

BRIDGE TECHNIQUE SERIES

ELIMINATIONS & THROW INS



David Bird • Marc Smith

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Bridge Technique Series

Entry Management
Tricks with Trumps
Safety Plays
Eliminations and Throw-Ins
Deceptive Card Play
Planning in Suit Contracts
Planning the Play in Notrump
Defensive Signaling
Squeezes for Everyone
Planning in Defense
Reading the Cards
Tricks with Finesses

Basics of Elimination Play

It is never to your advantage to make the first play in a suit — this is a fundamental fact of cardplay. You will always fare at least as well, usually better, if the opponents open the suit. Look at these typical holdings:

1. ♠ Q 7 6 2. ♥ J 10 63. ♣ 8 4 2

 ♠ J 8 5 ♥ A 5 2 ♣ K 6 3

If you have to play combination (1) yourself, the best chance is to lead towards one honor, then towards the other. Your main hope is that the ace and king are in the same hand. If the opponents open the suit instead, you are certain to score a trick.

Tackle position (2) yourself and the chance of two tricks is remote. When a defender has to make the first play, it soars to more than 75%. Indeed, if East has to make the first play and West has to return the suit, you are certain of two tricks.

Play combination (3) yourself and you are likely to score a trick only when East holds the ace. If instead you can force West to lead the suit, a trick is certain.

So, we're agreed. You would like the defenders to make the first play in your key suit — the one where you are worried about too many losers. How can you force them to do this? When you have plenty of trumps in both hands it can be quite easy. You throw the lead to a defender at a time when he cannot safely lead any suit but the one you want him to play. Let's see a full deal involving the diamond position shown in (1) above:

♠ 9 8 3	♠ Q 10 5 2				
♥ Q 8 6 4	♥ A 9 3				
♦ A 10 2	♦ Q 7 6				
♣ J 10 4	♣ 9 8 3				
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div>	N	W E	S	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ A K J 7 6	♠ 4			
	♥ K 5	♥ J 10 7 2			
	♦ J 8 5	♦ K 9 4 3			
	♣ A K 6	♣ Q 7 5 2			

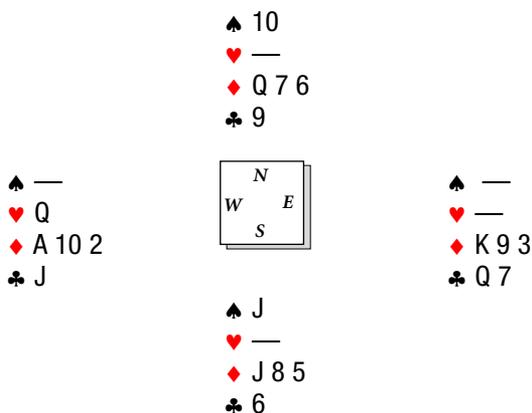
West leads a trump against 4♠ and you draw trumps. You have a certain loser in clubs and must therefore restrict your diamond losers to two. The best way of achieving this is to force the defenders to make the first play in diamonds.

What will happen if you play ace, king and a third club, immediately after drawing trumps? No good. The defender who wins will be able to exit safely in hearts, leaving you to open the diamond suit.

Before throwing the defenders on lead, you must remove the defenders' safe exit in the heart suit. Cash the ♥K, cross to the ♥A, and ruff a heart. You have 'eliminated' the heart suit — the defenders will not now be able to play a heart without conceding a ruff-and-discard.

Now you turn to the clubs. The third round of the suit not only

passes the lead to one of the defenders, it also eliminates the clubs from both your hand and the dummy. This will be the position:



When you exit with a club, it makes no difference which defender wins the trick. He will have to open the diamond suit or give you a ruff-and-discard (allowing you to ruff in one hand and throw a diamond from the other). You will lose just one club and two diamonds.

Note how important it was for you to have at least one trump in each hand when you threw the defenders on lead. If the ruff-and-discard element had not been present, they could have exited safely in one of the suits that you had eliminated.

Opportunities for ‘Elimination Play’, as it is called, are very frequent and will arise nearly every time you come to the table. Any time you spend in learning how to execute such plays, and how to defend against them, will be amply rewarded.

Key Points

1. Look for an elimination play when you have plenty of trumps in both hands. The aim is to force the defenders to make the first play in your key suit.
2. To perform an elimination play: draw trumps, eliminate the suits where the defenders can exit safely, then throw them in. They will have to lead your key suit or concede a ruff-and-discard.
3. For an elimination ending to succeed, you need at least one trump both in your hand and in the dummy.

INTERMEDIATE

The **Bridge Technique Series** is designed to take the reader through the most important aspects of card-play technique at bridge. Each book of the series focuses on a different topic, and wherever possible the tactics and strategy are considered from the point of view of both declarer and defenders.

ELIMINATIONS & THROW-INS

Eliminations and throw-ins constitute one of the fundamental weapons in declarer's armory. This book begins with basic types of the elimination play, and moves on to more complex topics such as loser-on-loser plays and partial eliminations. It also addresses how to anticipate and avoid throw-ins from the point of view of the defenders .



DAVID BIRD has written more than forty previous books, including the well-known 'St Titus Abbey' series, and several co-authored with Terence Reese. He writes two newspaper columns in the UK, and his work appears regularly in numerous bridge magazines in the UK and the US.



MARC SMITH's previous books include *Countdown to Winning Bridge* (1999, with Tim Bourke) and *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know* (1999 American Bridge Teachers Association Book of the Year, with Barbara Seagram). He is a regular contributor to a number of bridge magazines.



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