

Esther Discusses

"When Playing a Difficult Contract as Declarer, the '*Trump Squeeze Play*' Can Be Very Helpful"

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

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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 Playing a Difficult Contract as Declarer, the '*Trump Squeeze Play*' Can Be Very Helpful**". 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, would you begin first by reminding us what a "**Simple Squeeze Play**" is before you then discuss the "**Trump Squeeze Play**"?

Esther: Well, my *inquisitive interlocutor*, I will certainly try to help you.

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?

In a "**Simple Squeeze Play**" the Declarer leads a card that forces a Defender to either discard a "winner" or

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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.

unguard a "protected" "winner" (e.g., discard the 7 in a K,7 holding so that your Ace can then "drop" the Opponent's King). For example, let's say after **10** Tricks have been played during your **NT** contract the 4 Hands now hold the following **3** cards:

	Dummy	
	S: 6	
	H: A J	
	D:	
	C:	
WEST		EAST
S: 3		S: A
H: 4 2		H: K Q
D:		D:
C:		C:
	YOU	
	S: K	
	H: 5	
	D: 8	
	C:	

In this situation over the previous **10** Tricks you have "stripped" your Opponents of all their cards in **2** Suits. On Trick **#11** you lead the "**Squeeze Card**", your Diamond 8, and "squeeze" EAST into unavoidably playing one of his "busy" "winners" thus gaining an "extra" Trick. You can read more about the "**Simple Squeeze Play**" by going to the "**Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson**", "**How as Declarer to Execute an Endplay 'Squeeze'**":

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

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther. Well, now would you tell us what a "**Trump Squeeze Play**" is?

Esther: Well, my *gracious giver*, I will certainly try to help you! A "**Trump Squeeze Play**" forces an Opponent playing against your Suit contract to shorten a "long" "side" Suit holding by discarding, later allowing you to ruff a "losing" Trick in a "side" Suit, and thereafter "promote" a Trick. Here is an example drawn from the Wikipedia entry, "Trump Squeeze":²

² See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trump_squeeze

Dummy

NORTH

S: T 8 3

H: 2

D:

C: 3

WEST

S: Q 9

H:

D:

C: J 9 8

YOU

SOUTH

S: A

H:

D: A

C: K T 7

Here as Declarer on Trick **#9** in a Heart Suit contract you lead your Diamond Ace which is your "**Squeeze Card**". Here WEST has no good card to sluff. If WEST plays a Spade on Trick **#9** on Trick **#10** you as Declarer can "cash" your Spade Ace, then on Trick **#11** you can "cash" your Club King. On Trick **#12** you can lead your Club 7 and ruff in the NORTH Dummy. On Trick **#13** the NORTH Dummy Spade 10 has been "promoted" into a "winner". A similar fate awaits WEST if WEST on Trick **#9** sluffs a Club rather than a Spade.

example Board a Board used in the **Bridge Master** Level 4 Lesson **B-30**. I may have altered some cards in some Hands.

BBO Bridge Master Level 4 **Lesson B-30**

Dealer: **EAST**

	NORTH (10)	
	S: 5 4 3 2	
	H: 4 3 2	
	D: A K 3	
	C: Q J T	
WEST (7)		EAST (8)
S: 7 6		S: K Q J T 9 8
H: 6 5		H: 9 7
D: 8 7 6 5		D: Q T 9
C: A K 5 3 2		C: 6 4
	SOUTH (15)	
	S: A	
	H: A K Q J T 8	
	D: J 4 2	
	C: 9 8 7	

Bidding

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
2 S	3 H	PASS	4 H
PASS	PASS	PASS	

WEST leads the Club Ace thus "promising" the Club King and asking EAST to "signal" whether EAST can "win" a **3rd** Round of Clubs either (1) with the Club Queen assuming that the NORTH Dummy holds at least 3 "lower" Clubs or (2) by ruffing.

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... What impressions should Declarer SOUTH form once the NORTH Dummy has been exposed?

Esther: Well, Bruce, in a Suit contract the Declarer should initially identify his Partnership's "losers" and try to formulate a "Line of Play" that allows Declarer to "dump" "losers". Here it looks like Declarer SOUTH will "lose" **1** Diamond Trick and at least **2** Club Tricks.

Bruce: Well, OK, Esther, WEST on Trick **#1** has led his Club Ace. EAST plays his Club 4 apparently "signaling", given that the exposed NORTH Dummy holds the Club Queen, that EAST can "win" Trick **#3** if a Club is led by WEST by ruffing. WEST leads the Club King on Trick **#2**. EAST plays the Club 6 as his "echo" "signal" card. Because EAST has lead "low-higher" EAST has confirmed that he can ruff Trick **#3** if a

Club is led. So, on Trick #3 WEST leads a Club and EAST "wins" by ruffing. Now N/S must "win" all remaining Tricks or the 4H contract will be "set".

Esther: Well, my *curious carnivore*, on Trick #4 EAST leads his Spade King and Declarer SOUTH "wins" with his Spade Ace singleton. On Tricks #5 and #6 Declarer SOUTH "draws" all the remaining 3 E/W Trump Heart cards. On Trick #6 EAST discards his useless Spade 8.

Bruce: Esther, after 6 Tricks what does Declarer SOUTH now know about EAST's remaining cards?

Esther: Well, Bruce, EAST so far played Spades on Trick #4 and Trick #6. EAST has also played 2 Heart cards and 2 Club cards. From EAST's initial 2S opening bid Declarer SOUTH knows that EAST started with 6 Spade cards.

This means that Declarer SOUTH has a "complete count" of EAST's holdings after 6 Tricks. EAST now holds 4 more Spade cards and 3 Diamond cards. If EAST holds the Diamond Q,x,x then it appears that N/S will "lose" a Diamond Trick and the 4H contract will fail.

Bruce: Oh, my, Esther. Is there anything that Declarer SOUTH can do to "make" his 4H contract?

Esther: Well, Bruce, yes, there is something that Declarer SOUTH can do to "make" his contract even if EAST initially held the Diamond Q,x,x tripleton. SOUTH can run a "**Trump Squeeze Play**". After 6 Tricks the 7 cards now held in the 4 Hands are:

		NORTH (10)	
		S: 5 4 3	
		H: 4	
		D: A K 3	
		C:	
WEST (7)			EAST (8)
S: 7			S: Q J T 9
H:			H:
D: 8 7 6 5			D: Q T 9
C: 5 3			C:
		SOUTH (15)	
		S:	
		H: Q J T 8	
		D: J 4 2	
		C:	

On Tricks #7-#9 leads 3 more Rounds of Trump Hearts. On Trick #9 Declarer SOUTH discards the NORTH Dummy's Diamond 3 "loser". On Trick #9 EAST does not know if Declarer SOUTH holds a Spade void and is likely to discard his Diamond 9.

After 9 Tricks the 4 cards held in the 4 Hands are:

		NORTH (10)	
		S: 5 4	
		H:	
		D: A K	
		C:	
WEST (7)			EAST (8)
S: 7			S: Q J
H:			H:
D: 8 7 6			D: Q T
C:			C:
		SOUTH (15)	
		S:	
		H: Q	
		D: J 4 2	
		C:	

On Trick #10 Declarer SOUTH leads his Diamond 2 to the NORTH Dummy Diamond King. On Trick #11 Declarer "wins" the NORTH Dummy Diamond Ace. On Trick #12 Declarer SOUTH leads a "low" Spade from the Dummy and ruffs with his own Trump Heart Queen. On Trick #13 Declarer SOUTH "cashes" his "promoted" Diamond Jack and "makes" his 4H contract!



Esther says:

Why not proceed *immediately* to “**Bridge Base Online Bridge Master**” Level-4 Lesson #**B-30** to practice making an “*Trump Squeeze Play*” on this Board? Search “BBO”, then Click “Bridge Master”, then Click “Play”, then Click “Level 4”, then Click “B-30”. You can play this Board *repeatedly* in Bridge Master for *free*!