

Three-Way Push

TO THE EDITOR:

One of my favorite features of online bridge is that we homebodies can use boards previously played in high-level matches. On this deal, three Souths (myself at home, two others at the table during a Spingold match) reached four spades on an only-spades auction after East passed as dealer.

East dealer
Both sides vulnerable

<p style="text-align: center;">WEST</p> <p>♠ J ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ K 9 7 6 5 ♣ K 10 9 4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTH</p> <p>♠ Q 10 5 ♥ A 10 2 ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ 6 5 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EAST</p> <p>♠ A 8 6 ♥ K 7 5 3 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ 8 7 3</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SOUTH</p> <p>♠ K 9 7 4 3 2 ♥ J 6 4 ♦ 10 ♣ A Q J</p>		

At my table, West led the diamond five. I won with dummy's ace and played a club to the queen and king as East showed odd count. I ruffed the diamond-nine continuation and played a spade to the jack and queen. After another diamond ruff, I knocked out the ace of spade, took East's club, and ran black-suit winners to squeeze West in this position:

NORTH

♠ —
♥ A 10 2
♦ J
♣ —

WEST

♠ —
♥ Q 9 8
♦ K
♣ —

EAST

♠ —
♥ K 7 5 3
♦ —
♣ —

SOUTH

♠ 7
♥ J 6 4
♦ —
♣ —

After West threw a heart on the seven of spades, I discarded dummy's jack of diamonds, led a heart to the ten and king, then guessed to play low on the forced heart return.

At one Spingold table, the first three tricks were the same, but East took the spade and played a club. Declarer used dummy's spade ten as an entry to ruff a third diamond and executed the same squeeze.

At the other Spingold table, declarer won with the diamond ace, ruffed a diamond, and played a spade to the jack, queen, and ace. East played a club: queen, king. Declarer took the club continuation, drew trumps ending in dummy, ruffed a diamond, and achieved the same winning position, with the same result.

At double-dummy, the early diamond ruff is necessary. It looks good at single dummy also; if the spade lie is friendly (probably a necessity) there will still be two entries to dummy for club finesses; meanwhile, the diamond royals might tumble down.

Not knowing the layout, the early-diamond-ruffing declarer didn't follow up with further double-dummy play. He could have been defeated with an early third-diamond play and later a fourth round, killing the

menace. An East in top form might have worked out that there was no need to attack clubs; declarer appears to have six cards in the rounded suits, so no discards would have been forthcoming.

The double-dummy line for declarer is to pursue clubs after ruffing the first diamond, not wasting precious dummy entries on losing finesses. South must use those entries to ruff two diamonds but not take the second ruff before West's club king has been dislodged.

The single-dummy culprits were the Wests who helped declarer by leading a diamond after winning with the club king. A club return, which had to be safe, would have been good enough. Or, ducking the club smoothly would have caused declarer to expend a dummy entry to repeat the finesse.

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