

<b>DECLARER PLAY</b>
<b>THE ENDPLAY</b> Card Combinations

# Bridge Lab

with the Monroes

**The Endplay.** Certain suit combinations are dependent on a successful finesse to maximize winning tricks and involve an uncertain guess on the specific location of missing cards. The odds for success improve to 100% with certain suit combinations when the suit is led by an opponent. Consider the opportunity for an endplay - get the defenders to lead the suit and eliminate the guesswork.

In order to execute an endplay, two components are needed:

- ✓ A losing trick to concede the lead – Declarer’s “exit” card.
- ✓ One or more losing tricks in the identified suit.

**Make a Plan Before playing a card at trick one.** Count tricks and manage losers. Evaluate trick options suit-by-suit and identify the opportunity for an Endplay. Timing is everything!

## Execute the Endplay

Determine whether it would be helpful for a defender to lead a certain suit, then:

1. Identify an “exit” card to be used to intentionally lose a trick and concede the lead to a defender at the right time to help with the opportunity suit.
2. Strip the hand leaving only the opportunity suit for defender(s) to return.
  - ✓ In a suit contract, draw trump, but leave a trump in both Declarer and Dummy hands to take advantage of a ruff and sluff.
  - ✓ Eliminate side suits -- aka the “Strip” - to remove defenders’ options.
3. Play the exit card to put a defender on lead, with no option other than to lead a suit to benefit Declarer.

SUIT COMBINATIONS BETTER LED BY A DEFENDER					
DUMMY	5 3	A Q	K 10 3	Q 5 3	Q 9 3
DECLARER	K X	5 3	A J 4	J 4 2	K 10 2
ENDPLAY	LHO	RHO	EITHER	EITHER	EITHER
# TRICKS 100%	ONE	TWO	THREE	ONE	TWO

## THE ENDPLAY

South Deals

	♠ A 9		
	♥ A Q 10 7 4		
	♦ A J 7		
	♣ K Q 10		
♠ J 10 3 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ K 8 7 6 5	
♥ J 3		♥ 2	
♦ 5 4 2		♦ Q 9 8 3	
♣ J 9 8 7		♣ 6 3 2	
	♠ Q 4		
	♥ K 9 8 6 5		
	♦ K 10 6		
	♣ A 5 4		

20  
3 5  
12

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	4 N <sup>1</sup>	Pass	5 ♦ <sup>2</sup>
Pass	5 N <sup>3</sup>	Pass	6 ♥ <sup>4</sup>

All pass

1. With first or second round control in all suits and values for slam, the only information needed is number of aces and kings.
2. One ace.
3. With all four aces and interest in a grand slam, ask for number of kings.
4. Two kings. Sign off in six hearts missing one king.

**CONTRACT:** 6 ♥ by South  
**TRICKS NEEDED:** 12

**OPENING LEAD:** ♠ J, top of two-card honor sequence  
**LOSING TRICKS:** One ♠, One ♦ Eliminate one loser

**Is there a suit best led by Opponents for maximum tricks?** The ♦ suit is missing the ♦ Q, and all three ♦ tricks are needed. There is a two-way 50/50 finesse to guess if Declarer leads ♦s. If the either Opponent leads ♦s, three ♦ tricks are 100%.

**Declarer's Exit Card.** Based on the opening lead, East likely holds the ♠ K and with only two ♠s, there is no point in ducking the first trick. Declarer identifies the ♠ Q as the exit card to play when Declarer is ready to lose the trick and force the defense to lead ♦s.

**Declarer's Plan.** Win the ♠ A, then draw two rounds of trump when the ♥ suit divides 2-1. Take the three ♣ winning tricks to strip the ♣ suit from both Dummy and Declarer's hands. Then play the ♠ Q to exit from the lead, and force East to lead ♦s. If East chooses to lead a ♠ instead of a ♦, "ruff" the ♠ in one hand and "sluff" a ♦ loser from the other hand.

**Mirror Hands.** Declarer and Dummy have "mirror" hands -- an equal number of cards in each suit between the two hands. With this distribution, there is no short suit to ruff in Dummy and no long suit to discard losers.

**Defense.** Against a slam contract, make a passive lead. An honor sequence is best.

## The Endplay

### 2-Way Finesse in ♥s

**Board 1**  
South Deals

	♠ J 9 7 6		
	♥ K J 7 4		
	♦ J 5 4		
	♣ Q 3		
♠ 8 2	N	♠ 3	
♥ Q 9 2	W	♥ 8 6 3	
♦ 8 7 6 3	E	♦ Q 10 9 2	
♣ J 10 9 4	S	♣ K 8 7 5 2	
		♠ A K Q 10 5 4	
		♥ A 10 5	
		♦ A K	
		♣ A 6	

8			
3 5			
24			
West	North	East	South
			2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 N
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	5 N
Pass	6 ♦	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

**Contract:** 6 ♠ South, 12 Tricks  
**Lead:** ♣ J, Passive, Top of sequence  
**Losers:** 1-♥, 1-♣ = 2.

**Play:** After drawing trump and stripping ♦s and ♠s, exit with the ♣6 to endplay either opponent. A ♥ lead, gives South 3 tricks, any other suit gives a ruff and sluff.

### Unsupported ♥K

**Board 2**  
South Deals

	♠ K 10 6 5		
	♥ 6 5 4		
	♦ A 6		
	♣ A 9 6 5		
♠ 8 2	N	♠ J 7 4	
♥ A 8 2	W	♥ Q J 10 7	
♦ K Q 10 5	E	♦ 8 7 4 3 2	
♣ 10 8 3 2	S	♣ 7	
		♠ A Q 9 3	
		♥ K 9 3	
		♦ J 9	
		♣ K Q J 4	

11			
9 4			
16			
West	North	East	South
			1 N
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

**Contract:** 4 ♠ South, 10 Tricks  
**Lead:** ♦ K, Top of seq., East plays ♦ 2.  
**Losers:** 1-♠, 3-♥, 1-♦ = 5.

**Play:** South wins the ♦ A, draws trump, strips ♣s, and exits with the ♦ J to endplay West who showed the ♦ Q on the opening lead. West must give a sluff and ruff in ♦s, or a free finesse to South's ♥ K.

### ♠ Qxx - Opposite - ♠ Jxx

**Board 3**  
South Deals

	♠ Q 5 4		
	♥ Q 10 5 2		
	♦ A Q 7 5		
	♣ A 5		
♠ A 9 8 3	N	♠ K 10 7	
♥ 9 8 4	W	♥ 7	
♦ 8 4	E	♦ J 10 6 2	
♣ 10 9 4 3	S	♣ K 8 7 6 2	
		♠ J 6 2	
		♥ A K J 6 3	
		♦ K 9 3	
		♣ Q J	

14			
4 7			
15			
West	North	East	South
			1 N
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	

**Contract:** 4 ♥ South, 10 Tricks  
**Lead:** ♣ 10, Passive, East plays ♣ 8  
**Losers:** 3-♠, 1-♣ = 4.

**Play:** South wins the ♣ A, draws trump, wins the ♦ AKQ, ruffs a ♦, and exits to either opponent in ♣s. By playing 2nd hand low, South wins one ♠ trick.

### ♠ AQ10 Double Finesse

**Board 4**  
South Deals

	♠ 6 3 2		
	♥ K J 7 4		
	♦ A 9		
	♣ K Q 7 4		
♠ K J 7 5	N	♠ 9 8 4	
♥ 5	W	♥ 9 3 2	
♦ J 10 5 4 3 2	E	♦ Q 8 7	
♣ 10 2	S	♣ J 9 8 3	
		♠ A Q 10	
		♥ A Q 10 8 6	
		♦ K 6	
		♣ A 6 5	

13			
5 3			
19			
West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	2 N	Pass	4 N
Pass	5 ♦	Pass	6 ♥
All pass			

**Contract:** 6 ♥ South, 12 Tricks  
**Lead:** ♦ J, Passive, East plays the ♦ 8  
**Losers:** 2-♠ = 2.

**Play:** South wins the ♦ K, Draws trump, wins the ♣ AKQ, ruffs a ♣, and wins the ♦ A. With ♣s and ♦s stripped, a ♠ is led toward the ♠ AQ10. West wins but is endplayed.

# The Endplay

Larry Cohen's Endplay Quiz

## Finesse the ♠ J

**Board 5**  
South Deals

	♠ K 10 5		
	♥ A J 8 5		
	♦ K 6		
	♣ 8 6 5 4		
♠ 8 6 3	N	♠ A J 7 2	
♥ 9 7 3	W	♥ 4 2	
♦ Q 10 9 3	E	♦ J 8 5 4 2	
♣ K Q 9	S	♣ J 10	
	♠ Q 9 4		
11	♥ K Q 10 6		
7 7	♦ A 7		
15	♣ A 7 3 2		
West	North	East	South
			1 N
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	

**Contract:** 4 ♥ South, 10 Tricks  
**Lead:** ♣ K, 2-card seq., East plays ♣ J  
**Losers:** 2-♠, 3-♣ = 5.

**Play:** South wins the ♣ A, Draws trump, wins the ♦ AK, and exits with a ♣ to either opponent. Eventually the opponents lead ♠s, giving a free finesse. South wins the 4th ♣.