

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0043:
"Can You as Declarer Take All
Remaining 6 Tricks In the Infamous, Classic
'Whitfeld Six' Bridge Problem?"**

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Newspaper and Magazine Bridge Columnists

Although book authors have hugely influenced bridge play and players,¹ newspaper and magazine columnists have also wielded huge influence. In recent years, for example, the New York Times bridge column written by Alan Fraser Truscott² for 41 years was massively influential. Similarly, the Australian Ron Klinger³ wrote bridge columns for The Daily Telegraph and The Weekend Australian, and more recently a weekly bridge column for the Sydney Morning Herald and The Sun-Herald. But bridge columnists were influential even from the earliest days of bridge and whist dating back even to the 1880's.

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¹ To see Esther's curated **list of the best bridge books published in 2021 to 2023**, go to:

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

² See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Truscott

³ Ron Klinger is the inventor of the "**Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score**", and the author of numerous books, including 100 WINNING BRIDGE TIPS for the Improving Player. See:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ron_Klinger

William Henry Whitfeld (1856-1915)⁴ was one such bridge columnist. Whitfeld was an extremely gifted English mathematician who graduated from Cambridge in 1880. And for several years he was a tutor and lecturer at Cavendish College, Cambridge, and later was card editor for The Field. Whitfeld was particularly known for his "**Double Dummy Problems**". "**Double Dummy Problems**" (1) expose all 4 Hands, (2) the final contract is named, (3) the lead and possibly several Rounds of play are summarized, and the task for the problem-solver is to determine how to play the remaining Tricks to obtain the optimal result.

On January 31, 1885 in the London magazine The Field, Whitfeld published what is doubtless the most famous "Double Dummy Problem" ever published in bridge: the "**Whitfeld Six Problem**".⁵ As Hugh Darwen notes in his entry on Whitfeld,

This is conceded to be the most difficult problem of its kind ever constructed. It may be of interest to know that it was composed in bed. Mr. Whitfeld was kept awake one night by a strong cup of coffee, and employed his sleepless moments in thinking it out. In the morning it was finished. Before its appearance in the Field, "Cavendish" sent a copy of it to N. B. Trist, and the latter had it published in the New Orleans Times-Democrat, from which paper it was extensively copied, and went the rounds in this country.

In a April 6, 1940 bridge column, "The Whitfeld Six", published by Leslie E. Parker in The Argus in Melbourne, Australia, Parker notes that:

That is not the name of a new car. It is the title given to a problem originally composed by W. H. Whitfeld, for many years card editor of the London "Field." It was the publication of this problem which really demonstrated the possibilities of Double Dummy propositions, and this particular problem is supposed to

⁴ See the Wiki article, "**William Henry Whitfeld**":
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Whitfeld

⁵ The "**Double Dummy Corner**" website was started in 2001, and is curated by Hugh Darwen, and "is updated every Monday, in principle, subject to the vagaries of the webmaster's personal life." For Darwen's web posting on **Whitfeld**, see: <https://doubledummy.net/Whitfeld.html>

be the **most difficult six carder [sic] ever composed.** (p, 12, emphasis added)

As Darwen notes, the "Whitfeld Six Problem" has been published in various forms, with Suits switched or unimportant cards altered, from the 1880's onward. For example, one such variation occurred in a December 14, 1889 article in the London Field, and another such variation was published in a March 1, 1896 article in The New York Sun.

The "Whitfeld Six" "Double Dummy Problem"

	NORTH	
	S: --	
	H: 8 7	
	D: J 5	
	C: A 2	
		EAST
		S: J 6
		H: --
		D: T 8 6
		C: 8
	SOUTH	
	S: T 9	
	H: --	
	D: A K 9	
	C: T	

SOUTH is Declarer playing a Heart contract. 7 Tricks have been played. SOUTH is "on lead". SOUTH's quest is to take all remaining 6 Tricks.

1. What should SOUTH play as his lead on Trick #8?

It is strongly suggested that the Reader prints 6 or more copies of this page, and cross off cards "played" card-by-card and Trick-by-Trick. Only look at the solution once you surrender (if you do so).

To see Esther's **suggested answer**, CLICK:
<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/whit6 a1.pdf>