

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

RIGHT-SIDING THE CONTRACT

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ 53 ♥ 3 ♦ 964 ♣ AQ98432	
♠ AQJ962 ♥ JT2 ♦ K532 ♣	North West East Declarer	♠ T87 ♥ 98764 ♦ T87 ♣ 76
	♠ K4 ♥ AKQ5 ♦ AQJ ♣ KJT5	

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
	1♠	3♣	Pass
6NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

As can be seen, 6♣ (played from the North side) is down one in a hurry after East's opening Spade lead. So South sensibly bid 6NT to "right-side" the contract, putting West on lead and protecting the ♠K. Against 6NT, West leads the ♥J. Can you make 12 tricks?

Declarer can count only 11 top tricks and can be sure (from the bidding) that the ♦K and ♠A are both with West. Does that mean that 6NT is destined to fail? Actually, no, because Declarer can organize an end-play. Declarer wins the opening Heart lead, cashes the other Heart winners and rattles off 7 Clubs. West's last three cards will presumably be ♠A and ♦K5, and Declarer will come down to ♠K and ♦AQ. Now, West is thrown in with a Spade and must lead a Diamond, giving Declarer her 12th trick. That pretty ending is known as a Strip Squeeze.

Post Script: West might have thwarted the squeeze by coming down to ♠AQ and ♦K, but an astute Declarer will suspect that West has the ♠Q for his opening bid and will play to drop the ♦K instead of trying the Spade throw-in. A more thoughtful West will bare the ♦K early in his discards, and will also pitch away the ♠Q and ♠J, coming down to the fiendishly devious ♠A6 and ♦K! Nobody would fault Declarer for now assuming that West started life with 5=3=5=0 distribution, and for misguessing the end-game as a result. Wicked defense, Mr West!

Visit www.acbl.org for more about the fascinating game of bridge or email marketing@acbl.org