



End Plays

This is a general term for plays of the last few tricks by declarer to ensure maximum tricks. There are two common strategies: "eliminate and throw in" and "squeezes".

Squeezes

In a squeeze, the defence have potential winners in different suits. Declarer plays ("cashes") long, winning suits, forcing discards by the defence, until they must play guards or winners. Declarer leads the "over discarded" suit hopefully "dropping" (forcing the play of) the potential winner. These plays are hard on the memory, but it is always worth running long suits rather than conceding as the defence may get it wrong.



Eliminate and Throw in

Sometimes declarer finds he has a good run of tricks in three suits, but the fourth one is "frozen". A frozen suit typically has honours distributed across all four hands. Any pair leading that suit usually concedes a trick as the fourth player gets to win the trick or to have his/her honour promoted.

Declarer's winning strategy is often to cash in all the obvious winners, running the defence out of cards in those suits, and then give the defence a trick in a suit other than the frozen one, so that the defence are forced to lead the frozen suit.



In this example, the contract is 6♠, and the lead was K♦, obviously from KQ. Declarer takes the A♦, clears trumps, takes A♥, K♥ and ruffs the third heart in hand. Thus, Hearts and Trumps are “eliminated”. Declarer “throws” the defence in (forces them to take a trick and lead), by playing a Diamond. Defence is now forced to either give declarer a “ruff and discard” in a red suit or lead the frozen club suit. Job done.

Declarer

♠ A Q J 6 5 4

♥ A 3

♦ A 4

♣ K 10 9

Dummy

♠ K 8 7 3 2

♥ K 5 4

♦ 5 3

♣ A J 6



Look out for this type of situation – hearts are trumps, you can afford to lose only one more trick, the lead is in North (dummy) with these cards left.

♥ 8

♣ 4 3 2

♠ J

♣ K J 8

♠ 6

♣ 9 7 5

♥ 7

♣ A Q 10

Lead the ♣**2** and play the ♣**10** from hand. West can win but is forced to lead into your ♣**AQ** or give you a ruff and discard. This also works if you hold ♣**A Q 9**.

♥ 8

♣ 4 3 2

♠ J

♣ K J 8

♠ 6

♣ 10 7 5

♥ 7

♣ A Q 9

Lead the ♣**2** and play the ♣**9** from hand. If East plays the ♣**10** on the ♣**2**, cover with the ♣**Q** for a similar outcome.



Trump coups

An unkind trump split can sometimes be overcome with a 'trump coup'. These cards are left, the lead is in dummy, spades are trumps and you need all three tricks.

Dummy

♠ -

♥ Q

♦ K

♣ 4

♠ -

♥ 3

♦ J

♣ 6

♠ 10 8

♥ -

♦ -

♣ 5

Declarer

♠ J 9

♥ -

♦ -

♣ A

Lead a red suit winner from dummy; if East throws a club, declarer does likewise, if East ruffs, declarer overruffs.