

THROW-IN PLAY

A “throw-in” play is another term for an end play. It involves “throwing an opponent in”—giving an opponent the lead—at a time when whatever that opponent does will be helpful to you.

Throw-ins are most effective in trump contracts when you still have at least one trump in both your hand and in dummy at the time you throw the opponent in. Generally, a throw-in forces an opponent to “break” a suit for you or to give you a ruff-and-sluff (trumping in one hand and discarding in the other hand if an opponent leads a suit in which neither you nor dummy has any cards). In order for a throw-in to be effective, you must first eliminate any potential safe exit cards from the opponents’ hands. This is called “stripping” the hand. When stripping two suits, **eliminate the shorter suit first**. (That way, if an opponent ruffs the longer suit, s/he will still be end-played.)

After you eliminate safe exit cards, you usually throw the opponents in with a suit which is equally divided in your hand and in dummy. (For example Axx opposite xxx is a good throw-in suit. Strip the hand and then cash Ace and a low card. After the opponents take 2 tricks, they’ll have to do something good for you.) **When you have two equally-divided suits, use the weaker one as the throw in to force opponents to lead the stronger one for you.**

As Declarer, **there are a number of card combinations that you would prefer to have the opponents play first**. Look for throw-in plays with these combinations:

Jxx opposite Qxx

AJx opp K10x

AJx opp K9x

A10x opp K9x

A9x opp Q8x

A10x opp Jxx

Qxx opp K109

Q9x opposite K8x

Jxx opposite Kxx

Sometimes it is possible to throw in one particular opponent. For example, when you have combinations such as Ax opposite Jx and one opponent leads the King (promising queen), you know who will take the lead if you take the Ace, eliminate safe exit cards, and then throw in a specific opponent with the Jack. Look for throw-in possibilities rather than risking a finesse whenever possible. For example, with Kx opposite xxx in dummy, try to throw in LHO. If the Kx is in dummy, try to throw in RHO. When you have multiple tenaces (or more than one possible finesse), take the finesse that will give you the best results if it loses. For example, if you have pulled trumps (spades) and have x VOID AQ AQ10 opposite xx VOID xx xx, play a club to the 10. Even if it loses, RHO will be end-played. If you try the diamond finesse, RHO has a safe exit in diamonds.

Sometimes you can **throw an opponent in with a trump-suit winner**. Sometimes, you can throw an opponent in with a 3rd suit (after stripping 2 suits) in order to force a trump lead (and possibly avoid a trump loser with holdings such as K10x opposite A98x).

Loser-on-loser plays are classic throw-in plays. If, for example, dummy has x VOID AKQx xxx remaining and you have xx VOID xxx AQx and spades are trump (and opponents have no trumps). Cash top 3 diamonds. If diamonds are 3-3, discard a club on 13th diamond and take club finesse. If

diamonds are 4-2 and LHO has 4th diamond, discard a club on 4th diamond and LHO must give you a ruff-and-sluff or lead into your AQ of clubs.