

## SQUEEZES

Squeezes occur when an opponents (or opponents) are forced to make discard(s) that are disadvantageous for their side. Because Declarer has charge of 26 cards (his/her own and Dummy's) and each defender has only 13 cards, it is sometimes easy for Declarer to bring pressure to bear on either or both defenders.

In a **simple squeeze**, you need:

- 1) At least two **threat suits**. (A threat suit is a suit that contains a potential winner. For example: AK8 the 8 of spades is a potential winner (if either or both opponents discard or unguard their QJ109 of spades so that they fall under the AK. In this case, spades would be a threat suit.)
- 2) At least one threat suit must have an **entry** (to get to it).
- 3) Declarer must have **enough winners to take all the remaining tricks except one**. If this does not yet exist, Declarer must lose some tricks ("rectify the count") until only one loser is left.
- 4) If there are two threat suits, the **same opponent must guard both** of those suits.

A simple squeeze may be **positional** or **automatic**. In a positional squeeze, both threats lie opposite the squeeze card and must be behind the hand being squeezed (in the "upper" hand) so that one specific threat or the other can be discarded, depending on what the opponent in front unguards or discards. For example, Dummy has: Qxxx AKQ8 Kx xxx and Declarer has x xx AQJxxxx Axx and contract is 6D. LHO leads Ace of spades and shifts to a low club. Take Ace of clubs and play out ALL the trumps, retaining Q of spades and AKQ8 of hearts in dummy. On the final trump, if LHO does NOT discard the King of spades, discard the queen of spades and play the hearts from the top. If LHO has 4 hearts along with the AK of spades, s/he is squeezed positionally. In the 4-card ending LHO cannot keep 4 hearts AND the King of spades.

In an **automatic** squeeze, one threat lies opposite the squeeze card, and one threat is in the same hand as the squeeze card. (Therefore, one threat is in the "upper hand" for one opponent and one for the other opponent.) An idle card (NOT a threat card) is discarded on the squeeze card. For example: Dummy has AKQ2 543 Kxx xxx and Declarer has 654 AK10 AQJ10xx A. The lead is a diamond (trump). Pull trumps. Cash Ace of clubs and cash ALL the trumps. If either opponent has 4 spades and the QJ of hearts, that opponent will be squeezed. (Dummy retains AKQ2 54.)

### Procedure:

- 1) **Avoid ducking a trick in a threat suit** when rectifying the count. (You may destroy your threat.)
- 2) Take your tricks in non-threat suits before cashing tricks in your threat suits. (This includes all trump tricks.)
- 3) If one threat suit has a one-way entry (e.g., only in Dummy or only in Declarer's hand), and the other threat suit does not, plan to cash your non-threat suit winners and end up in the hand opposite that entry.
- 4) If one threat suit has built-in entries to both hands, you can cash your non-threat winners in any order.

### A Double Squeeze:

- 1) Each opponent must guard one threat suit solely and both opponents must guard a 3<sup>rd</sup> threat suit. The usual result is that both opponents retain their guards for the single suit of which they have sole responsibility and Declarer ends up with an extra trick in the suit that they both guard (and usually both give up on).