

## End Plays Strip and Throw-In

by Ed Rawlinson

Consider the following declarer-dummy holdings:

A. Kxx      B. 10xx      C. xxx      D. AJx

Jxx                  AJx                  Kxx                  K10x

In example A, you may take no tricks if the A and Q are unfavorably located. In example B, if the suit splits 4-3 with at least one honor offside, you can only win 1 trick against proper defense. In example C, if the Ace is offside (with at least 2 other cards in the suit), you have no winners. In example D, you have only 2 sure winners.

However, there is one circumstance which will guarantee you an extra trick in each case. That is to **force the opponent to lead the suit for you**. (In example C, the lead must come from West.)

Consider the following hand, played by South in 4♠:

♠-AKXX  
♥-Axx  
♦-xx  
♣-Kxxx  
  
♠-QJxx  
♥-Kxx  
♦-xx  
♣-AQJx

As long as spades are not 5-0, you have 10 tricks and no hope of winning an overtrick. However, EW are beginners, and West leads the ♦A, K, and Q. This allows you to discard (or **sluff**) a heart from dummy, while **ruffing** in your hand. The **ruff & sluff** given to you by your opponents allowed you to avoid a sure loser in hearts. Your opponents will rarely be so generous, but there are certain hands where you can **force the opponents to give you a ruff & sluff**.

Consider a similar hand (see below), played by South in 6♠ with the ♦K lead. You win the ♦A and pull trumps in 3 rounds. It seems that you have

♠-AKXX  
♥-AJx  
♦-Ax  
♣-Kxxx  
  
♠-QJxx  
♥-K10x  
♦-Jx  
♣-AQJx

a diamond loser and a possible heart loser. However, you can execute a **strip and throw-in end play** to eliminate the heart loser. You will throw West in with a diamond, **forcing** him to give you a ruff & sluff or to lead hearts for you. After pulling trumps (they were 3-2), you cash your clubs winners (**stripping** the NS hands of clubs and **stripping** West of clubs to exit with). Now you **throw** West **in** with the diamond. Now he must either lead a diamond, which you **ruff** and **sluff** your heart loser, or he must lead a heart for you.

This example was provided to illustrate the terms strip & throw-in. The accompanying sample hands provide numerous examples of this type of end play.

## End Plays: Strip & Throw-In Sample Hands

<p>1.</p> <p>♠-AKxx ♥-Ax ♦-AKJx ♣-Kxx</p> <p>♠-QJxx ♥-xx ♦-Qxxx ♣-AJ10</p> <p>Contract: 6♠ Opening Lead: ♥K</p>	<p>You have one heart loser and a possible club loser. There is no need to guess which way to finesse clubs. You can make the opponents solve the problem for you if spades are 3-2. Pull trumps in 3 rounds. Cash 4 rounds of diamonds (“stripping” your hands of diamonds). Now throw the opponents in with a heart. They must either lead clubs for you or lead a red suit, allowing you to ruff in one hand and sluff a club in the other hand (ruff &amp; sluff).</p>
<p>2.</p> <p>♠-Jx ♥-KQxx ♦-xxx ♣-AJxx</p> <p>♠-Ax ♥-Axxx ♦-Kxx ♣-KQxx</p> <p>Contract: 4♥ Opening Lead: ♠K</p>	<p>You have one spade loser and 3 possible diamond losers, if the ♦A is offside. There is a better play (in fact, a guarantee of success) than hoping the ♦A is onside, if hearts are 3-2. Pull trumps in 3 rounds, cash 4 rounds of clubs (stripping your hands of clubs). Then throw West in with a spade (assume West led the ♠K from KQ). West now must lead diamonds for you or give you a ruff &amp; sluff.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>♠-xx ♥-KQ109x ♦-xxx ♣-AJx</p> <p>♠-A10x ♥-AJxx ♦-Kxxx ♣-Kx</p> <p>Contract: 4♥ Opening Lead: ♠K</p>	<p>After West opens 1♠, NS get to 4♥. You have one spade loser and 3 likely diamond losers. If West has KQJ of spades, you may be able to end play him (strip &amp; throw-in), depending on the heart and spade splits. Duck the first spade and win the second. Pull 2 rounds of trumps (we will assume they are 2-2 or that West has one). Now strip the clubs (win the K, then the A, then ruff the third round). Now lead the ♠10, <b>but don’t ruff it</b>. Instead, throw a losing diamond (“loser-on-loser”). Now West must lead diamonds for you or give you a ruff &amp; sluff). Note that if East had 3 trumps, you cannot pull his last trump, because you wouldn’t have any trumps left in the South hand when you throw West in. Both declarer and dummy must have a trump in order for a ruff &amp; sluff to work.</p>

<p>4.</p> <p>♠-xx ♥-KQxx ♦-Kxx ♣-AJxx</p> <p>♠-Ax ♥-Axxx ♦-Jxx ♣-KQxx</p> <p>Contract: 4♥ Opening Lead: ♠K</p>	<p>You have one spade loser and 3 possible diamond losers, if the ♦A and ♦Q are offside <b>and you lead them</b>. However, if either opponent leads diamonds, they will allow you to establish a diamond trick, regardless of where their diamond honors are. (Just play “second hand low” on their first diamond lead). You can force the opponents to lead diamonds for you (or give you a ruff &amp; sluff) by executing a “strip &amp; throw-in” just as in hand #2. Pull 3 rounds of trumps, cash the clubs and throw them in with a spade. It makes no difference which one wins the trick. They are end played.</p>
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<p>5.</p> <p>♠-AQ107 ♥-QJ82 ♦-AQ ♣- KJ7</p> <p>♠-K86 ♥-AK1097 ♦-108 ♣-A85</p> <p>Contract: 6H      OL: H3 From “Aces on Bridge” by Bobby Wolff</p>	<p>You have 11 tricks and multiple chances for a twelvth (spades split 3-3, ♠J falls, diamond finesse, club finesse, spade finesse). It’s possible that all of these will fail. However, there’s a 100% line of play. Pull trumps (even if they are 4-0); cash the ♠A &amp; ♠K; and lead a spade to dummy. If West follows, play the 10. If East wins, he will have to lead a minor into your tenaces in dummy. If West shows out on the third round of spades, win the ♠Q, throw East in with the ♠10, discarding a diamond. Again, East will have to lead into your tenaces in dummy. This line will also work if East has Jxxxx of spades, as long as trumps were not 4-0. After East wins the ♠10, he must lead a minor for you or give you a ruff and sluff.</p>
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<p>6.</p> <p>♠-A954 ♥-J93 ♦-Q4 ♣-A1064</p> <p>♠-QJ1087 ♥-1054 ♦-AK6 ♣-Q2</p> <p>W   N   E   S P   P   P   1♠ X   2N* P   3♠</p> <p>All Pass *Limit raise in spades</p> <p>West cashes the A-K-Q of hearts and switches to the ♦J.</p>	<p>The bidding provides the roadmap for this hand. West, a passed hand, reveals 10 pts. on the first 4 tricks. He can not have either black king. South could try to drop the spade king offside, but the right line works when East has either the stiff K or Kx of spades. South should win the ♦Q; cash the ♠A, ♦A, and ♦K; and lead a spade. If East started with Kx, he is endplayed. He must either lead away from the ♣K (South confidently plays the Q) or give South a ruff and sluff.</p> <p>From “Thinking Bridge” by Eddie Kantar</p>
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7.	♠-K1043 ♥-K43 ♦-A3 ♣-AK65  ♠-AQJ2 ♥-AQ2 ♦-J2 ♣-Q432	S W N E 1N 3♦ X* P 3♠ P 4N P 5♠**P 6♠ All Pass *Negative **2 Key cards +♠Q  OL: ♦K	You win the ♦A and pull trumps in 3 rounds. As long as clubs are 3-2, you have 12 tricks. However, you cash the ♣AK and West shows out on the second round. No problema! Cash your heart winners, and throw west in with a diamond. He will have nothing left but red cards and must give you a ruff & sluff.
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8.	♠-AQ32 ♥-432 ♦-K2 ♣-J432  ♠-KJ54 ♥-QJ5 ♦-AQ4 ♣-A65	Contract:4♠ by South OL: ♥6 to East's A; ♥9 returned to West's King. ♥7 to South's Queen (East follows). You pull trumps in 3 rounds (West discards the last heart).	Your chances are not good. You will need a favorable club position. One option is to strip the NS hands of diamonds and lead a low club toward the Jack, hoping West has both honors. West would then have to lead away from his remaining honor or give you a ruff & sluff. However, if West started with ♣KQ, he might have led the ♣K rather than his actual heart lead. A better option is to play clubs to be 4-2 with split honors. You can play ♣A and then a small club, and the hand with the doubleton honor will have to give you a ruff & sluff on the next lead. If the doubleton honor is with East, there is nothing the defense can do to prevent the endplay. However, if West has the doubleton honor, he can thwart the endplay by unblocking his honor under your Ace. You can make your plans less obvious to the defense if you cash the ♣A early (before stripping out the diamonds). The best line would be to win the third trump in dummy and lead a low club to the A. If no honor appears, cash the diamonds, lead a club and hope for the desired distribution.
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<p>9.    ♠-K                    S   W   N   E        ♡-A105432    1♥ X XX 2♦        ♦-AK                P   P   4N P        ♣-J632            5♥ P 6♥ P                                P   P</p> <p>      ♠-AJ105        ♡-J9876            OL: ♥K; East        ♦-                    discards a diamond.        ♣-AQ74</p> <p>From Spotlight on Card Play by Robert Darvas &amp; Paul Lukacs</p>	<p>West is a heavy favorite to hold the ♠Q and the ♣K. You could win both diamonds (discarding clubs); cash the ♠K; and throw West in with a heart. However, he can simply exit with a spade, and you still will have a club loser. It's tempting to automatically discard two clubs on the ♦AK, but you can also get two club discards on spade winners (with a ruffing finesse). This allows you to strip the NS hands of both spades and diamonds before throwing West in with a heart. So: win the ♥A; cash the ♠K, ruff a diamond; cash the ♠A (pitching a club); lead the ♠J (West covers and you ruff; ruff a diamond; cash ♠10 (pitching a club); throw West in with a heart. West must either give you a ruff &amp; sluff (getting rid of a third club in dummy) or lead a club back into your AQ. The hand would have been easier to play if dummy had had two low diamonds.</p>
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