

4 Preparing for a Squeeze

By Mike Lawrence

♠ AKQJ10752
♥ Q2
♦ A2
♣ 6

South had an odd hand to open in first seat. He was conflicted between 1♠, 2♣, and 4♠. He knew that bidding 4♠ with this good a hand might cause him to miss a slam. Still, bidding 4♠ would probably stop the opponents from competing. There were, after all, three suits for the opponents to compete in. He considered opening 2♣. The ACBL has some rules about what is needed to constitute a legal 2♣ bid and South was pretty sure that his hand qualified. There was no lawyer around to tell him otherwise but in the end, he opened 1♠ because he felt that 2♣ should promise better controls. If his ♥Q had been the king, he would have bid 2♣. Here is the bidding that followed South's 1♠ bid.

Dealer South: All Vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| | | | 1♠ |
| 2♥ | Pass | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | 5♥ | Pass | 6♠ |
| All Pass | | | |

South was disappointed that North had not done anything over 2♥ and decided reasonably to jump to 4♠. South needed just one trick from North to make game. Surprisingly, North now came to life. North's 5♥ bid was a cue bid saying that he had a heart control and he was interested in slam. South had what he promised so he jumped to 6♠. Here is the layout facing South.

North
♠ 64
♥ A54
♦ QJ543
♣ K74

South
♠ AKQJ10752
♥ Q2
♦ A2
♣ 6

West led the ♠3 and East followed with the eight. South won and drew the last trump, which West had. East discarded the ♣Q.

Making this hand is not that difficult if you are familiar with squeezes. The key is that South has information from the bidding. Do you remember the bidding and the vulnerability? It will help you in the play.

The first part of the play is predictable. After the trumps, South plays a club. West takes his ♣A and plays another club. If West had played a heart or a diamond, that would have been good for you. What do you discard on the ♣K?

One play you can consider is discarding the ♥2 and taking the diamond finesse. The bidding, however, suggests that this is not the best play. If you think West has the ♦K, you should discard your ♦2. Now come to your hand with the ♦A and lead spades.

West has the ♦K and the ♥K and won't be able to protect both red kings when you play your last spade. This is the three card end position.

| | |
|------|-------|
| | North |
| | ♠ |
| | ♥ A5 |
| | ♦ Q |
| | ♣ |
| West | |
| ♠ | |
| ♥ KJ | |
| ♦ K | |
| ♣ | |
| | South |
| | ♠ 2 |
| | ♥ Q2 |
| | ♦ |
| | ♣ |

When South leads the ♠2, West gives up.
Here is the entire hand.

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ 64 | |
| | ♥ A54 | |
| | ♦ QJ543 | |
| | ♣ K74 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 93 | | ♠ 8 |
| ♥ KJ10973 | | ♥ 86 |
| ♦ K7 | | ♦ 10986 |
| ♣ A82 | | ♣ QJ10953 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ AKQJ10752 | |
| | ♥ Q2 | |
| | ♦ A2 | |
| | ♣ 6 | |

MIKE'S ADVICE

If you overlook the information you get from the bidding, you are likely to choose the wrong line.
Here, West bid 2♥, vulnerable, suggesting that he has the ♥K and the ♦K. Not a 100% inference, but a good enough one to nudge you into the winning line.