

## ♠♥♦♣ SQUEEZING OUT THE 13<sup>TH</sup> TRICK ♠♥♦♣

I don't know how you did it, but you got yourself into a 7NT contract. Your LHO leads the ♠J and you get to see the dummy:

N	North
♠	AK64
♥	K4
♦	6543
♣	973

West leads ♠J

S	South
♠	Q5
♥	AQ52
♦	A7
♣	AKQJ10

You count up the top tricks and you are disappointed to find you can only count to 12 😞 You look for finesses and see none. You can't trump anything because you are in notrump. Your longest combined suits are only 6 cards long so you can't hope for a 3-3 split. You wish you had stopped at 6NT.

There is only one possibility, although it is a long shot. When all else fails, you can try for a squeeze play. Squeeze plays sound mysterious. They are, but in this case not so much.

The squeeze play is when one opponent is guarding two suits and is forced to discard one of the guards, making your small card in that suit take a trick. Here, you have two good 4-card suits. You have the top three honors in both spades and hearts, and if the outstanding cards in those suits break 4-3, and the same opponent hold four or more cards in both majors, you can force him to discard his 4<sup>th</sup> card in one of those suits. Imagine that West holds 4 spades and 4 hearts. You have 6 winning tricks in the two side suits. If you play them all off, on the 6<sup>th</sup> trick, West will have to reduce his hand to 7 cards. Thus he must reduce his holding in one of the majors to 3 cards. We say West has been squeezed.

Win the first spade lead with the ♠Q and play the ♦A and all your clubs. On the last club watch West's discard. Whichever major suit he chooses to discard from, you will play your small 4<sup>th</sup> card for the 13<sup>th</sup> winner.

Of course there is a possibility that East has the 4-card holding in the two major suits. That will work just as well. I've shown both deals below so you can experiment with the squeeze technique.

West holds both guard cards:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ AK64 ♥ K4 ♦ 6543 ♣ 973	W   N   E   S P   P   P   7NT	
	<b>W West</b> ♠ J1098 ♥ 10763 ♦ Q108 ♣ 52	<b>E East</b> ♠ 732 ♥ J98 ♦ KJ92 ♣ 864	
	<b>S South</b> ♠ Q5 ♥ AQ52 ♦ A7 ♣ AKQJ10		
			7NT S    NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y9lhjzjk>, Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.

If East holds the guard cards:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ AK64 ♥ K4 ♦ 6543 ♣ 973	W   N   E   S P   P   P   7NT	
	<b>W West</b> ♠ 732 ♥ J98 ♦ KJ92 ♣ 864	<b>E East</b> ♠ J1098 ♥ 10763 ♦ Q108 ♣ 52	
	<b>S South</b> ♠ Q5 ♥ AQ52 ♦ A7 ♣ AKQJ10		
			7NT S    NS: 0 EW: 0

The link to the play this arrangement is: <https://tinyurl.com/y9254uet>