

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

A SHOW-OFF SQUEEZE

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ K87 ♥ AKJ84 ♦ 6 ♣ K982	
♠ QJT654 ♥ T653 ♦ 52 ♣ 3	North West East Declarer	♠ 3 ♥ Q7 ♦ 987 ♣ AQJT765
	♠ A92 ♥ 92 ♦ AKQJT43 ♣ 4	

Both Vulnerable

	South	West	North	East
			1♥	3♣
3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Against 6♦ West led a Club, won by East's Ten. Hoping for a trump promotion, East returned a low Club, but Declarer could afford to ruff high and draw trumps. There are 11 tricks on top, where's the 12th?

Plan A is to cash the top Hearts and ruff a Heart, hoping that the ♥Q comes down in three rounds. That happens to work on the actual lie of the cards, but it's not a good way to play the hand. More often than not, West will have long Hearts with the Queen (remember that East has long Clubs and is therefore likely to be short in Hearts).

Plan B is the doomed Heart finesse, but fortunately there's a Plan C which is guaranteed to succeed, regardless of who has the ♥Q! Declarer cashes the ♠A, ♠K and ♥A, and returns to hand with a Club ruff. With West showing out on the second Club, and East showing out on the second Spade, East is known to have started with 1=2=3=7 distribution.

Does that change things? Sure it does! Declarer rattles off the remaining Diamonds, keeping ♥KJ in Dummy and putting West under pressure. West must hang on to a high Spade, which will leave room in his hand for just one Heart. At Trick 12 a Heart is led and when West does not show up with the Queen, Declarer can be sure that it is dropping from the East hand. It's called a Show-Up Squeeze, and there's no guesswork required! Actually, Declarer could have flaunted his mastery by claiming after Trick 5. That would have been a Show-Off Squeeze.

P.S. After drawing trumps, Declarer did well to cash the ♠A next. That way, if East is void in Spades then the Hearts must be 3-3, and Declarer can revert to Plan A.

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