

Esther Discusses (1) "When Are 'Squeeze Endplays' Most Likely Do-able and (2) What Is a 'Repeating Squeeze Endplay?'"

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>

Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through "**When Are 'Squeeze Endplays' Most Likely Do-able and (2) What Is a 'Repeating Squeeze Endplay?'**". Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking the time to be with us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther, because I am such a "warm and caring" person!

Bruce: Errr, well, in any case, Esther, at the start would you please briefly remind us what a "**Squeeze Endplay**" is?

Esther: Well, my *inquisitive interlocutor*, I will certainly try to help you. My first lesson on the "Squeeze Endplay" was my "Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson #67: **Esther Discusses "How as Declarer to Execute an Endplay 'Squeeze'":**

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/squeeze.pdf>

A "**Squeeze Endplay**" involves the Declarer "rectifying the card count" such that 1 or both Opponents toward the end of play of the bridge Board is/are forced to make discard decisions favorable to the Declarer involving

© Copyright, Bruce Thompson, 2026. All rights reserved.

¹ As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by **Bruce Thompson**.

discarding a "control card" (a "winner") or discarding a needed "guard card" protecting a "winner" (e.g., K, 5). Often you are squeezing Opponent(s) in **2** Suits. Occasionally you may be "squeezing" Opponents in **3** Suits.

There are numerous *variations* of the "**Squeeze Endplay**" such as:

1. the "**2-Opponent Squeeze Endplay**":
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0324_q.pdf
2. the "**3-Suit Squeeze Endplay**":
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0322_q.pdf
3. the "**Entry-Shifting Squeeze Endplay**":
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0320_q.pdf
4. the "**Compound Squeeze Endplay**" in which 2 Opponents are "squeezed" both in 2 different Suits:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0301_q.pdf

For a short discussion of when and by whom "**Squeeze Endplays**" were first popularized in bridge see Esther's "**A Brief History of Duplicate Bridge**":

https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/br_hist.pdf

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... Are you actually being *nice* to me?

Esther: Well, my *studious salamander*, of course I am being "nice" to you! Why wouldn't I be "nice" to you?

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... To make your discussion of the "**Repeating Squeeze Endplay**" concrete would you talk us through the execution of this "endplay" using an illustrative bridge Board?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. On my "**Esther Bridge Lessons**" website I have previously recommended the "**BBO Bridge Master**" website:

<https://www.bridgebase.com/v3/anon/bridgemaster>

The "**BBO Bridge Master**" website allows you to declare your skill level, then shows a series of Hands and announces the final contract, each of which you then play as Declarer. At the end of play you can then request a solution in which the optimal "Line of Play" is discussed step by step. Here as an illustration I will use the *free* "**BBO Bridge Master**" Level-5 **Lesson B-03** which gives you the opportunity to see and *repeatedly practice* for *free* playing a given bridge Board. I have altered a few of the cards in these Hands from the Board.

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... Are there certain situations in which "Squeeze Endplays" are more likely to be do-able?

Esther: Well, my *loquacious linkster*, you have indeed asked a very *astute* question! To execute a "Squeeze Endplay" as Declarer you usually need to know or are pretty certain *exactly* what card distributions your Opponents hold. First of all, you are much *less likely* to be able to perform a "Squeeze Endplay" if both your Opponents were silent throughout the auction because they will not have supplied any information during the auction about their holdings.

At the other extreme, if (1) both Opponents bid during the auction or (2) an Opponent makes a bid "showing" an *unusual* distribution (e.g., a 6-card Suit, or a 2-Suited Hand) then you have a lot more information to suss out the Opponents' card distributions. So, you are *more likely* to execute a "Squeeze Endplay" if an Opponent bid:

1. a pre-empt bid (e.g., 2S) "showing" a "long" Suit,
2. an "Unusual 2NT" bid "showing" a Hand 2 Suited in the Minors:

https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/unus_2NT.pdf,

3. a Cuebid by an Opponent of your bid or Partner's bid "showing" an Opponent holding a 2-Suited Hand, such as "Michael Michaels Cuebid":

https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/5_cuebids.pdf.

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... What is the basic idea of a "Repeating Squeeze Endplay"?

Esther: Well, my *puffy palanderer*, we have established that you can "squeeze" 1 or 2 Opponents, you can "squeeze" in 2 Suits or 3. But you can also "squeeze" 1 Opponent 2 times! Let's now see this in action on the following bridge Board.

BBO Bridge Master Level 5 Lesson B-03

Dealer: **EAST**

NORTH (13)

S: A 6 3
H: 4 3 2
D: A K Q 6 5 4 2
C: --

WEST (2)

S: J 9 8 7 5
H: J 5
D: 8
C: 6 5 4 3 2

EAST (9)

S: K T
H: K Q 9 8 7 6
D: J T 9 7
C: T

SOUTH (19)

S: Q 4 2
H: A T
D: 3
C: A K Q J 9 8 7

Bidding*

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
2H	3NT	PASS	4C^A
PASS	4S^B	PASS	7NT
PASS			

*This bidding is by Esther.

^AThis bid is a "**Gerber Convention**" bid asking for Aces.

^BThis bid says, "Partner, I hold **2** Aces."

WEST leads the Heart Jack, his "highest" Heart in Partner EAST's bid Hearts. Declarer SOUTH "wins" Trick #1 in his "closed" (hidden) Hand with his own Heart Ace.

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... Once the NORTH Dummy is exposed what "winners" can Declarer SOUTH see?

Esther: Well, my *inquisitive interlocutor*, SOUTH has "won" Trick #1 with his Heart Ace. SOUTH will "lose" either **1** or **2** Spades depending upon which Opponent holds the "missing" Spade King. It appears likely that EAST holds the Spade King because EAST opened a "weak" **2H** pre-empt bid so a Spade finesse through EAST may well work. The NORTH Dummy holds **7** Diamonds to the Diamond A,K,Q. SOUTH himself holds **7** Clubs to the Club A,K,Q,J.

What will likely determine whether SOUTH can "make" his **7NT** contract is how the E/W Diamonds and Clubs "split". With **6** Club cards "missing" because **6** is an "even" number

the most likely Club "split" is not the equal 3-3 "split". Instead, the 4-2 "split" is the most likely "split". To be specific, the probability of a 4-2 "split" is **48.4%**, the probability of a 3-3 "split" is **35.5%**, the probability of a 5-1 "split" is **14.5%**, and the probability of a 6-0 "split" is **1.5%**.²

With **5** Diamond cards "missing" because **5** is an "odd" number the most-likely "split" is 3-2. To be specific, the probability of a 3-2 "split" is **67.8%**, the probability of a 4-1 "split" is **28.3%**, and the probability of a 5-0 "split" is **3.9%**. Thus, the 3-2 "split" is $67.8\% / 28.3\% = 2.4$ times more likely than a 4-1 "split".²

Declarer SOUTH must try to protect against the unlikely Diamond "split". If EAST holds **5** Diamonds or the Diamond J,x,x,x cards the **7NT** contract will "fail". SOUTH must assume that EAST holds the "protected" Spade King and then try to execute the "**Repeating Squeeze Endplay**" against EAST.

Bruce: Well, Esther, what should Declarer SOUTH do on the next few Tricks?

Esther: Well, Bruce, there are **2** reasons why Declarer SOUTH should "attack" Clubs 1st: (1) SOUTH holds **7** Clubs including the "top" **4** Clubs and a 5-1 Club "split" is quite unlikely (sadly, miracles happen every day at the bridge Table), and (2) the NORTH Dummy holds **7** Diamonds but only the "top" **3** Diamonds and Declarer SOUTH holds only 2 "entries" into the Dummy: (a) the Dummy's Spade Ace and (b) the Dummy's Diamond Ace because SOUTH holds only **1** Diamond to lead toward the Dummy. Of course, in a **7NT** contract Declarer SOUTH **must** "make" every single Trick anyway!

On Trick **#2** SOUTH leads his Club Ace. WEST "follows". SOUTH discards a "low" Heart from the NORTH Dummy. EAST plays the Club Ten obviously suggesting the very, very good news that EAST initially held a Club Ten singleton and now Declarer will certainly "make" **7** Club Tricks. On Trick **#3** SOUTH "cashes" the Club King. A Heart is discarded from both the Dummy and by EAST.

² Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons" see: "**A Comprehensive List of 8 Different Categories of Bridge Probabilities, and How These May Help Guide Your Bidding and Play**": https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8_probs.pdf

Bruce: Errr, well, after Trick #3 N/S have "won" 3 Tricks and E/W have "won" 0 Tricks. The 10 cards now held in the 4 Hands are:

	NORTH (13)	
	S: A 6 3	
	H:	
	D: A K Q 6 5 4 2	
	C: --	
WEST (2)		EAST (9)
S: J 9 8 7 5		S: K T
H: 5		H: K Q 9 8
D: 8		D: J T 9 7
C: 6 5 4		C:
	SOUTH (19)	
	S: Q 4 2	
	H: T	
	D: 3	
	C: Q J 9 8 7	

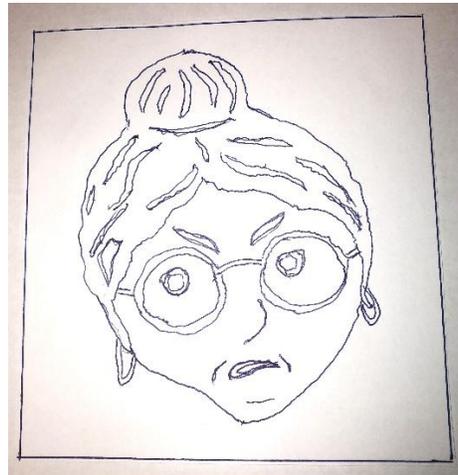
Because the NORTH Dummy holds 0 Clubs SOUTH cannot "cash" the NORTH Dummy Spade Ace and then return to his own Hand to "cash" more Clubs so the Dummy Spade Ace has no value. So, on Tricks #4 to #7 Declarer SOUTH "cashes" all but his last Club "winner".

After Trick #7 N/S have "won" 7 Tricks and E/W have "won" 0 Tricks. The 6 cards now held in the 4 Hands are:

	NORTH (13)	
	S:	
	H:	
	D: A K Q 6 5 4	
	C: --	
WEST (2)		EAST (9)
S: J 9 8 7		S: K
H: 5		H: K
D: 8		D: J T 9 7
C:		C:
	SOUTH (19)	
	S: Q 4 2	
	H: T	
	D: 3	
	C: 7	

On Trick #8 when SOUTH leads his Club 7 "winner" EAST is "squeezed" into necessarily giving up either (1) a Spade "winner", the Spade King, (2) a Heart "winner", the Heart King, or (3) one of EAST's essential "guard cards" "protecting" his Diamond Jack "stopper".

If on Trick #8 EAST discards his Heart King "winner" then on Trick #9 Declarer SOUTH can next "cash" his Heart Ten "winner" and thereby "squeeze" EAST a 2nd time because EAST will then have to discard either (1) his Spade King "winner" or (2) one of EAST's essential "guard cards" "protecting" his Diamond Jack "stopper". This explains the use of the word "**Repeated**" in the play named the "**Repeating Squeeze Endplay**"!



Esther says:

“Why not proceed *immediately* to ‘**Bridge Base Online Bridge Master**’ Level-5 Lesson #**B-03** to practice executing an ‘**Repeating Squeeze Endplay**’? Search ‘BBO’, then Click ‘Bridge Master’, then Click ‘Play’, then Click ‘Level 5’, then Click ‘B-03’. You can play this Board *repeatedly* in Bridge Master for *free*!”

Esther also says:

“I have now prepared a ‘Map’ of all the ‘**Esther Bridge ‘Pop’ Quizzes**’ that use ‘BBO Bridge Master’ lessons to teach the ‘*Squeeze Play*’, the ‘*Elimination Endplay*’, the ‘*Loser-on-Loser Play*’, the ‘*Unblocking Play*’, and the ‘*Dummy Reversal Play*’”:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/MAP.pdf>