

# 23- 2024 – The Phantom Squeeze

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The Ghost Who Walks brought off an unmakeable Slam

**Dealer E, Both Vul**

	<b>NORTH</b>		
	AKQJ942		
	983		
	K7		
	8		
		<b>EAST</b>	
<b>WEST</b>		765	
108		Q10	
A54		A10932	
864		1064	
Q9532			
	<b>SOUTH</b>		
	3		
	KJ762		
	QJ5		
	AKJ7		
<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>
P	1H	P	1S
P	1NT	P	6S (1)
P	P	P	

(1) Hmm – how about asking for Aces?

## THE PLAY

East led DA, Declarer throwing DK to preserve entries to Dummy. East followed with D2 (a Spade, Heart or Club would have been better). Declarer won DQ and cashed DJ throwing a Heart from Hand (phew, not ruffed by EW)

Then a Spade to hand, drawing Trumps in 3 rounds

*How should Declarer now play?*

It is certain West has HA, as East would surely have cashed it at Trick 2

Declarer can make the Contract by finessing Clubs if East has CQ (7 Spades, 2 Diamonds and 3 Clubs). This is a 50:50 chance. If the finesse fails, then the score may be worse (West will cash HA), but 6S going down any number is going to be a very bad score as it should not have been bid missing 2 Aces, so Declarer may as well risk everything

So, what can Declarer do but finesse?

Declarer ran the last 4 Spades. East threw 2 Diamonds and 2 Clubs. West threw 2 Clubs and 2 Hearts

This was the 4-card ending when Declarer played the last Spade (S2):

<b>NORTH</b>	
2 ( <i>Declarer plays this</i> )	
98	
-	
8	
<b>WEST</b>	<b>EAST</b>
-	-
A	Q10
-	-
Q95	106
<b>SOUTH</b>	
-	
K	
-	
AKJ	

East played C6, Dummy threw HK, and what does West throw? He thought North may have HQ (given the jump to 6S), so he could not throw HA. So, he threw C6. Declarer has seen 5 Clubs discarded, plus one from Dummy = 6 gone. He has 4 left = 10. That leaves 3 Clubs unaccounted for. Declarer then led a low Club to CA, CK and CJ, making 6S despite being 2 Aces down and CQ offside

You could ask:

- Would the Club finesse at 50% still have been better odds than the way Declarer played? (I suggest not – but if you think so, at least run all but 1 of your Spades seeing what is thrown before you finesse)
- What if East had helped West by throwing HQ on S2 (telling him to discard HA after HK is thrown)? (As West does not know where H10 is, this is not much help)

### **MORAL OF THE STORY**

6S is a poor jump without asking for Aces, but the Phantom Squeeze saved the Slam. The motto is: *Never give up, no matter how hopeless things look*

**Ian Morison**

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