

When you see AQ9, think “endplay”.

This chestnut is quite correct. If you can eliminate all the other suits except this one and the missing trumps in our hands, watch what happens:-

♠AQ9

♥x

♠xxx

♥x

These are your last four cards where hearts are trumps. Lead a small spade from South.

If West plays low, insert the 9. East may win the trick cheaply but will have no exit card. A spade will be straight back to the AQ. A minor suit return will provide a ruff and discard.

Suppose West is awake and inserts the T or J. Now, you cover this card with the Q. East may take the Queen with his King but is fixed with the same unpalatable exit – back into the A9 or ruff and discard.

Similar reasoning can be applied to KJ8 when the Ace has been taken earlier.