

The Dentist's Coup

The Dentist's Coup is the "extraction" of a safe exit card from an opponent's hand; the removal of a card which would allow an opponent a safe play.

East Deals
N-S Vul

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| ♠ K J 5 | ♠ Q 8 3 2 | ♠ — |
| ♥ J | ♥ 4 3 2 | ♥ K 10 9 8 7 6 |
| ♦ K 10 5 4 | ♦ J 7 6 | ♦ A 9 8 3 2 |
| ♣ J 10 9 7 5 | ♣ A K 2 | ♣ 6 4 |

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|--------|
| N |
| W E |
| S |

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| ♠ A 10 9 7 6 4 | ♠ A 10 9 7 6 4 |
| ♥ A Q 5 | ♥ A Q 5 |
| ♦ Q | ♦ Q |
| ♣ Q 8 3 | ♣ Q 8 3 |

4 ♠ by South
Lead: ♥ J

Declarer wins the ♥Q and lays down the ace of trumps; bad news. If he plays a second trump, West will take it and lead a diamond to East's ace. East can switch to the ♥K and declarer will lose two more tricks. Instead, declarer should take three rounds of clubs before playing a second spade. Now when East leads a heart, declarer covers; if West ruffs the ♥A, he will either have to set up ♦J for a heart pitch or give declarer a ruff and sluff.

Another example:

South Deals
None Vul

| | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| ♠ J 6 3 | ♠ A Q 5 4 | ♠ K 9 2 |
| ♥ Q J 10 8 | ♥ K 6 3 | ♥ 7 5 2 |
| ♦ 10 6 | ♦ K 7 | ♦ J 9 3 2 |
| ♣ 9 5 3 2 | ♣ A J 7 6 | ♣ Q 10 8 |

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|--------|
| N |
| W E |
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|-------------|-------------|
| ♠ 10 8 7 | ♠ 10 8 7 |
| ♥ A 9 4 | ♥ A 9 4 |
| ♦ A Q 8 5 4 | ♦ A Q 8 5 4 |
| ♣ K 4 | ♣ K 4 |

3 NT by South
Lead: ♥ Q

Declarer starts the elimination play right away, ducking the opening lead. Dummy's ♥K takes the second trick. Declarer cashes the ♦K, ♦A and ♦Q, as well as the ♥A (a Dentist's Coup, extracting East's last exit card), before throwing him in with the fourth diamond and getting a free black-suit finesse.

The Dentist's Coup

Another example:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| South Deals Both Vul | ♠ K Q ♥ J 10 2 ♦ K J 9 3 ♣ A K 9 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ A J 10 9 4 ♥ A 9 8 6 ♦ 7 ♣ 8 5 4 | <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ 8 7 6 5 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 8 5 4 2 ♣ Q 7 2 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ 3 ♥ K Q 7 5 3 ♦ A Q 10 6 ♣ J 10 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 ♥ by South Lead: ♠ A | | | | | | | | | | | |

West switches to his singleton diamond at trick two and withholds his ♥A when declarer plays two rounds of trumps. If a third trump is played, West wins this and plays a club, putting declarer back on the table with no good continuation. Instead, therefore, declarer cashes the ♣AK. Then, and only then, does he play the third round of hearts. Declarer can now win any return in hand and draw the last trump.