leaves only the diamond honours for West, and he must have six for his free bid of Two Diamonds. As players with five spades and six hearts usually open One Spade unless strong enough to reverse, East's likely shape is 4-6-1-2. Plainly it would be a mistake to ruff a diamond, setting up a cross-ruff for the defence. I begin instead with a finesse of the jack of clubs, followed by the ace and king. East, as expected, has Q-x and discards a heart on the third round.

I think now that West is out of the game and that I can take on East alone. I lead the six of hearts, West discards a spade, and the queen is taken by the king. This is the position now, with East on lead:



East, looking unhappy, returns a low heart. Avoiding this small trap, I overtake the nine with the jack and return the seven. East covers with the

eight and I let this hold. Now East cannot avoid giving me a tenth trick, whether he lays down the ace of spades (which will be allowed to win) or returns a heart into the A-5. The full hand was:

	♠ K J 9 5 2										
	♥ A Q J 7 5										
	♦ A										
	♣ 4 3										
♠ 8 7 4 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 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		♠ A Q 10 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ —		♥ K 10 8 4 3 2									
♦ K Q J 9 4 3		♦ 7									
♣ 9 6 2		♣ Q 5									
	♠ —										
	♥ 9 6										
	♦ 10 8 6 5 2										
	♣ A K J 10 8 7										

Making ten tricks in clubs produced only an average score, as it happened. Owing to the fortunate lie of the diamonds and clubs, declarers in no-trumps could not help making nine tricks; a small triumph for players who overcalled with the unusual Two No-Trumps and were left to play in that contract.

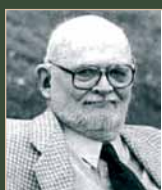
## Post-mortem

Once declarer had avoided the pitfall of trying to ruff a diamond, the play of this hand was simple enough; but it is interesting to note that after the first trick it was possible to form an exact picture both of the distribution and of the division of the high cards.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

# Play These Hands With Me

Terence Reese pioneered the 'over-the-shoulder' approach to bridge writing in 1960 with *Play Bridge with Reese*, a book that became an acknowledged classic of the game. *Play These Hands with Me* is a sequel, containing another sixty deals recounted in the same style. Again, you are at a world champion's elbow from the moment he picks up his cards. You share his thoughts in the bidding and play. You perceive how an expert works out the opposing hands and become aware of inferences that average players never dream exist. This book is still full of fresh ideas that will help any player's game improve.



**TERENCE REESE** (1913-1996) was a World and European champion, and one of the best technical writers the game has yet produced. Several of his books are still in print more than half a century after their first appearance.



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