IMAGINATIVE CARDPLAY

PART I: THOSE EXTRA CHANCES

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

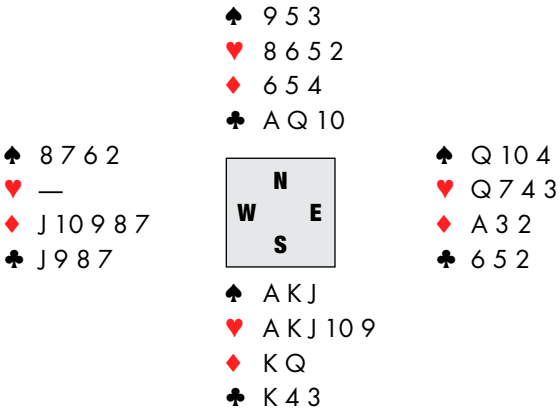
THOSE EXTRA CHANCES

The original French title of this section was *Précautions et Soin*, a phrase used in medicine that is similar in meaning to the motorist's 'due care and attention'. Some of the examples that follow appear to involve safety plays, but they are not exactly that, for there is no guarantee of success. The problem is to find the line of play that offers the best chance.

There are several examples on standard themes such as suit establishment, technique in finessing, avoiding a dangerous lead, attacking the danger hand, averting a ruff, and many forms of communication play. In every case, the right line of play can be determined by logical analysis; the reader is not called upon to perform feats of counting or deduction, nor is a knowledge of endplays demanded. These are basic techniques with which the aspiring player must be familiar.

EXAMPLE 1

There is nothing fixed about the timing of a finesse in bridge. On many hands the declarer will postpone a finesse until the last possible moment, hoping that somehow it can be avoided. The deal below was different: quite early in the play the declarer took a finesse that could not possibly gain a trick in the suit, even if it succeeded. The finesse was nevertheless necessary because it provided an extra entry to the dummy.



North-South reached an optimistic contract of 6♥. West led the jack of diamonds, East won with the ace and returned a diamond to the declarer's king. On the ace of hearts West showed out, discarding a diamond.

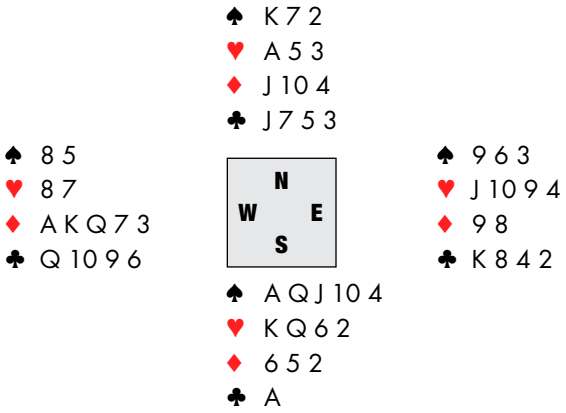
South had been hoping for an even break in hearts, but now it was evident that he would need two finesses to pick up East's queen. The ace and queen of clubs would supply entries for this purpose, but what about the third round of spades? Dropping a doubleton queen was a slender chance.

The solution was to take an 'unnecessary' finesse of the ten of clubs. When this succeeded, South was able to finesse against the queen of spades as well as against the queen of hearts.

You may think that declarer could begin with a club to the queen, intending to finesse the ten on the next round. But this would give West the chance to make the fine blocking play of the jack of clubs on the second round. Then declarer would be unable to obtain three entries in clubs.

EXAMPLE 2

Do not allow yourself to be deflected from the right line of play by a danger that is real in one sense, but imaginary in another: imaginary, because if the feared distribution exists, then the contract will be impossible anyway. The theme illustrated below is very common.



South was the dealer, with both sides vulnerable, and the bidding went like this:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
pass	2♠	pass	3♥
pass	4♠	all pass	

It is rare for a player with such a flat hand to accept a game try in a major, but North correctly attached importance to the good cards in each of the suits bid by his partner.

The defense began with three rounds of diamonds. When his partner discarded a low club on the third round, West switched to the eight of hearts, which was won by the declarer's king.

Now, if the hearts are divided 3-3, the hand presents no problem. But a 4-2 break is more likely and the declarer must consider what he can do to overcome that distribution.

The solution is to draw just two rounds of trumps, then play on hearts. It may seem a little dangerous to leave a trump outstanding, but if you study the matter more closely you will

see that this line provides an extra chance and no additional risk. If the hearts are 4-2 you are not going to make the contract anyway. But there is a chance that the last trump will be in the same hand as the long heart. As the cards lie, South draws two trumps with the ace and queen, and then plays on hearts, ruffing the fourth round with dummy's king of spades.

Since there are always people who write to say 'Your analysis is wrong because…', we will make a small safety play of our own by adding that there is another line of play that may possibly succeed. Suppose that declarer, ignoring the play we have suggested, cashes ace of clubs, plays three rounds of trumps, finishing in dummy, and ruffs a club. Then he plays off the fifth trump. If East began with ♣KQ, or any six clubs plus four hearts, he will be squeezed. A good player would note this possibility but would reject it in favor of the play described above.

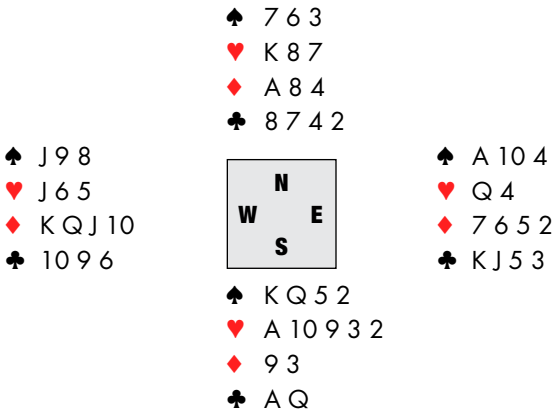
EXAMPLE 3

This type of hand is often a source of trouble in the bidding:

♠ K Q 5 2 ♥ A 10 9 3 2 ♦ 9 3 ♣ A Q

You open 1♥ and partner responds 1NT. Do you then rebid 2♥ or do you pass? Undoubtedly, the pass is correct, because partner has had an opportunity to respond 1♠ on a four-card suit and has not done so, and in any event, reversing into 2♠ would show a much better hand. Some players seek to escape this problem by employing the Flannery convention, but this brings its own headaches, including giving away too much information to the opponents.

When the deal below was played, South found a heart fit, but then failed to respect his partner's sign-off.



The bidding went:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	3♥	pass	4♥
all pass			

West led the king of diamonds and obviously prospects were poor. To make the contract, South would need the club finesse and he could afford to lose only one heart and one spade. He had to find East with ♠Axx, and for the club finesse and two leads up to ♠KQxx he would need three entries to the table. Only two were visible — the ace of diamonds and the king of hearts.

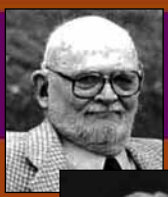
South created the extra entry by a maneuver similar to that used on Example 1. Having won the first trick with the ace of diamonds, he successfully finessed the queen of clubs, then led the ten of hearts and let it run to East's queen. When the defense played diamonds, South ruffed the third round with the nine of hearts, led a low heart and finessed the eight, which held. He played a spade to the king, entered dummy with the king of hearts, and led another spade to the queen. When the spades broke 3-3 he was able to claim the contract and was, no doubt, proud of his enterprise.

INTERMEDIATE

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.

Imaginative Cardplay is the second of these two books, and comprises the following titles from the original series: *Those Extra Chances in Bridge*; *Master the Odds in Bridge*; *Snares and Swindles in Bridge*; and *The Art of Defense 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.

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