

HIDDEN PLAYS

I usually do not deal with end plays and squeeze plays, because new players find these topics very difficult to deal with. The newer players who read the Bulletin every month usually skip the Test Your Play column by Eddie Kantar, because the hands are too hard. But this month he had two hands which are so neat, and which show how squeeze plays and end plays can be made by anyone, not just by super advanced players. While the hands are his, the commentary, or most of it, is mine,

```
A Q J
K 3 2
A K J
10 7 6 4

K 9 8 7 6 3 2
A 7 6
---
A 5 2
```

You reach an optimistic contract of 7 spades. West leads a club. You win the Ace. You count your winners, and no matter how many times you count them, they only add up to 12. You need another trick. Yes the queen of diamonds might drop, but that means that someone has 8 diamonds. Don't rely on that; in fact don't even think about it. Look deep into the hand, and try to find another trick.

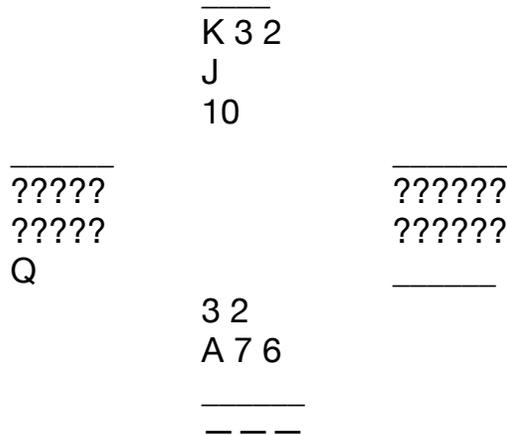
AHA. LOOK AT THE CLUB SUIT!!! Maybe it will split 3/3. Not much hope, but better than the diamonds. So you play a spade to the dummy and note that both players follow. You draw the last trump, and trump a club in your hand. Both follow. So far, so good. You play a spade to the dummy and lead a club, and trump it. It is hard to see that you can throw away two clubs and then trump two clubs, and set up the fourth club in the dummy. But you did it.

Scenario 1 - Both follow. Take a deep breath, and cash out. You have manufactured thirteen tricks, for a cold top, unless someone bids and makes 7 no trump. Isn't this a neat "secret play?"

Scenario 2 - East shows out on the third club.

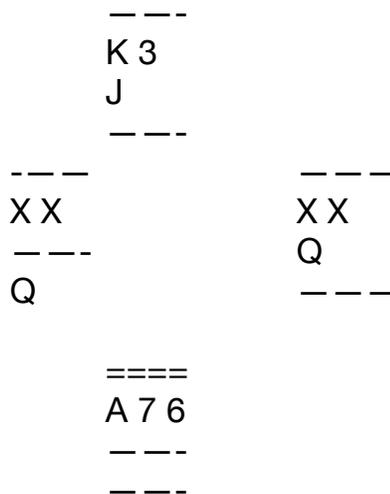
Scenario 3 - West shows out on the third club.

Now, because you are so good at squeeze plays, you suddenly wish you were in 7 No Trump, because if you make it, you beat everyone in 7 Spades, making. Don't even think about going down. Run your spades. You have pulled three rounds, and trumped twice, so you still have two spades. Let's deal first with the hand in which East showed out. This is the position before play the last two spades.



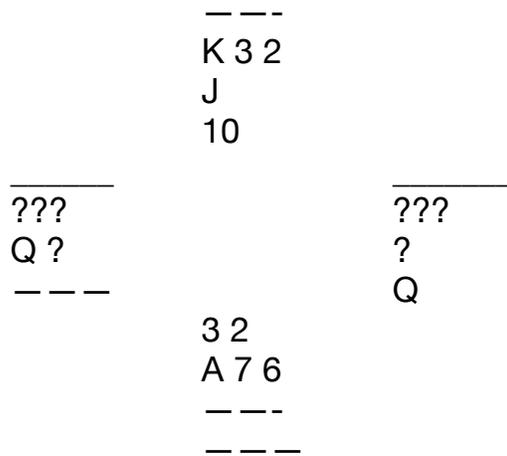
You play a spade, and throw a heart from the dummy. West must keep a club. So he has to throw something, so he throws a heart. East is smiling, so you know that he has the queen of diamonds, and is planning to set you. He throws a heart. Now you play the last spade. Again, West throws a heart and you no longer need the club, so you throw it. East, hanging on to his queen of diamonds, throws a heart.

Here is the final position:



West had to keep a club, East had to keep a diamond. No one could hold three hearts, and your six wins the thirteenth trick. Simple!! To really, but a great play.

Now let's look at the hand when East held the fourth club. Here you have to play West for the queen of diamonds. We come down to the same end position:



Again, you play a spade, and throw a heart from dummy. West and East can each comfortably throw a diamond. But when you play the last spade, West must throw a heart. You throw the jack of diamonds from the dummy. East must hold a club, So he must throw a heart. Now, the third heart in your hand again wins the last trick. As long as the high club and high diamond are in opposite hands, they cannot stop you from making seven.

For a squeeze to work, you must have all of the remaining tricks but one, and there must be a side suit that one or both players need to protect. This hand is a double squeeze, something that does not come up often, but when you see one, and execute it, you will remember it forever.

— — — —
 Q J 10 9
 K Q J 9
 A J 7 3 2

K 3
 A 4
 A 4 3 2
 K 10 9 8 4

This time you are in 6 Clubs. West leads the ace of spades and you ruff in dummy. This contract looks pretty good. If clubs split, and if East has the king of hearts, you make seven. But, what if both suits are wrong, can you still make the contract? Think about the end position. If you can make West lead hearts, you get a free finesse. So, the only thing that can harm you is if East has three to the queen. So you start clubs with the ace in the dummy, When East follows, the contract is cold. If West shows out, you can take the finesse, pick up the suit, and later take the heart finesse, making seven if their heart (the king) is in the right place.

No, East shows out. So you play a club to the king, leaving West with the queen of clubs, cash the king of spades, and eliminate the diamonds. If West ruffs in, he must lead a heart, giving you a ruff and a sluff, and if he does not ruff in, you have taken away all of his safe exits, strip and eliminate, so you put him with a club, and again he has the same set of bad choices. Making 6.

All that we have done here is gone back to basics.

Count your winners. 12 off the top if clubs split, and 11 if you go wrong in clubs.

Where can I get an extra trick? Heart finesse, if I need it.

What can go wrong? Can I do better if both go wrong?

If you can work through it, you can work out the end position described above. Making 6.

You do not have to be an expert to make plays like this. If you have seen them a few times, you will get a feel for them, and once you have executed one or two successfully, it will become a habit.