

## SQUEEZE PLAYS

### ABOUT THE DEALS

The first page of each Deal shows both your hand and partner's, along with a possible auction. Feel free to disagree with the bidding; it is only there so as to get to a contract appropriate for some particular squeeze play. In fact, the bidding is irrelevant except in Deals where the opponent's bids may influence your actions.

With both hands visible and the opening lead noted you are asked to make a Plan for each Deal. This is to get you started thinking about how you would play the hand. When ready just click on **NEXT** to go to the next page.

In most of the Deals, all subsequent pages show all four hands. These subsequent pages show the progression of all the hands as the Deal is being played.

Having the defender's hands visible at the second page is not a perfect scenario. For example, there will be situations where you, as Declarer, are still playing for a suit to split 3-3 when you only have to peek at the hands to see that the split is 4-2. However, the other possibility of keeping the defender's hands hidden until later would prevent you from seeing how your plays are squeezing them. On balance, we decided to use the more open method.

You are always going to be the Declarer, playing in the South position.

You will notice that a large portion of the 20 Deals are slam hands. This is not because Squeezes don't arise in lower contracts, just that the presentation and explanations are less cluttered when there is only one (or none) trick that can be lost.

### SQUEEZE PLAYS SUMMARY

The basic principle of a Squeeze Play can be summed up with this statement.

A DEFENDER CANNOT HOLD ON TO THREE GUARD CARDS WHEN HE HAS ONLY TWO CARDS IN HIS HAND

♠ K  
♥ A J  
♦

South is in her hand and she plays the ♦A.

♦  
♠ A  
♥ K Q  
♦



West cannot throw his ♠A because dummy's ♠K would then be high.

♦  
♠ A  
♥ K Q  
♦  
♠ 2  
♥ 2  
♦ A

But he also cannot throw his ♥Q because then South would discard dummy's ♠K and win two tricks with ♥A, ♥J.

We say that West is Squeezed in ♠s and ♥s. He needed to keep all three cards at a time when he had to come down to just two.

The statement in the blue box is definitely True, but it isn't complete.

You could also say:

A defender cannot hold four guards when he has only three cards.

Or even:

A defender cannot hold eight guards when he has only seven cards.

You get the idea. Look at an example of the eight and seven situation:

♠ A K Q 2  
♥ 5 4 3  
♦ 2

South is in her hand and she plays the ♦A.

♠ 7 6  
♥ 7 6  
♦ Q J 9  
8



♠ J 10 9 8  
♥ J 10 9 8  
♦ ♦

East needs to keep all 4 ♠s to stop dummy's ♠2.  
But he also must keep all 4 ♥s to stop your ♥2, (though he might not realize the importance of this).

♠ 5 4 3  
♥ A K Q 2  
♦ A

We say that East is Squeezed in ♠s and ♥s. He needed to keep all eight cards at a time when he had to come down to just seven.

Perhaps it is already obvious to you that all those extra winners in each hand don't affect the fundamental squeeze position. Take the last example and play dummy's ♠ A K and then your own ♥ A K Q. You would then have this basic position:

♠ Q 2  
♥  
♦ 2

All the extra winners have already been won and you are down to basics.

Play the ♦A and squeeze East in ♠s and ♥s.

♠  
♥  
♦ Q J 9



♠ J 10  
♥ J  
♦ ♦

♠ 5  
♥ 2  
♦ A

There are three terms we use when talking about squeezes.

A **THREAT** is a card which is not yet a winner but THREATENS to become a winner if a defender discards a higher card in the suit. In the example above your ♥2 and dummy's ♠2 are both Threats.

A **GUARD** is a card(s) held by a defender that is preventing one of your Threats from becoming a winner. East's ♠ J 10 is a Guard against dummy's ♠2 and East's ♥J is a Guard against your ♥2.

The **SQUEEZE CARD** is the card you play which forces a defender to give up one of his Guards. Here the Squeeze Card was the ♦A.

**Automatic Squeeze:**

Remember this?

♠ A K Q 2  
♥ 5 4 3  
♦ 2

South plays the ♦A and **EAST** is Squeezed in ♠s and ♥s.

♠ 7 6  
♥ 7 6  
♦ Q J 9 8



♠ J 10 9 8  
♥ J 10 9 8  
♦ ♦

♠ 5 4 3  
♥ A K Q 2  
♦ A

Suppose the East and West hands were switched:

♠ A K Q 2  
♥ 5 4 3  
♦ 2

South plays the ♦A and **WEST** is Squeezed in ♠s and ♥s.

♠ J 10 9 8  
♥ J 10 9 8  
♦ ♦



♠ 7 6  
♥ 7 6  
♦ Q J 9 8

♠ 5 4 3  
♥ A K Q 2  
♦ A

An automatic squeeze is just a squeeze which will work equally well against either defender.

Deal 1 shows you a full example of an automatic squeeze. Feel free to go there right now and then come back for the next bit.

### Positional Squeeze:

Remember this?

♠ K  
♥ A J  
♦ ♦

South plays the ♦A and **WEST** is Squeezed in ♠s and ♥s.

♠ A  
♥ K Q  
♦ ♦



♠ 10  
♥ 9 8  
♦ ♦

♠ 2  
♥ 2  
♦ A

Suppose the East and West hands were switched:

♠ K  
♥ A J  
♦

South plays the ♦A and **EAST** is not squeezed at all!  
In fact it is dummy that is squeezed. Since dummy has to play before East does, East just watches and discards the same suit as dummy.

♠ 10	N	♠ A
♥ 9 8	W	♥ K Q
♦	S	♦
	E	

♠ 2  
♥ 2  
♦ A

This is a Positional Squeeze, so called because it only works on one of the Defenders.

Deal 2 is an example of a positional squeeze. Feel free to go check it out, then come back.

### Rectifying the Count:

That may sound rather high-tech but it's not really that bad.

MOST SQUEEZES CAN ONLY OCCUR WHEN  
YOU MUST WIN ALL THE REST OF THE TRICKS

Look at this end position one more time.

♠ K	N	♠ 10
♥ A J	W	♥ 9 8
♦	S	♦
♠ A	E	
♥ K Q		
♦		

♠ 2  
♥ 2  
♦ A

South needs to win all the rest of the tricks.

South plays the ♦A and **WEST** is squeezed in ♠s and ♥s.  
He is squeezed because all of his cards are Busy - they are all doing guardwork.

Now give everybody an extra ♥.

♠ K  
♥ A J 6  
♦

South needs to win 3 of the last 4 tricks.

South plays the ♦A and **WEST** is not squeezed.  
He has one card, the ♥7, which is not Busy doing guardwork.  
So he just discards that card and awaits his two tricks.

♠ A  
♥ K Q 7  
♦



♠ 10  
♥ 10 9 8  
♦

♠ 2  
♥ 4 2  
♦ A

If you checked out Deals 1 and 2 earlier you didn't run across this problem. And for a very good reason - both of those Deals involved Grand Slams so you were already in a spot where you needed the "rest of the tricks".

When you are playing a small slam, though, rectifying the count is vital. So when your Plan calls for a squeeze to be made at the end you will have to give up one trick to the defenders early.

Deal 3 (surprise) just happens to demonstrate rectifying the count. So if you want to see it work in the context of a full deal just check that out and then come back when you are done.

### The Vienna Coup:

Nice name, huh?

Take a look at this ending, where South needs to win all four tricks. South is in her hand and can certainly win the three Aces. She has two Threats, the ♠Q and the ♥Q with which she hope to squeeze East.

♠ A Q  
♥ A 6  
♦

South plays the ♦A and discards the ♥6 from dummy.

♠ 9  
♥ 8 7 3  
♦



♠ K 4  
♥ K J  
♦

East will throw his ♥J because he can see that he must hold onto both ♠s.  
Dummy's ♥A now drops the ♥K, and establishes South's ♥Q.  
**BUT SHE HAS NO ENTRY TO IT, SHE IS LOCKED IN DUMMY.**

♠ 7  
♥ Q 4  
♦ A

So, let us apply the Vienna Coup! At some earlier time, perhaps the first trick, or the fourth trick or whenever, dummy's ♥A was played. So the ending would now look like this:

♠ A Q  
♥ 6  
♦

South plays the ♦A and discards the ♥6 from dummy.

♠ 9  
♥ 8 7  
♦



♠ K 4  
♥ K  
♦

East is squeezed in ♥s and ♠s.  
The difference here is that South no longer needs an extra entry to her ♥Q because she is already in her hand.

♠ 7  
♥ Q  
♦ A

## THE VIENNA COUP IS THE CASHING OF A HIGH CARD IN ONE HAND TO CREATE A THREAT IN THE OTHER HAND

Want to see the Vienna Coup in action?  
Go to Deal 7, then come on back.

### The Suicide Squeeze: (aka the Cannibal Squeeze)

This squeeze often occurs when the defenders have made a mistake, but there are some situations where they defend perfectly and still get caught in it. What happens is that one defender cashes a winner and in so doing squeezes his partner.

Look at this ending:

♠ Q 10	West cashes the ♦J.
♥ 6 4	
♦	Discard the ♥4 from dummy and the ♠4 from your hand. East is squeezed and you win the last three tricks.
♠ 6 5	
♥ 7	
♦ J	If West had just ignored the ♦ winner and led one of the other suits East would have been assured of taking 2 tricks.
♠ 7 4	
♥ J 8	
♦	

There is just one Suicide Squeeze Deal presented in this set so I won't identify it for you, just be on the lookout.

### The Double Squeeze:

Usually you think of a squeeze occurring when one defender is trying to guard two suits. In these descriptions we have often said "East is squeezed in ♠s and ♥s." But sometimes when you are trying to set up a squeeze on one player it will turn out that West guards one suit but East guards the other suit. So you try to get a situation where neither one can guard a THIRD suit.

That sounds messier than it should. Suppose you have a long ♦ suit which you play to use for a squeeze. It turns out that West guards a ♠ threat while East guards a ♥ threat.

You will say to yourself: "West guards the spades, East guards the hearts, nobody can guard the clubs."

Here is how it works:

♠ K 7

♥

♦

♣ A 8 4

♠ J 10

♥

♦

♣ Q 10 6



♠

♥ Q 10

♦

♣ J 9 5

♠ 5

♥ J

♦ 5

♣ K 7

You play your ♦5.

West is not squeezed, but he must keep both ♠s to guard against dummy so he is forced to discard a ♣. Since you know your ♠7 cannot win a trick now you throw it. East is not squeezed, he can spare the ♥10.

But you then play a ♠ to dummy's ♠K. This squeezes East who now has the sole guard for both ♥s and ♣s. He will probably throw his ♣5 in which case you take the last 3 ♣ tricks.

Deal 13 is a good example of a Double Squeeze.

**That's all folks:**

I didn't start this lesson by talking about how difficult Squeeze Plays are. As you have seen, though, they do require some effort, both learning how to execute them and in the execution itself. Most of the examples here are classified as Simple Squeezes. There is another whole level.

If your interest is piqued you might want to look for the Vise Squeeze, or perhaps the Winkle and the Stepping-Stone squeeze. How about the Trump Squeeze or the Criss-cross squeeze?

Good luck.

**Deal 1**