

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0441:
"As Bridge Declarer '*Timing*' Your Needed Ruff
Can Be *Vitally* Important"**

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

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The present "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz" uses ideas and examples presented by Marc Smith in his excellent article, "When to Take a Ruff", published in the June, 2026 issue of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin (p. 48). Esther may have altered some of the cards held in the 4 Hands.

About Marc Smith

Marc Smith (1960-) is a British bridge player, columnist, and writer. As a 25-year-old he represented Great Britain and won the 1985 European Union Junior Team Championship. Playing with his wife he later reached the finals of the World Mixed Pairs championship. With Barbara Seagram he authored the 1999 bridge book, 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know, which won the "American Bridge Teachers' Association Shirley Silverman Award for Best Student Book". He is the author or co-author of more than **30** bridge books. Smith is also a monthly author of a bridge column in the ACBL Bridge Bulletin.

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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, 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.

Dealer: **WEST**

Vul: **BOTH**

NORTH (11)

S: 9 8 3

H: A 7 4 3

D: K 8 4 2

C: A 3

WEST (9)

S: J 2

H: K Q J 8 5 2

D: Q 9 5

C: 6 5

EAST (6)

S: Q T 7

H: T

D: J T 6

C: Q J T 8 7 2

SOUTH (14)

S: A K 6 5 4

H: 9 6

D: A 7 3

C: K 9 4

Bidding

WEST

2H*

PASS

PASS

NORTH

PASS

4S

EAST

PASS

PASS

SOUTH

2S

PASS

E/W by Partnership Agreement are playing 2-level preempt opening bids as "showing" (1) a "weak" Hand and (2) either (a) **2 of the "top" **3** cards in the Suit or (b) **3** of the "top" **5** cards in the Suit.*

On Trick #1 WEST leads the Heart King thus "showing" lower "touching" Honors. Declarer SOUTH "wins" Trick #1 with the NORTH Dummy Heart Ace. EAST "follows".

- 1. Once the NORTH Dummy is exposed how many Hearts does Declarer SOUTH know EAST initially held?*
- 2. Once the NORTH Dummy is exposed what "losers" can Declarer SOUTH see?*
- 3. One possible "line of Play" is for Declarer SOUTH on Tricks #2 and #3 to "cash" his own Club A,K, and then on Trick #4 lead a Club for a ruff from the NORTH Dummy. Is this a "reasonable" "Line of Play"?*

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0441_a1.pdf