Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

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37.   Squeeze Play Demystified, Part II

A. Automatic Squeeze

As I have described in the Part I of this topic, a *positional squeeze* works on one defender but not on the other. I would recommend that you go back and review my column number #31 for a few minutes. You will note that **the most common setting for a positional squeeze is where the one card threat and the two-card threats *both* lie in the same hand opposite to the squeeze card.**

In situations where the squeeze operates on *either* opponent is called an *automatic squeeze*. One can quickly conclude from the above paragraph that for an automatic squeeze to work **the one card threat must lie with the squeeze card and the two-card threats *must* lie *in the other hand*.**

Let's consider an example that is similar to the second example in Column 31 with an important difference. In Column 31, the squeeze was positional and did not work. We make some modifications to that hand below.

Consider the following ending in a NT contract where your objective is to win **all** the tricks:

Dummy:	A J 3	---	---	---

T 2		K Q
---		---
---		---
T		Q

Declarer:	8	5	---	J

In this example, the one card threat (J of Clubs) lies in the same hand with the squeeze card (5 of H) and the two-card threats lie in the other hand. As a result there is a room for a spare card in dummy, namely the 3 of S.

Although East discards after the dummy, observe what happens when South plays the 5 of Hs. Dummy discards the spare card, 3 of S and East does not have any good discard: *East is squeezed*.

B. Positional Squeeze can become Automatic Squeeze with a Twin Entry

Entries are the life blood of a squeeze. In this example, you will see that the layout looks like a positional squeeze but there is entry to both hands via one suit. That suit is called a *Twin Entry* suit.

Dummy: ---   ---   A 7   J 6

---	---
---	---
9 6 2	Q J 8
7	Q

Declarer: ---   J   K T 3   ---

In this example, the one card threat (J of C) and the two-card threats (A 7 of D) *both* lie in the same hand opposite to the squeeze card (J of H). So naively one might conclude that this squeeze is positional and would not work on East as he discards after the dummy. However, there is an important difference namely the D suit has twin entry.

Observe what happens when South plays the J of Hs. Dummy discards the 6 of C and *whichever defender* protecting both minor suits will be squeezed. I suggest that you start with paper and pencil and work it out yourself with the current layout. Then reverse the East-West hands and repeat the exercise once again to convince yourself.

A Real-life example of Twin Entry Automatic Squeeze

This is a hand I have recently played on BBO and made 3N on a squeeze.

Dummy:	**J 4 2**	**J 3**	**Q J T 3 2**	**4 3 2**

Q 7 6					T 9 8 5
K 9 2					T 8 5 4
A 6 4					9
J T 9 5					A Q 8 7

Declarer:	**A K 3**	**A Q 7 6**	**K 8 7 5**	**K 6**

Trick 1.	I got the J of C lead which was ducked to my King.
Trick 2.	K of D ducked.
Trick 3.	8 of D ducked.
Trick 4.	7 of D won by lefty with the A.
Trick 5-7	They win 3 C tricks ending in Righty's hand. I pitch a S and a H from hand and a H from board.
Trick 8	I am in trouble with a H return but Righty returns a S. I win the A of S.
Trick 9	This is a critical play. I cash the K of S.
Trick 10	D to the board
Trick 11	This is when the last D is being played from dummy --- look at the hand position:

Dummy:	**J**	**J**	**2**	**---**

Q				does not matter
K 7				

Declarer:	**---**	**A Q 7**	**---**	**--**

On the 2 of D I play the idle card i.e. the 7 of H from hand and lefty is squeezed. If she discards a H, I score 2 Hs and if she discards the Q of S I win the J on dummy.

The irony of the hand is that after I made the contract, Righty (who did not return a H when needed) tells his partner that if she holds on to the "right card", they will set this 3N. None of us has ever seen a partner like that, right?

References:

1. The classic book on Squeeze play is by Clyde Love which has a theorem-proof type lay out (no surprise: Love was a math professor).

2. A generally more readable book is by David Bird (*Bridge Squeezes for Everyone*) which I plan to use as our textbook. I will add some supplemental notes from other sources as well.