

10 - 2023 – Squeeze Play in 7NT

Here is a big hand from last week

Dealer North, all Vul

Q
A832
J3
AK10953

AKJ54
KQ4
AK76
J

THE BIDDING (EW silent throughout)

North opened 1 Club (could be short)

South bid 1S

North has 14 HCP, and now faces a dilemma. The Hand is not balanced for 1NT, is too strong for 2C, and bidding 2H with such a weak suit seems wrong. North should simply bid 3C. That tells Partner he has a good Club suit and better than an opening hand

South has 21 HCP, and then took over. After a 4NT Ace ask (RCKB), South knew they had all the Aces and Kings, but not CQ

South closed off in 7NT. [I think without CQ and with South having no 10s or 9s, this is too risky. I would have closed off in 6NT. That gives a good score]

Anyway, 7NT by South it was

THE PLAY (South is Declarer)

Here are the full hands:

	Q	
	A832	
	J3	
	AK10953	
1082		9763
J10965		7
1092		Q854
82		Q764
	AKJ54	
	KQ4	
	AK76	
	J	

West correctly led HJ

As Declarer, before doing anything - firstly, count your sure winners. You have 4 Spades, 3 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 2 Clubs. That is 11, 2 short

Where will 2 more come from? If you finesse the CQ, that will give you 1 extra Club if the finesse works (or many more if the finesse works, and you play CA and CK and CQ falls)

The Club finesse is all or nothing – either it works or not

Another way is to hope the Spades break 4:3. That gives you trick 12 with the long Spade

But then, where will trick 13 come from? If Hearts break 3:3, or the person with long Hearts throws them, then you will make the long Heart as Trick 13

At our Table, Declarer won HJ with HQ, then led CJ at Trick 2, and overtook it in Dummy with CA, cashed CK. Unfortunately, CQ did not fall doubleton (a low chance). Then he cashed SQ and led DJ. East covered with DQ (correct) and South overtook with DA

The Declarer ran the 4 Spade winners (Spades broke 4:3)

West felt the heat on the last Spade (Trick 9). He had thrown a Heart on the second last Spade, but could not throw another on the last Spade (if he did, with 6 Hearts then gone and with Declarer holding 5, Dummy's last Heart will be Trick 13). So, he threw a Diamond. Dummy then threw a Heart, and East a Club

This was the position then:

	-	
	A8	
	3	
	10	
-		-
1096		-
10		854
-		Q
	-	
	Q4	
	A7	
	-	

South then played HQ, and went over to HA. West played 2 Hearts, and East played 2 Diamonds (he could not throw CQ as C10 is then best)

Declarer is then in Dummy. He knows that there are only 2 Diamonds still out with EW (having counted carefully), and he knows East has CQ and a Diamond, and West H10 and a Diamond

So, he plays a Diamond to his DA in hand, and D7 is best – Trick no 13. A Double Squeeze

MORAL OF THE STORY

You make this Hand by playing carefully and counting. You look for all opportunities – such as Clubs being 4:2 with the CQ a doubleton. When that fails, you try the squeeze. Here it works

The alternative line (not unreasonable) is to take the Club finesse. I think the squeeze (preceded by the hope Clubs break with CQ doubleton or that a sleepy Defender throws Hearts away), is better

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Bridge lover

23 March 2023