


The Vienna Coup

By Rich Waugh

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 8 7 2 ♥ J 10 9 8 ♦ J 8 3 2 ♣ K J	♠ K J 10 4 ♥ K 5 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ Q 7 4 2	♠ 9 6 5 3 ♥ A Q 7 6 ♦ 9 6 ♣ 10 9 3	
			
	♠ A Q ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ A 8 6 5		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	INT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	2 ♦
Lead: ♥ J			

East-West take the first four heart tricks and West pauses to take stock. He started with 6 HCP, South is known to have 15-17 HCP for his opening bid and there were 13 HCP in dummy. Partner has already shown up with 6 HCP (♥A Q). How many honors can East have at this point? Clearly he *cannot have as much as another jack!* Since it would be dangerous to break either minor, West must exit passively with a spade.

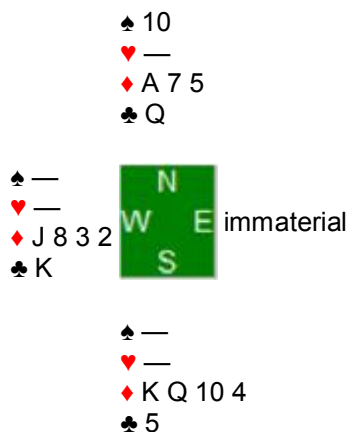
Meanwhile, South (after thanking his lucky stars the hearts split) counts his tricks: four spades, three diamonds and one club. Eight tricks. Where will the ninth come from? One possibility is a diamond split. If the diamonds are 3-3, the thirteenth diamond will set up. Another possibility is finessing the ♦10 if East has four or more diamonds. Is there another possibility that will keep the diamond threat intact? What about the ♣Q? If one of the opponents has the long diamonds *and* the ♣K, he will not be able to hold onto both. The ♣Q is a *threat*.

The plan is to cash the ♣A (Vienna Coup), establishing the enemy's ♣K, and run all eight winners, *watching only for the ♣K*. If the ♣K does not show up, assume the squeeze worked or the diamonds split. Whenever one opponent holds both the diamond length and the ♣K he will not be able to hold onto both. It costs nothing to cater to this possibility.

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After cashing the ♣A and top three spades the position will be:



On the last spade from dummy, South discards his club and West is squeezed. If he discards the ♣K, dummy's ♣Q and the ♦A K Q take the last four tricks. If he discards a diamond instead, South wins the last four tricks with the ♦A K Q 10. This squeeze is not positional; it would work against either opponent who holds both the diamond and club protection. Note that the squeeze will not operate if South fails to cash the ♣A, since he will not have an *idle* card to discard on the last spade. Try it.

This is not as complicated as it may seem. South doesn't have to count the diamond discards. *All he watches for is the ♣K*. If that card is not discarded, South cashes the top diamonds.