

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0153:
"Beware the 'Rule of 7' When Playing a
NT Contract as Bridge Declarer"**

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>

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 **Lesson A-5**. Note that across repeated play "**BBO Bridge Master**" may change some Hands in given lessons. Esther may have altered some cards in some Hands.

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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.

Dealer: **SOUTH**

Board A-5, Level 2

NORTH (7)

S: Q J T
H: 6 2
D: K J 5 4 3 2
C: 6 5

WEST (9)

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

EAST (6)

S: 6 5
H: K 8 7
D: T 9 8 7
C: K 9 8 2

SOUTH (18)

S: A 3 2
H: A 5 4 3
D: A Q
C: A 7 4 3

Bidding

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 C	PASS	1 D	PASS
2 NT	PASS	3 NT	PASS
PASS	PASS		

WEST leads the Spade 7, 4th from the "top" of his "longest and strongest" Suit. The NORTH Dummy comes down. Declarer SOUTH (and EAST) can then invoke the "**Rule of 11**"² to determine how many Spade cards "higher" than the 7 EAST holds. $11 - 7 = 4$ - SOUTH's 1 card higher than the Spade 7 = $4 - 1 = 3$, so EAST holds 3 Spades higher than the Spade 7.

However, a different rule, the "**Rule of 7**" says that when playing a **NT** contract Declarer should count (1) the number of cards in the led Suit the Dummy holds plus (2) the number of cards in the led Suit the Declarer holds, here $3 + 3 = 6$, and subtract that number from 7 to determine how many Rounds the

² Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons", see: "**Some of the 40 or So Bridge Bidding/Play 'Rules'**": <https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/rules.pdf>

This posting covers some of the many various bridge "rules" that players can use to help guide the bidding and play, such as the "**Rule of 5**", and the "**Rule of 17**". Esther's lesson on the "**Rule of 17**" is the *most frequently read* posting on her bridge lessons website:

https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/Rule_17.pdf

Declarer should "duck" in the Suit in order to optimize Declarer's results. Here the "**Rule of 7**" suggests ducking for $7 - 6 = 1$ Round.

1. How many "winners" do you as the SOUTH Declarer see once the North Dummy comes "down"?
2. What challenges do you see that you as Declarer must confront in formulating your "Line of Play"?
3. Once on Trick **#1** the NORTH Dummy follows Suit and EAST plays a lower Spade, what Spade should you then play from your "closed" (hidden) Hand?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0153_a1.pdf