

# Preserving Self-Esteem. . .with John Koch

Playing in a pairs' event, I hold as South:

♠ K 10 9 6 5   ♥ K 4 3 2   ♦ A 7 6   ♣ A

We are playing a big-club system and partner opens **two clubs**, showing long clubs with a limited opening bid. I bid **two diamonds**, implying strength in the majors, and we reach **three notrump** after this auction:

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West opens the ♣3 and this is what I see:

♠ A 7  
♥ A  
♦ K 9 4 2  
♣ K J 9 8 7 2

♣3 led

♠ K 10 9 6 5  
♥ K 4 3 2  
♦ A 7 6  
♣ A

I try the ♣9 and win East's queen with the ace. I cross to dummy's ♥A, the defender's playing the eight and five, and am pleased when both defenders follow twice to the high clubs. This gives me twelve tricks, so the test is to win a thirteenth. The best method is to play winners and watch the discards. On the fourth and fifth clubs, West discards a low spade and the ♥10, while East discards a low spade and low heart.

Before calling for the last club, I consider that I have already made four discards from hand: two spades, a heart and a diamond. Another discard from either major will give up my threat card; a diamond discard will destroy communication in that suit.

It is time to simplify. The defenders have each discarded a spade. I play a small spade to the king, cash the ♥K, and return to dummy with a spade to the ace. West follows in each case, playing the ♠3, ♥J, and ♠J; East follows to the first spade, and to the heart, but discards a heart on the ♠A. *What is the lay of the land?*

West has played the ♥J108, which virtually marks East with the ♥Q because West would surely have led a heart from ♥QJ108. East's discard on second spade marks West with the remaining spade. This is the position:

♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ Q
♦ K 9 4	♦ H x x
♣ 2	♣ —
♠ Q	♠ 10
♥ —	♥ 4
♦ H x x	♦ A 7
♣ —	♣ —

The club is led from dummy. East has to keep her ♥Q, so she throws a diamond. My heart is no longer needed. West now is subject to pressure. He keeps his spade, so the ♦9 takes the thirteenth trick.

The full deal:

♠ A 7	♠ 8 4
♥ A	♥ Q 9 7 6 5
♦ K 9 4 2	♦ J 10 8
♣ K J 9 8 7 2	♣ Q 5 4
♠ Q J 3 2	♠ K 10 9 6 5
♥ J 10 8	♥ K 4 3 2
♦ Q 5 3	♦ A 7 6
♣ 10 6 3	♣ A

*Points of Interest:*

- It is seldom right to lead dummy's first bid suit against notrump. The lead here put East under extraordinary pressure and it is not surprising that she got it wrong. Mike Lawrence's *Opening Leads* gives an example of the lead from a broken holding in a suit bid by dummy:

♥ A 9 8 3	♥ J 5 2
♥ Q 10 7 4	♥ K 6

West leads the ♥4 and declarer wins East's jack with his king. Declarer is now in a position to establish two more tricks in hearts.

- West's discard of the ♥10 (after having played the ♥8) almost inevitably was from short hearts. Declarer could focus on West's spades while relying on East to hold hearts.

- The simplest form of a double squeeze is a three-card ending:

<p>♠ Q ♥ — ♦ Q 5 ♣ —</p>	<p>♠ 10 ♥ — ♦ 4 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ Q ♦ J 10 ♣ —</p>
	<p>♠ — ♥ 4 ♦ A 7 ♣ —</p>	

Dummy leads the ♣2. East is positionally squeezed and West is automatically squeezed. Note that the 2♣ squeeze card is opposite the ♥4 positional threat, which is jettisoned once East keeps his heart winner.

The example hand is one step more advanced than the simplest form. The squeeze card is again opposite the positional threat. The automatic threat is also opposite, but this time the double threat is in the same hand as the squeeze card. Transportation is furnished in the double threat suit:

<p>♠ Q ♥ — ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ —</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ — ♦ K 9 4 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ Q ♦ J 10 8 ♣ —</p>
	<p>♠ 10 ♥ 4 ♦ A 7 ♣ —</p>	

When the ♣2 is cashed, the defenders are simultaneously squeezed. Declarer's part is not difficult. He watches out for the master cards in the one-threat suits, and he discards the positional threat card (the ♥4) once it has done its job. But he can leave the double-threat suit to look after itself with 100% certainty.

- Finally, after the unfortunate events of trick one, declarer has 12 tricks and the defenders are booked for a zero. West can, however, preserve some self esteem by holding the contract to 12 tricks by keeping his hearts and discarding diamonds. In that case, West's winners are both "over" declarer's threats and the positional factor needed for the squeeze will be missing.

