

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

Meets every Thursday at 7.25 for 7.30
at Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Essex, England, CM15 0UG

“2020” Comments on “AN ELEGANT DOUBLE SQUEEZE BRINGS HOME A SLAM”

Submission by Alaric Cundy: [Click here](#)

Commentary by Alaric Cundy

Firstly, it is worth reminding readers that anybody can download the ‘Bridge Solver’ analytical tool for free, and use it to analyse different Declarer plays and / or defences, on any hand of their choosing – such as this one! To access ‘Bridge Solver Online’ go to this link:
<https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/upload.htm> It is also available to download as an App for Android devices or Chromebooks or as a Windows desktop App here:
<https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/index.php?section=1> This tool is embedded into the Bridgewebs website and it is used by the ‘Play it Again’ facility.

As ever, my first port of call on this hand, was to check out what *Bridge Solver* has to say about it, and it says that 13 tricks can be made in clubs, 12 in diamonds, but only 11 in No Trumps.

Looking first at 6NT by N, Bridge Solver claims that the contract can be beaten on the opening lead of a spade (as discussed in the original article), or alternatively, after a top heart lead. As noted in the article, the entries get messed up after a spade lead at trick 1, or, after a spade switch at trick 2 if the initial top heart is allowed to hold.

Anyway, we are in 6NT, the defence failed to find the killing spade lead at trick 1, so where do we go from here? As stated in the original article, there are 11 top tricks, assuming the clubs behave nicely, and 16 top tricks if the Queen of Diamonds falls in two rounds. When you are one trick short of target, a squeeze is often indicated as the potential winning line of play – all the more so when there is what looks like a running 6-card club suit, which if ‘run’ will require the opponents to find lots of discards.

Generally, when playing for a squeeze, the winning play usually involves losing whatever tricks can be spared early in the play. This idea is called ‘rectifying the count’. Here, we can afford to lose one trick, of course. Suppose we choose to win the opening heart lead; when we come to lose our one affordable loser, the opponents will have two hearts to cash – so if you are thinking ‘squeeze’, as you should be, it has to be right to duck the first trick – and hope that they don’t switch to something devastating! [All of this can be confirmed if you play the hand through using *Bridge Solver*.]

The play in 6D by North is trivial. It makes no difference what East chooses to lead at trick 1, but in practice, it will surely be a top heart? The opening trick is won in Dummy, and the safest play thereafter, just to avoid any possible banana skins, is to draw trumps, so cash the Ace of diamonds at trick 2, cross to the top spade, and lay down the King of Diamonds. When the Queen fails to drop, clearly, the only possible danger now would be getting cut off from Dummy’s Queen of Clubs – the parking space for the otherwise losing 3 of spades; that could happen if, for example, Declarer decided to ‘leave the Queen out’ and then if whoever held it was able to ruff the second round of clubs. The chances of a 4-1 break in clubs is approximately 29% (see

https://www.bridgewebs.com/mountnessingbc/How_will_that_suit_split.pdf), and the chance that the singleton club lies in the hand with three diamonds is better than half that, so ‘leave the Queen out’ incurs a completely unnecessary risk of upwards of 15% of failure. So – give up the Queen of trumps, then claim!

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7C can also be made on any lead when played by either North or South. Let's look at 7C by South. The textbooks say that against a grand slam in a suit, it is usually best to lead a trump at trick 1, so let's assume that West has read that book and leads a club, presumably the 4. Declarer is now assured of no trump losers – well, he didn't have any anyway, as it happens! We are actually looking at the same 11 tricks that presented in 6NT, except now we need two more! The 12th trick could obviously come from a heart ruff, but to get the total up to 13, after the opening trump lead, it will be necessary to get an extra trick out of the diamonds. I would favour this line:

Cash the Ace of diamonds at trick 2, followed by the Ace of hearts, and a heart ruff. Now the key is NOT to cash the King of Diamonds, but rather to play a *small* Diamond off table and ruff it. Why not cash the King of Diamonds first? That would require Declarer to cross back to hand (to draw trumps) by ruffing the *third* round of diamonds, and there is a significantly enhanced risk of an over-ruff or trump promotion. Play safer – ruff the *second* (not King) Diamond! Now draw trumps, cross to Dummy with a Spade, cash the King of diamonds, felling the Queen – and your original 11 top tricks has become 16!!!!