

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

SQUEEZED IN THREE SUITS

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ A954 ♥ QJT ♦ J5 ♣ AJT2	
♠ KJT ♥ 9763 ♦ KQT3 ♣ K8	North West East Declarer	♠ 872 ♥ A854 ♦ 742 ♣ 754
	♠ Q63 ♥ K2 ♦ A986 ♣ Q963	

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
	1♦	Dbl	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

3NT is an optimistic contract, but things get better when West leads the Heart Three to East's Ace, followed by a second Heart. With the ♥A in the East hand, the bidding marks all the remaining HCP with West. How will you take advantage of this?

The Club finesse is sure to work, taking the trick count to eight. The bad news is that the Spade King is surely sitting over the Queen ... the good news is that, as West holds the missing high cards, he is likely to come under pressure when you play the Clubs. So, after winning the ♥K at Trick 2 you successfully run the ♣9, play a low Club to the King and Ace, and cash the ♣J. When West shows out, what do you know about his distribution? Not five Diamonds (West didn't lead one), nor three Diamonds (East didn't raise), so assume four Diamonds. How many Hearts? West would have led top-of-nothing with three (also, East might have bid 1♥ with five), so assume West has four Hearts. That means West is 3=4=4=2 and the hand is an open book.

What does West pitch on the third Club? Not a Spade, in that case you cash the ♠A and duck a Spade to West's King, scoring the 9th trick with the ♠Q ... not a Heart, in that case you cash the ♥Q and run the ♦J around to West (now West must play on Diamonds or Spades, either of which gives up the 9th trick) ... and not a Diamond, in that case you run the ♦J around to West's Queen and have the timing to set up the 13th Diamond. Poor West was squeezed in three suits, but it required accurate card reading to take advantage of that.

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