

In a club game a few years back at the Beverly Hills bridge club, I encountered this hand.


		<u>North</u>			
		S: K Q 4			
		H: A J 10 5			
		D: A 10			
		C: K 9 6 3			
<u>West</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>East</u>	
S: J 9 8 6		S: A 10 5 2		S: 7 3	
H: void		H: K 9 7 4 3		H: Q 8 6 2	
D: 9 8 3 2		D: Q		D: K J 7 6 5 4	
C: A Q J 8 5		C: 10 7 2		C: 4	
				<u>Dealer: West</u>	
				<u>Vulnerability: N/S</u>	
				<u>The Bidding at our table:</u>	
				N	E S W
					2D P 3D
				Dbl	P 4H P
				P	P
				<u>Lead: Diamond Nine</u>	

The opening lead was the diamond nine, indicating that East had the diamond king so I won the ace. Presuming that if anyone was short in hearts, it rated to be East, I now played a heart to the king and was shocked when West showed out! I was now in great jeopardy of going down, looking at least two club losers, probably a spade loser and all of a sudden a trump loser as well.

Without any great analysis, I decided that I needed to find out what was happening in clubs before anything else and I led towards the king; West won the ace and continued with the queen. I hopefully played the king only to have it ruffed! The diamond king was now led and I dispiritedly trumped it.

Was there a way to still make 4H? Well - I knew a lot about the opponent's hands. East started with 6 diamonds, 4 hearts to the queen, 1 club and 2 spades. He was now down to queen-small of hearts. How could I avoid my club loser? If I eliminated spades and threw him in with ace and a heart – what then?

We're getting somewhere now! He would have to give me a sluff and a ruff, being forced to lead a diamond. If the jack of spades was doubleton in East's hand, I could throw my losing club and claim. What if the spade jack didn't drop, could I do anything about that? What would West be forced to come down to in the end-position? Could there be a "ruffing" squeeze on West? Hmm, in that case I'd need an entry to the club threat in dummy. Finally coming out of the tank, I cashed the king of spades, followed by a spade to the ace (the jack not dropping), leaving dummy with the singleton queen. I now played a heart to the ace and led another heart leaving this position:

		<u>North</u>			
		S: Q			
		H: x			
		D: void			
		C: 9 x			
	<u>West</u>	<u>South</u>		<u>East</u>	
	S: J x	S: 10 x		S: void	
	H: void	H: x		H: void	
	D: void	D: void		D: x x x <u>x</u>	
	C: J x	C: 10		C: void	
				Trick ten lead: A diamond by East	

This stripped East of all cards except diamonds and after being thrown in with the heart queen, he was forced to lead a diamond. I now pitched my losing club and ruffed the diamond on the dummy.

This trick squeezed *West* in two suits. If he pitched a spade, I would cash the spade queen, felling the jack, ruff a club to my hand and cash the now good spade ten. If he instead pitched a club, coming down to the singleton jack, I'd ruff a club, cross to the spade queen and dummy's last club would be good! ☺