

Advanced Declarer Play

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Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

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I will tell partners to avoid ruffing in the long trump hand. It is something the defenders want to do and it is called a forcing defense. Defenders will try to tap the declarer and the declarer should avoid tapping themselves. They are likely to lose control of the hand which is the purpose of having a trump suit in the first place.

But what are the situations where it is correct to ruff in the long hand:

1. **Huge** trump fit
2. **Transportation** is needed
 - It is better style to plan ahead and use entries wisely than it is to shorten your trump holding.
3. **Cross Ruff**

The keys to a cross-ruff are the following:

- Opponents cannot over-ruff.
- Cash your side-suit winners first.
 - Opponents will have their trump at the end and would have discarded all of their side suits.

Example



- Q♦ was led against 6♠ by South
- Do not draw a single trump.
- Cash Ace and King of diamonds, the side-suit winners.
- Cross ruff hearts and clubs.
- South will win AK♦, A♥, A♣, 4 heart ruffs, 4 club ruffs and the 9♠ to make 6♠+1 for 1010.
- On a trump lead, South will win A♠, AK♦, A♥, A♣, 3 heart ruffs, and 4 club ruffs to make 6♠= for 980.

4. Dummy Reversal

The conditions key to a dummy reversal are the following:

- You have the high trump in dummy
- You have a singleton in declarer's hand
- You have a loser in declarer's hand to get rid of.
- The trump split.
- You have enough dummy entries (three or more)

Example



Q♦ was led against 6♠.

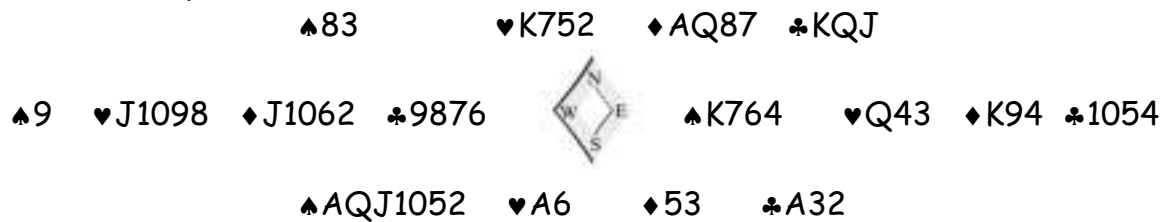
- Win A♦.
- Too Dangerous to use clubs for entries twice.
- Ruff a heart with A♠
- Play 7♠ to J♠
- Ruff a heart with K♠
- Play 8♠ to 10♠
- Ruff a heart with Q♠
- Play a small club to the Queen♣
- Draw last trump with 9♠, discarding a diamond from the hand.
- Claim as hand contains just good clubs making 6♠+1 for 1460.
- If trump are not 3-2, this will not work and you go down in a cold 6♠ trying for 7♠.
- If you have enough side suit entries to dummy, you must test trump for two rounds. If trump are 4-1, do not reverse the dummy.
- Here, there was not enough side entries so trump was needed for transportation.

5. Trump Coup

The conditions key to a trump coup are the following:

- Trump split badly so you need another trump finesse but do not have either any more trump in dummy.
- You can shorten your trump to the same length as the opponent.

Example:



J♥ was led against 6♠. You win the King♥ and take a trump finesse which holds. You go back to dummy on the K♣ and take the finesse again and West shows out. You cash the Ace♥ and Ace♣ and go to dummy on the Jack♣. It holds and you breathe a sigh of relief. You ruff a heart. You play to the Ace♦ and ruff the last heart. East discards a diamond. If he ruffs, you over-ruff and draw trump. He does not and the hands look like this:



Now exit the 3♦. Whether East or West wins, the opponents give you one more trump finesse. You make 6♠. If you take the diamond finesse, it loses and East exits a diamond. The hands look like this:



The trump coup does not work.

6. Trump Squeeze

The conditions key to a squeeze are the following:

- You are one trick short of your contract.
- The count is rectified
 - Lose every single loser except one.
 - The last loser will disappear with the squeeze.
- An opponent is guarding two key suits.
- Trump are drawn.
- Cash all trump and make an opponent who is guarding two suits, relinquish a winner in one of the suits.

Example:


♠83	♥Q652	♦AQ78	♣QJ10					
♠94	♥J1098	♦---	♣K987654		♠J10	♥74	♦KJ109652	♣32
♠AKQ7652	♥AK3	♦43	♣A					

J♥ was led against 7NT. You never lead a suit with nontouching middle honours, kings or queens.

Declarer wins the ace of hearts and counts 12 tricks. He needs the diamond finesse or hearts to break 3-3 (unlikely with the lead) or West to have four hearts and the King of clubs. It would be nice to test hearts before the diamond finesse but the queen of hearts is needed as an entry to the queen of clubs.

Declarer cashes the A♣ and AK♥ and plays a small diamond to the Ace seeing the bad split in diamonds, he runs his spades.

On the last spade, the hands look like the following:

♠	♥Q6	♦	♣Q					
♠	♥109	♦---	♣K		♠	♥	♦KJ	♣3
♠2	♥3	♦3	♣					

West must discard before dummy. If West discards a heart, the queen of clubs is discarded and if West discards the K♣, a small heart is discarded from dummy.

7. Elimination and End Play

Eliminating or stripping the hand means eliminating all safe exit cards from a defender's hand so he either has to lead the suit you want him to lead or he gives you a sluff and a ruff.

Example:

6♠ is guaranteed with an elimination and end play.

Q♥ was led against 6♠. Win the ace and cash the ace and king of trump.

♠A1097 ♥A2 ♦AK32 ♣K105



♠KJ82 ♥K3 ♦QJ54 ♣AJ3

Finish stripping the hand by cashing the king♥ first and then the four diamonds.

♠109 ♥♦ ♣K105



♠J8 ♥♦ ♣AJ3

If the opponent ruffs a diamond with the Queen, he is end played. If he holds up with the Queen♠, throw him in with a spade. Whoever wins the Queen♠ must play clubs or give a sluff and a ruff. 6♠ makes no matter what, a 100% chance. However, if one can guess spades and clubs correctly, a 25% chance, one can make 7♠. With guessing, there is a 50% chance to make 6♠ and a 25% chance to go down. With no chance to make 7♠, I will take the 100% chance to make 6♠.

8. Playing 3NT with a Major fit

With a five-three major fit, 3NT is better than 4M if all suits are doubly stopped and either of the following is true:

- the hand with the three trump has no shortness.
- the hand with the three trump has a shortness in partner's second suit.

With oodles of points, play 3NT.

With a four-four major fit, one likely needs 33 points to make 6 and with a five-three fit, one likely needs a little less than 33 to make 6. However, if one is between a good 28 and 32 points, it is usually best to play Notrump.

Furthermore, with a four-four major fit, 3NT is better if all suits are doubly stopped but since either hand can be made to draw trump and either hand can be made to ruff, one of the following must be true:

- either hand has no shortness.
- both hands have the identical shortness, doubletons.
- if one hand has shortness, the other hand has values in it.

With a four-four major fit, one can see that it is much more difficult to determine whether 3NT makes more than 4M. For that reason, most players will not try 3NT with a four-four or five-four major fit unless they have oodles of points.

Example 1. No shortness in both hands.

♠A1097 ♥A32 ♦K103 ♣K65



♠K862 ♥K54 ♦QJ54 ♣A73

Example 2. Shortness opposite values in both hands.

♠A1097 ♥32 ♦KJ103 ♣K65

♠QJ3 ♥A876 ♦Q987 ♣QJ



♠54 ♥Q54 ♦A65 ♣109842

♠K862 ♥KJ109 ♦42 ♣A73

Example 3. Shortness (doubletons) is the same in both hands.

♠A1097 ♥A2 ♦K1032 ♣K65



♠K862 ♥K3 ♦QJ54 ♣A73

Example 4. Oodles of points.

♠A1097 ♥A2 ♦AK1032 ♣K5



♠K862 ♥K3 ♦QJ54 ♣A73

This has 31 points and makes 680 or 690 if vulnerable. 3NT is better than 4♠.

Note how the point requirement for a slam decreases with the following:

- a long suit
- a double Golden fit

In examples 1 through 4, 3NT is better than 4♠. In 1 through 3, one can get 420 in 4♠ or 430 in 3NT if not vulnerable.