♣♥◆♠ SLAM ON A SQUEEZE♠♥◆♠

Your partner is the dealer and opens $1 \spadesuit$. East passes and this is your hand:



You have 18 HCP and partner opened. You should be thinking about Slam! Your first response is 2 - 1, forcing to at least 3NT. Partner rebids 2NT. You could easily bid 3NT and that would be where you'd play. But this hand is too strong. It's worth a slam investigation.

The bid of a suit at the 3-level, after a game force initial response, is a stopper showing bid. A rebid of 3♣ is suggesting 6 Clubs. You don't have six but a very strong 5-card Club suit.

Your partner now supports Clubs with a 4♠ rebid. Now that you know you have a Club fit, you can use Losing Trick Coutn. Your Losing Count is 5 and your partner has 7 since he opened and encouraged you to the 4-level. That is a total of 12. Subtracting 12 from 24 results is 12 tricks that you should be able to take in Clubs.

The only remaining information to glean is the presence of at least 1 Ace in partner's hand. Your 4NT elicits a $5 \checkmark$ response, confirming both of the missing Aces. You end up in $6 \spadesuit$.

Wests leads the ♦6 and you see this dummy:



West lead: ♦6

Assuming Club behave, you count 11 top tricks. 5 Clubs, 3 Spades, 1 Heart and 2 Diamonds. You see 4 Diamond honors that could have produced 3 tricks if you had a extra Diamonds in your hand. With the lay of the cards, you will have to play two of those honors on the same trick. That leaves the finesse of the •Q as your 50-50 shot of making this contract.

But wait, there are two techniques we haven't thought about. How about an End Play? No, you need trumps in both hands when you throw the opponents into the lead and you are going to need at least three rounds of trump to draw the 5 Clubs outstanding.

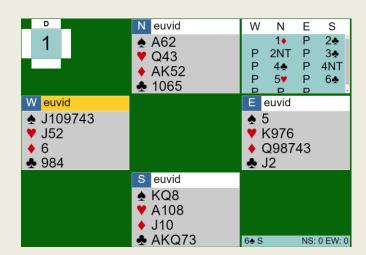
That leaves the Squeeze Play. If the same opponent is holding the \P K and \P Q, we can make him unguard one of those suits by taking 9 tricks. In order to guard the \P K the defender must keep 2 Hearts; to guard the \P Q, he must keep 3 Diamonds. That's a total of 5 cards and he must give up one of those suits on the \P th trick.

In any squeeze play, it is required to lose the trick you can afford to lose, early in the play. That is called "rectifying the count."

After winning the opening lead and drawing three rounds of Clubs, lead the ♥10 to the dummy. West will cover and you play the ♥Q. West will win the ♥K. Actually, it doesn't matter which card you play from the dummy because you want to lose this trick.

Now win the Heart return and play all your winners in the Spades and Clubs. You must be careful that you watch all of the Heart and Diamond discards, and keep a count of the two red suits. East, in this layout, will be forced to either discard his ♥9 or drop one of the two Diamonds he needs to guard his ♦Q.

This is the entire deal:



You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: https://tinyurl.com/2hn2lmzn, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the

"Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.
Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.
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