

A Really Good Elimination Play

The most common method employed to gain an additional trick is elimination play. Usually the technique requires the declarer to 'eliminate' dangerous side suits, before exiting to one or the other defenders to force them into making an awkward return.

Example 1 Contract is 6S by E

W	E
♠ A 10 7 6 2	♠ K Q 9 8 4
♥ A 10 4 W E	♥ K 9 3
♦ A K 3	♦ Q 7 2
♣ 7 6	♣ A 4

South led the ♣K. The immediate reaction is that the contract is doomed, since declarer must lose a ♣ and, because of the duplicated shape of the two hands, he has no long card on which to park a losing ♥. There is one good chance, however. If the missing ♥ honours are divided, then it is possible to force one or the other defender into the awkward position of either having to lead away from their ♥ honour or concede a crucial ruff and discard. Because of the valuable pips in the ♥ suit you will be able to finesse each of your opponents in turn, provided an opponent first leads the suit. Therefore you must draw all the outstanding trumps and cash three rounds of ♦s, eliminating the danger of either opponent being able to make a safe return in these suits. Now you can simply exit with a ♣ and whoever wins the trick is end-played, assuming the ♥ honours are divided. If not, you cannot make the contract anyway, since whoever holds the two ♥ honours will be sure to duck the second ♣.

See full hand on next page

North ♠ 3
 ♥ J 8 7 2
 ♦ 10 9 4
 ♣ J 9 8 5 2

W	♠ A 10 7 6 2	E	♠ K Q 9 8 4
	♥ A 10 4		♥ K 9 3
	♦ A K 3		♦ Q 7 2
	♣ 7 6		♣ A 4

S ♠ J 5
 ♥ Q 6 5
 ♦ J 9 6 5
 ♣ K Q 10 3

Note that the best chance for the defence is for whoever wins the second ♣ trick to exit with their ♥ honour! This might seem to be an odd play, but at least you will have awakened the suspicion in declarer's mind that the honours are held in the same hand and there is now a chance that he will guess wrong. The opening lead is frequently the determining factor in the decision to attempt the elimination play.