



# ACCURATE CARDPLAY

PART II: WHEN TO DUCK,  
WHEN TO WIN

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 II

WHEN TO DUCK,  
WHEN TO WIN





The hold-up is one of the most important and many-sided plays in the game. In the following pages we see examples of ducking play to prevent an opponent from establishing a long suit; to establish a long suit in the dummy or in his own hand; to prevent a dangerous opponent from gaining the lead; to retain trump control; to protect against an overruff; to retain control in a side suit; and as a preliminary measure for each of the standard forms of endplay.

At the same time, we look at occasions when it would be wrong to hold up and at others where it is essential to win the first trick in the right hand.

### EXAMPLE 1

The declarer will often wish to keep a particular opponent out of the lead and for this reason he will take a finesse towards the other opponent. But that may not be enough, for when this opponent wins the trick he may still be able to give the lead to his partner.

Sitting South, you play 4♥ with the following cards:

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
|            | ♠ 6 3  |           |
|            | ♥ K Q 8 7  |           |
|            | ♦ 7 3 2  |           |
|            | ♣ K 10 5 2   |           |
| ♠ Q J 10 7 |  | ♠ K 9 5 2 |
| ♥ 6        |  | ♥ 5 3 2   |
| ♦ A J 10 4 |  | ♦ Q 9 8 6 |
| ♣ Q 9 8 7  |  | ♣ 6 4     |
|            | <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>S</span> </div> </div> |           |
|            | ♠ A 8 4  |           |
|            | ♥ A J 10 9 4   |           |
|            | ♦ K 5  |           |
|            | ♣ A J 3  |           |

You open 1♥ as South, partner raises to 2♥, and you go to game.

West leads the queen of spades. You win with the ace and draw the trumps in three rounds, finishing in dummy. Obviously, you want to avoid a lead through your king of diamonds, so you take the club finesse into the West hand. Unlucky! West wins with the queen of clubs and leads the ten of spades (not

the jack, because he wants to make sure that his partner will overtake with the king). East wins and leads a diamond, giving the defense two tricks in this suit.

If South had finessed the other way in clubs he would have made his contract, but that was not his mistake: he made this at trick one when he took the ace of spades immediately. It was essential to restrict communications between the defenders by ducking the first trick. If the queen of spades is allowed to hold, West cannot give his partner the lead later on and South, after losing to the queen of clubs, can discard a diamond on the fourth club in dummy.

The observant reader may have noted that, even so, there is a possible defense against 4♠. It would be good play for East, at Trick 1, to overtake the queen of spades with the king. South is obliged to win, because otherwise East will switch immediately to a low diamond. It is still sensible for South to take the club finesse into the West hand. Now West, taking his cue from East's play to the first trick, must have the courage to underlead his ♠J107, enabling his partner to win the trick with the nine. If the play follows that course, South can only congratulate his opponents.

## EXAMPLE 2

In notrump contracts there are always these three points to consider: how many top winners are there, how many tricks can the opponents take if they obtain the lead, and which is the more dangerous opponent?

|   |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|   | ♠ 6  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♥ J 3 2  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♦ A J 10 8 4   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♣ K Q 4 2  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| ♠ A 10 8 7 2<br>♥ Q 9 6 4<br>♦ 5<br>♣ 9 7 3 | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <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> </div> |   | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  | ♠ Q 9 4<br>♥ 8 7 5<br>♦ K 7 6<br>♣ J 10 8 5 |
|   | N  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| W   |  | E |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | S  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♠ K J 5 3  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♥ A K 10   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♦ Q 9 3 2  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|   | ♣ A 6  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |

South deals and opens 1NT. In some systems there are ways for North to indicate that he has the values for a raise to 3NT but is short in spades. Whether or not such conventional methods are used, South is more likely to finish in 3NT than 5♦. West leads the seven of spades and East plays the queen. South notes that he will have ample tricks for the contract after the diamonds have been established, but meanwhile there is a danger of losing a diamond and four spade tricks. Since East is the danger hand in the sense that only he can win a diamond trick, it must be correct to duck the first trick.

When the queen of spades is allowed to win, East presses on with the nine of spades. South plays the jack, perhaps expecting West to win, but West has played the game before: he ducks in turn, playing the two.

Realizing now that at all costs he must keep East off lead, declarer plays a diamond to the ace, followed by another diamond. East wins and returns the four of spades through South's ♠J5. West makes three more spade tricks to defeat the contract.

South's mistake here was in splitting his honors on the second round of spades. He should play the three of spades on the first trick and the five on the second trick, when East leads the nine. This may seem a little unnatural, but it is the only safe way to play the hand. If spades are 4-4, declarer will lose at most three spades and a diamond; if they are 5-3 (or 6-2), East will be able to do no damage, for when he wins with the king of diamonds he will have no spade to play.

### EXAMPLE 3

Quite often, an intervening bid by an opponent will provide a clue to the best line of play. The following hand has a strong similarity, on the surface, to the example above, but the declarer must handle the 3NT contract in quite a different way.

# 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.

