

## **Hand of the Week 12/3/19**

By Susan and Mike Smith

### **The Dark Arts**

Many players look at squeezes as mysterious and only to be attempted by experts. With some study and practice, you can learn the basics of squeeze play.

A simple squeeze operates when four conditions are met:

1. one of the opponents is guarding two suits,
2. you have only one remaining loser,
3. one of the suits an opponent is guarding is over him positionally, and
4. there is an entry to the threat opposite the squeeze card.

Here is an example hand from the recent Mansfield regional (hand rotated and adjusted for this article).

Dlr: W	♠ A975
Vul: Both	♥ AJ6
	♦ AKJ62
	♣ 3
♠ KJ643	♠ Q102
♥ 3	♥ 742
♦ 753	♦ Q4
♣ AKQJ	♣ 108765
	♠ 8
	♥ KQ10985
	♦ 1098
	♣ 942

N  
W ————— E  
|      |  
|      |  
S

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♠	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: ♣A

Playing in a pairs event, you have an ambitious auction to arrive at 6 Hearts and a receive a club lead and continuation. You ruff in dummy and take stock. The opponents have a trick, and you have six heart tricks in your hand, two ruffs in dummy, the ace of spades and two diamonds,

equaling 11 tricks, so you only have one remaining loser. You need 12 tricks and you know West has five spades. You play the Ace of spades, ruff a spade, ruff a club high, cash the Ace of diamonds, ruff a spade, and pull three rounds of trumps. This is the situation:

Dlr: W	♠ 9
Vul: Both	♥ --
	♦ KJ
	♣ --
♠ K	N
♥ --	W E
♦ 75	S
♣ --	
	♠ --
	♥ --
	♦ Q
	♣ 108
♠ --	
♥ 9	
♦ 98	
♣ --	

When you play your last trump, the squeeze card, West must keep the King of Spades, and so must throw a Diamond. You now throw away the nine of spades and now lead a diamond. You have been carefully counting the spades and know that West still has the King of Spades, so that when he plays the 7 of diamonds, he cannot have the queen. You play the King of Diamonds and drop the doubleton queen offside. Note that you make your contract in this situation when West has the Queen of Diamonds or East has the doubleton Queen. This is because you know that West must guard Spades, and cannot guard both Spades and Diamonds. The squeeze works because West must guard both spades and presumably diamonds, you have 11 tricks and need 12, both the Spade threat and the Diamond threat are over West, and you have a Diamond entry opposite the squeeze card of the Nine of Hearts.

Note, you should play bridge rather than looking for a squeeze. You ruff your losers in dummy and make sure that West has to guard Spades. If you are aware of the conditions necessary for a squeeze, they will come your way. Welcome to the dark arts.

Recommended reading: Bridge Squeezes Complete by Clyde E. Love.