

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0344:  
"Playing a 4-Level Suit Contract in a Major as  
Bridge Declarer When Your Partnership Has a  
'Moysian Fit'"**

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

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Esther discussed in her "Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson #70: **Playing a 'Moysian Fit' as Declarer in a Major Suit Game Contract**": <https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/moysian.pdf>. In that lesson Esther noted that:

Playing a Suit contract, even a 4**H** or 4**S** contract, when your Partnership holds a 4-3 trump fit, is called playing a "**Moysian Fit**". As Alan Truscott, for many years the Bridge Columnist for the New York Times, wrote in a September 20, 2003 NYT article, "With the Common 4-3 Fit, Play Can be Complicated",<sup>2</sup>

More than 90 percent of [S]uit contracts are in obvious spots, with the declaring side owning eight or more trumps. The exceptions are always interesting... **Relatively common** (and usually **complicated**) are 4-3 fits, which are called Moysian, after Alphonse Moyses, a famous [bridge] writer of yesteryear. (p. B-16) [emphasis added]

Pam LaShelle, in an article posted on the Austin Bridge website, "The Moysian Fit",<sup>3</sup> noted that:

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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, the purported ACBL Double Triple Emerald Gold Platinum LifeMaster with 20+ million ACBL MasterPoints, in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So, this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/20/arts/bridge-with-the-common-4-3-fit-play-can-be-complicated.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://austinbridge.org/sbruce/lecture/Intermediate-Advanced%202203%20Moysian2.pdf>

Alphonse Moyses (1897-1973), genius bridge columnist, fabulous bridge player was a strong advocate of opening 4 card majors and even went so far as to advocate playing in a 4-3 fit. He wrote for over 20 years and wrote under the names of Josephine and Eli Culbertson in newspapers and bridge magazines. He thought that many times you could make a game contract in a 4-3 fit when no other game would make. Time has proved that he was right!

The idea of bidding a 4**H** or 4**S** contract when holding only 7 Trump cards emerged in the *earlier days* of bridge when opening by bidding a 4-card Major was more *common*, and the obsession with holding 8 Trump cards to bid 4**H** or 4**S** was less dominant.

But even modern players may *intentionally* bid a game contract even *knowingly* holding a 4-3 trump fit. It is also worth emphasizing that bidding 4**H** or 4**S** with a 4-3 trump fit may yield a *huge* duplicate bridge advantage, **because many opposing Partnerships will not bid Game when holding only 7 trump cards!**<sup>4</sup>

...In an article, "The Moysian Trump Fit",<sup>5</sup> posted on the Southwest Virginia Bridge Clubs website, an unnamed author notes that:

[L]esser trump holdings (5-2 or 4-3) sometimes produce an excellent [Game] result. If you can ruff losers in the **short [H]and**, usually you will score well on such [H]ands... The biggest challenge [when playing a "Moysian fit"] is that one of the opponents often has an equal (64%) or more trumps (16%) than you have. If the **master [H]and** (the one holding four trumps [when playing a "Moysian fit"]) is forced to ruff, it now has fewer trumps than one of the defenders. The [D]efender [with the longer trump card holding] can (and will) draw [D]eclarer's trumps and take control of the hand... You are

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<sup>4</sup> It has been suggested that bidding Game in a Major when holding a "**Moysian Fit**" may be particularly useful when playing in competitions using IMP scoring, such as Swiss Teams, because in IMP scoring the results on a *single* Board can have a more profound impact on results, because cumulated IMP totals can be heavily influenced by the magnitude of a superior performance on a single Board.

<sup>5</sup> <https://swvabridgeclubs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Moysian-Trump-Fit-April-19-2021.pdf>

helpless to do anything to stop them. [Do] anything to avoid losing trump control. [emphasis added]

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. Here we use the free "BBO Bridge Master" Level-1 Lesson B-08 which gives you the opportunity to see and repeatedly practice playing a given bridge Board. Esther may have altered some of the cards in the Hands.

**BBO Bridge Master Level 1 Lesson B-08**

Dealer: **NORTH**

	NORTH (15)		
	<b>S:</b>	A J 3	
	<b>H:</b>	A K Q J T	
	<b>D:</b>	4 2	
	<b>C:</b>	7 5 4	
	WEST (5)		EAST (8)
<b>S:</b>	T 9 8 5		<b>S:</b> 7 6
<b>H:</b>	9 7		<b>H:</b> 8 6 5 4
<b>D:</b>	K J T 9 8		<b>D:</b> A 7 6
<b>C:</b>	J T		<b>C:</b> A 9 8 6
	SOUTH (12)		
	<b>S:</b>	K Q 4 2	
	<b>H:</b>	3 2	
	<b>D:</b>	Q 5 3	
	<b>C:</b>	K Q 3 2	

**Bidding**

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
<b>1H</b>	PASS	<b>1S</b>	PASS
<b>2S</b>	PASS	<b>4S</b>	PASS
PASS	PASS		

On Trick #1 WEST leads the Diamond Jack as the "top" of an "interior" sequence. EAST "overtakes" with his Diamond Ace. On Trick #2 EAST returns WEST's lead, SOUTH plays "2<sup>nd</sup> Hand low", and WEST "Wins" with his Diamond 8.

On Trick #3 WEST leads his Club Jack and EAST "wins" with his Club Ace. On Trick #4 EAST returns a Club and Declarer SOUTH "wins" with the Club King.

After Trick #4 N/S have "won" 1 Trick and E/W have "won" 3 Tricks. The 9 cards now held in the 4 cards are:

	NORTH (15)	
	S: A J 3	
	H: A K Q J T	
	D:	
	C: 7	
WEST (5)		EAST (8)
S: T 9 8 5		S: 7 6
H: 9 7		H: 8 6 5 4
D: K T 9		D: 7
C:		C: 9 8
	SOUTH (12)	
	S: K Q 4 2	
	H: 3 2	
	D: Q	
	C: Q 3	

1. What potential "losers" can Declarer SOUTH see?
2. After WEST "wins" Trick #4 what "Line of Play" should Declarer SOUTH now play?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0344\\_a1.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0344_a1.pdf)