

**Esther Discusses "An Opponent's Opening Pre-empt  
Bid Almost Demands That You Execute an  
'Elimination Endplay' Against That Opponent!"**

**Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen<sup>1</sup>**

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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 "**An Opponent's Opening Pre-empt Bid Almost Demands That You Execute an 'Elimination Endplay' Against That Opponent!**" 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 today by first explaining from where today's concepts and examples originate?

**Esther:** Well, my *inquisitive interlocutor*, I will certainly try to help you. Today's concepts and examples originate from Richard Pavlicek's 6/26/88 bridge newspaper column, "Extreme Distribution Foils Declarer":  
<https://www.rpbridge.net/7c92.htm>  
This bridge Board was a "Real Deal" played on the Memorial Day 1988 Mid-Atlantic Regional Bridge Tournament in Roanoke, VA. Pavlicek played this Board sitting SOUTH.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](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**.

**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... In any case, would you please tell us a little bit about this Richard Pavlicek fellow?

**Esther:** Well, my *loquacious linkster*, of course!

About **Richard Pavlicek**

**Richard Pavlicek** (1945- ) has won **11** North American Bridge Championships, including a record-setting **3** straight wins in the Reisinger Board-a-Match Teams, 1982-84, and again in 1990. He won the 1973 inaugural Grand National Teams tournament and repeated a win there in 1997. He has written or co-authored several bridge books, including with co-author William S. Root their 1981 book, Modern Bridge Conventions. From 1984 until 1990 Pavlicek was the Bridge Columnist for the Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel.

**Bruce:** Well, Esther, thank you! Would you now share the "Real Deal" bridge Board that Pavlicek actually played sitting SOUTH?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, of course. I certainly want to help you!

Dealer: **WEST**

Vul: **BOTH**

NORTH (21)

**S:** A K 3

**H:** K 8 5 4

**D:** A T 7 2

**C:** A K

WEST (7)

**S:** J 9 5 2

**H:** A Q T 9 7 2

**D:** --

**C:** T 9 3

EAST (6)

**S:** 7

**H:** J 3

**D:** Q J 9 6 5

**C:** Q 8 7 5 4

SOUTH (6)

**S:** Q T 8 6 4

**H:** 6

**D:** K 8 4 3

**C:** J 6 2

### Bidding

| WEST       | NORTH       | EAST | SOUTH      |
|------------|-------------|------|------------|
| 2 <b>H</b> | <b>DBL</b>  | PASS | 2 <b>S</b> |
| PASS       | 2 <b>NT</b> | PASS | 3 <b>D</b> |
| PASS       | 3 <b>S</b>  | PASS | 4 <b>S</b> |
| PASS       | PASS        | PASS |            |

On Trick #1 WEST leads the Club Ten thus "promising" a doubleton or the "touching" Club 9.

**Bruce:** Hmmm, well, Esther... Would you now talk us through Pavlicek's play of the Board in this bridge tournament?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, of course. Pavlicek "won" Trick #1 with the NORTH Dummy's Club Ace. After the NORTH Dummy was exposed Declarer SOUTH, Pavlicek, thought he saw 10 "winning" Tricks in the form of 4 Trump Spades, 2 Diamonds, 1 Heart, 2 Clubs and 1 Club ruff.

1. After "winning" Trick #1 with the NORTH Dummy's Club Ace, on Tricks #2 and #3 SOUTH "cashed" the NORTH Dummy's Trump Spade A,K.
2. On Trick #4 SOUTH led a "low" Diamond from the Dummy to his own Diamond King, *but WEST ruffed!*
3. On Trick #5 WEST led his Club 3 and the NORTH Dummy's Club King "won", but EAST's Club Queen was now "promoted" into a "winner".

At this point in addition to "winning" Trick #4, E/W will later "win" 1 Heart, the Heart Ace, and 2 Diamonds, EAST's

Diamond Q,J, and Pavlicek's 4S contract sitting SOUTH, according to Pavlicek, "was history."

**Bruce:** Oh, my, Esther. Well, was there a "Line of Play" with which Declarer Pavlicek could have made his contract?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, yes indeed! Pavlicek in retrospect saw the "Line of Play" he *should* have followed:

|                |  |                                    |  |              |  |
|----------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
|                |  | NORTH (21)                         |  |              |  |
|                |  | S: <u>A</u> <u>K</u> 3             |  |              |  |
|                |  | 3 6 5                              |  |              |  |
|                |  | H: K 8 $\frac{5}{7}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ |  |              |  |
|                |  | D: A T 7 2                         |  |              |  |
|                |  | 8                                  |  |              |  |
|                |  | C: A <u>K</u>                      |  |              |  |
|                |  | 1 2                                |  |              |  |
| WEST (7)       |  |                                    |  | EAST (6)     |  |
| S: J 9 5 2     |  |                                    |  | S: 7         |  |
| 8 6 3          |  |                                    |  | 3            |  |
| H: A Q T 9 7 2 |  |                                    |  | H: J 3       |  |
| 7 4            |  |                                    |  | 4 7          |  |
| D: --          |  |                                    |  | D: Q J 9 6 5 |  |
| C: T 9 3       |  |                                    |  | C: Q 8 7 5 4 |  |
| 1 5 2          |  |                                    |  | 5 8 6 2 1    |  |
|                |  | SOUTH (6)                          |  |              |  |
|                |  | S: <u>Q</u> <u>T</u> 8 6 4         |  |              |  |
|                |  | 8 9 7 6 3                          |  |              |  |
|                |  | H: 6                               |  |              |  |
|                |  | 4                                  |  |              |  |
|                |  | D: K 8 4 3                         |  |              |  |
|                |  | C: J 6 2                           |  |              |  |
|                |  | 5 2 1                              |  |              |  |

1. Declarer SOUTH "wins" Tricks #1 and #2 with the NORTH Dummy's Club A,K.
2. On Trick #3 SOUTH "draws" 1 Round of Trump Spades using the NORTH Dummy's exposed Trump Spade Ace.
3. On Trick #4 SOUTH leads the Dummy's Heart 4 and EAST "wins" with his Heart Jack.
4. On Trick #5 EAST leads his Club Queen and SOUTH ruffs from the NORTH Dummy.
5. On Trick #6 Declarer SOUTH draws a 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Trump Spades by leading the NORTH Dummy's Trump Spade King. EAST discards a "low" Club.

6. On Trick #7 Declarer SOUTH leads a "low" Dummy Heart and ruffs from his own Hand.
7. On Trick #8 SOUTH "cashes" his Trump Spade Queen "winner".

|          |              |            |                                 |          |  |
|----------|--------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|--|
|          |              | NORTH (21) |                                 |          |  |
|          |              | S:         | <u>A</u> <u>K</u> 3             |          |  |
|          |              |            | 3 6 5                           |          |  |
|          |              | H:         | K 8 $\frac{5}{7}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ |          |  |
|          |              | D:         | A T 7 2                         |          |  |
|          |              |            | 8                               |          |  |
|          |              | C:         | A <u>K</u>                      |          |  |
|          |              |            | 1 2                             |          |  |
| WEST (7) |              |            |                                 | EAST (6) |  |
| S:       | J 9 5 2      | S:         | 7                               |          |  |
|          | 8 6 3        |            | 3                               |          |  |
| H:       | A Q T 9 7 2  | H:         | J 3                             |          |  |
|          | 7 4          |            | 4 7                             |          |  |
| D:       | --           | D:         | Q J 9 6 5                       |          |  |
| C:       | <u>T</u> 9 3 | C:         | <u>Q</u> 8 7 5 4                |          |  |
|          | 1 5 2        |            | 5 8 6 2 1                       |          |  |
|          |              | SOUTH (6)  |                                 |          |  |
|          |              | S:         | <u>Q</u> <u>T</u> 8 6 4         |          |  |
|          |              |            | 8 9 7 6 3                       |          |  |
|          |              | H:         | 6                               |          |  |
|          |              |            | 4                               |          |  |
|          |              | D:         | K 8 4 3                         |          |  |
|          |              | C:         | J 6 2                           |          |  |
|          |              |            | 5 2 1                           |          |  |

Declarer SOUTH knows that WEST now holds (1) **1** Trump Spade, the *inevitable* Trump Spade Jack "winner", and (2) **4** more Hearts, the Heart A,Q,T,9. So SOUTH knows that WEST is "ripe" for being "endplayed":

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

(i.e., forced into the lead in which he, after "cashing" his Heart Ace, **must** lead a "low" Heart toward the NORTH Dummy's now "promoted" Heart King "winner"). E/W will "win" Tricks **#4**, **#9** and **#10** but N/S will "make" their **4S** contract.



**Esther says...**

“Well, Bruce, there is a General Bridge Principle:

***Whenever an Opponent opens with a *pre-empt bid*, consider during play as Declarer whether that Opponent is ‘ripe’ for being ‘endplayed’!***

1. WEST’s **2H** pre-empt opening bid informed Partner EAST to lead a Heart through Declarer SOUTH.
2. But WEST’s **2H** pre-empt opening bid also informed SOUTH *how* he can ‘endplay’ WEST (i.e., by leading a Heart toward WEST either from his own Hand or the Dummy) thus forcing WEST late in play to then lead a Heart, if that is what SOUTH desires.”