

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0125:
"As Declarer, Ignore Intermediate 'Beef' 'Spot'
Cards at Your Own Peril,
Especially When Playing NT Contracts"**

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

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

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In bridge a "spot card" is any card in a Suit from the 2 through the 9, inclusive. Alan Truscott, the long-time Bridge Columnist at the New York Times, argued in a September 18, 1964 NYT article, "Bridge: Intermediate Spot Cards Often Guide the Declarer" (p. 32), argued that duplicate bridge players ignore "spot cards" at their peril in some situations.² In some cases higher "spot cards" can be key to your bridge salvation especially when playing **NT** contracts as Declarer! Some LifeMasters call these "higher" "spot cards" (e.g., Ten, 9, 8), "*the beef*." We need to pay attention not only to honors, but also, sometimes, to "*the beef*".

Esther on her "**Esther Bridge Lessons**" website has 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. The present "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz" question is drawn from "**BBO Bridge Master**" Level-2 **Lessons D-13**. Note that across repeated play "**BBO Bridge Master**" may change

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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.

² See: <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/09/18/archives/bridge-intermediate-spot-cards-often-guide-the-declarer.html>

some Hands in given lessons. Esther may have altered the auction and/or some cards on some Boards.

Board D-13, Level 2

NORTH (5)

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

WEST (11)

S: A K 8 7
H: Q J T 9 8
D: J 4
C: 6 5

EAST (0)

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

SOUTH (24)

S: J 3 2
H: A K 2
D: A K Q 3 2
C: A K

Bidding

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 C	PASS	2 D *	PASS
2 NT	PASS	3 NT	PASS
PASS			

*N/S are playing the "2**D** Waiting" response to Partner's "strong" 2**C** opening bid.

On lead, WEST quite correctly leads the Heart Queen, thus promising "length" in Hearts and always at least the Jack, and usually the Ten.

Once the NORTH Dummy comes down, the SOUTH Declarer must count his "winners", but also try to determine how to maximize the number of Tricks taken by N/S. In "MatchPoint" duplicate play, EVERY Trick counts!

1. Usually when playing as Declarer in **NT** contracts your first job is to "count" your "certain" "winners". How many certain "winners" do you see?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:
<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0125 a1.pdf>