



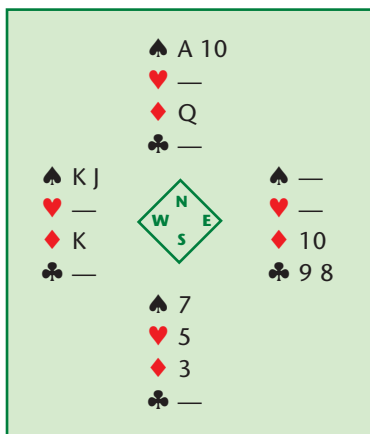
Brian Senior

Squeeze play (Part I)

FOR many players squeeze play is something dark and mysterious which experts use but which they would never be able to perform themselves. Yet, in truth, while there are some very complex squeezes, which even many experts would struggle to carry out correctly, the more common basic squeezes should be well within the capabilities of any competent declarer.

The Positional Squeeze

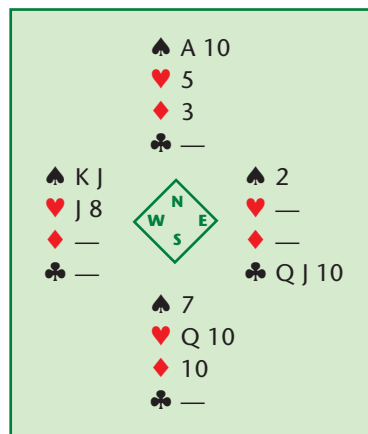
A squeeze occurs when a defender is left with sole control of two or more suits and cannot keep sufficient cards to do the job effectively. The most straightforward is the Positional Squeeze. Look at this ending, in a no-trump contract:



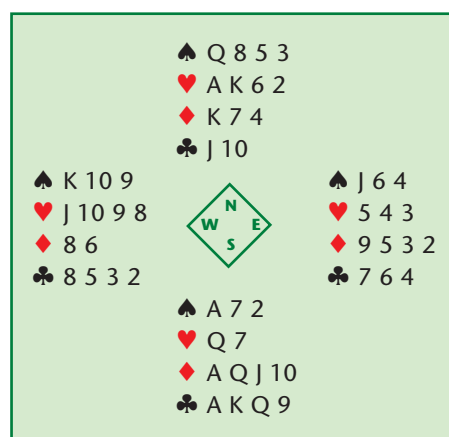
South cashes the five of hearts and what is West to do? If he throws the king of diamonds he establishes dummy's queen so declarer throws the spade ten away and claims the last two tricks; if he pitches a spade, the diamond queen goes from the dummy and the ace and ten of spades make the last two tricks. This squeeze works because the defender had to play

before declarer had to make the critical discard. Switch around the East and West hands and dummy must discard before the defender with the two stoppers, and the defender is under no pressure.

In the last example, North's spade ten and diamond queen were menaces against West, but would have been ineffective as menaces against East, had he held the defensive stoppers, or guards. The reason for the lack of effectiveness if the guards were sitting over the menaces was that both menaces were in the same hand so that declarer had to make the critical decision ahead of the defender. Now look at what happens if declarer has one menace in each hand (again, the contract is in no-trumps):



Declarer cashes the ten of diamonds and either defender guarding both majors will be squeezed into submission.

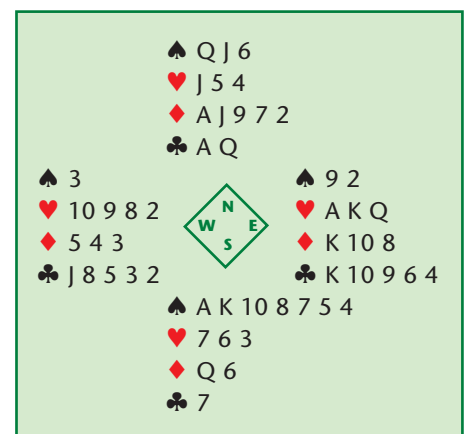


West leads the jack of hearts against the ambitious contract of 7♦. There appears to be only one chance; that the king of spades will fall under the ace. However, only one defender can guard the hearts and if he also holds the spade king he may be in trouble when declarer cashes the minor-suit winners.

Declarer wins the queen of hearts to keep his communications as fluid as possible and cashes four rounds of trumps and the ace of spades followed by four rounds of clubs. The last club sees West obliged to throw a heart to keep the king of spades. Dummy's spade queen can no longer be of any value so away it goes, and the squeeze has seen to it that dummy's hearts are now all good to bring home the contract.

A squeeze against either defender

Sometimes, declarer is able to convert a positional squeeze into one which will work against either defender.



South plays in 4♠ after East has opened 1NT (15-17). West leads ♥10. East wins the top three hearts and switches to a trump.

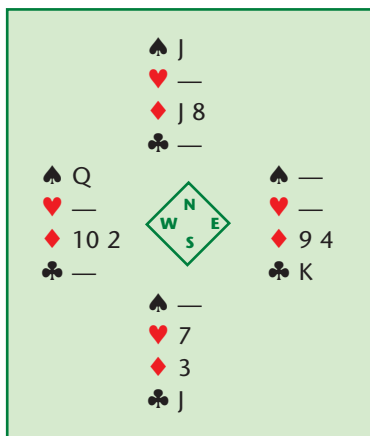
East's opening bid marks the position of both the missing kings so there can be no successful finesse. A squeeze is possible, however. As East is sitting over dummy, one of declarer's *menaces*, or threat cards, must be in his own hand, otherwise East can just wait to see what dummy discards ⇨

and follow suit to keep control.

Declarer wins trick four and cashes the diamond ace, leaving the queen as the threat card. Now he runs all the trumps, keeping the club ace-queen in dummy. If the king of diamonds has not appeared, declarer leads to the ace of clubs at trick twelve, confident that the king will drop. The play of cashing the ace of diamonds is known as a *Vienna Coup*, and was first recognised back in the days before the invention of bridge when Whist ruled the roost.

The Double Squeeze

Then there is the Double Squeeze.



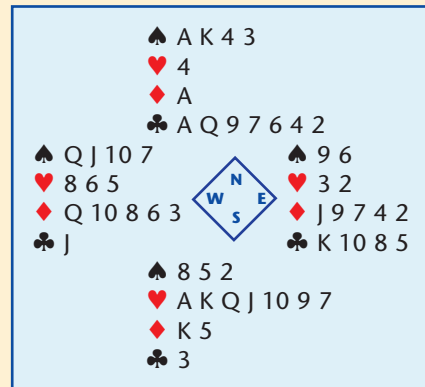
Declarer, in a no-trump contract, cashes the seven of hearts and West is squeezed out of one of his diamonds so as to keep the spade guard. The spade jack has done its work now, so is pitched from the dummy and the spotlight turns to East. He must keep the club king, so is also forced to discard a diamond. Declarer takes the last two tricks with the jack and eight of diamonds. □

PRIZE PLAY ANSWER

PIATNIK

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QUIZ master Julian Pottage gives his view of the best line of play in our October competition and awards prizes in three categories.



YOU play in 7♥ after an uncontested auction.

West leads the ♠Q, you play the ace from dummy and East follows.

You have twelve top tricks. The obvious place for the thirteenth trick is in clubs, with ruffing the suit good far preferable

to taking a finesse. If clubs break 4-1 with the king not singleton, you will need four entries to dummy – three to take ruffs and one to get back to the long card. This means you must time the play carefully.

Cash the ♣A and ruff a club high. If all follow, you can draw trumps and set up the clubs with ease: you need only two more entries to dummy, which you have with the ♦A and ♠K. In practice, West shows out.

You return to dummy with the ♦A and ruff another club high. You then ruff the winning ♦K in dummy. This allows you to take a third club ruff with a high trump. Finally, you draw trumps and cross to the ♠K to cash a long club.

You would be very unlucky to go down with this line.

Congratulations to the winners:

County: Sylvia Palmer, Shirley, Solihull

Regional: Matthew Kiggins, Sheffield

Open: Malcolm Young, Allestree, Derby

NEW QUIZ

This month's new **PIATNIK** Play Quiz is featured on page 21.

Paul Soloway 1941 – 2007

PAUL SOLOWAY of Seattle, USA, who has died aged 66, was one of the world's leading bridge-players. He won the Bermuda Bowl, the World Open Teams' title, on five occasions, and took silver in two Bermuda Bowls and two Olympiads.

Soloway learned bridge at college, and six months after graduating made bridge his full-time career. In 1971 he became a member of the 'Aces', the leading professional team in the USA. World titles in 1976, 1977 and 1979 were followed by a fallow period, but in 1998 he joined the USA's top team, led by Nick Nickell, replacing Bobby Wolff as partner to the world number one, Bob Hamman. This led to further Bermuda Bowl titles in 1999 and 2003.

Soloway was America's leading master-point holder having won more than two dozen national team titles, the most recent being this summer's Spingold. At the time of his death his master-point total of 65,500 was more than 6,000 ahead of the next on the list.

Soloway was due to be in the Nickell team for the World Championships last October in Shanghai but his ill health prevented him competing. Without him the team was eliminated at the end of the qualifying round robin, not reaching the quarter-finals.

Paul Soloway left a widow, Pam.

(Patrick Jourdain)



Photo: Ron Tacchi