

A Bridge Zugzwang by frank ayer

In chess the obligation to make a move to your detriment is called Zugzwang. All bridge squeezes have this element, of course, but this hand seems more Zugzwang than Squeeze.

You hold S - K J 7 5 4, H - void, D - A 10 9 4 3, C - J 6 3. Partner deals and opens 1D, RHO overcalls 2C, and you venture 2S. LHO passes and partner raises you to 3S. RHO refuses to give up and bids 4H over which you bid 4S. RHO ends the auction with Double. The opening lead is the CQ and dummy comes down.

S - A Q 9
H - K 10 4 3
D - K 7 5 2
C - 7 2

S - K J 7 5 4
H -
D - A 10 9 4 3
C - J 6 3

| Pard | RHO | You | LHO |
|------|-----|----------|------|
| 1D | 2C | 2S | pass |
| 3S | 4H | 4S | pass |
| pass | DBL | all pass | |

The CQ goes to the 2, 9 (u/d), and 3. LHO continues with the C5 to the 7, K, and 6. RHO now tries to cash the HA but you ruff with S4 as LHO plays H2 and dummy the H3. At this point you may want to try to make the hand on your own.

Part One: Construct the Hands

For RHO to bid clubs before hearts he must have more clubs than hearts and we know he has at most six clubs since LHO followed to two rounds. RHO must have five hearts to bid them at the four level opposite a passing partner. But why did he double? The C-AK and the H-AQJ are not really enough to double and the only logical conclusion is that RHO has a diamond void and was hoping to ruff a diamond opening lead. RHO's shape is 2-5-0-6 and LHO is 3-4-4-2.

Part Two: Form a Plan

The good news is that trumps are breaking 3-2 but with two club losers the problem is to only lose one diamond. Since LHO has D-QJ86 you cannot develop the diamonds for one loser by force (try it), you have to endplay LHO into leading a diamond. In order to do that you have to lose a trick to him at a point when he has only diamonds in his hand. That means stripping him of all his non-diamonds. Since he has three hearts left and the HK will take care of one you have to ruff two more hearts in your hand. If you ruff three hearts in total you will only have two trumps left to draw LHO's three spades so you will have to draw the last trump in dummy and the S9 won't be high enough for LHO's hypothetical S10. But a finesse of the S9 on the second round of spades should take care of that. So the plan is, after ruffing HA: spade to Ace, ruff a heart with SJ, spade to the Nine, ruff a heart, D10 covered by Jack and won with King, SQ drawing last trump, HK stripping LHO of his last heart and throwing CJ from hand, and finally a diamond to the Nine to endplay LHO.

Part Three: Review the Plan

The hand construction seems valid and the only flaw is the finesse of the S9 - if RHO has S-10x he will win the second spade - still the odds are 3-2 in your favour. Can anything be done about it? Well, LHO is out of clubs and a club lead at trick four may embarrass him. But why should you ruff CJ, wasting one of dummy's precious trumps, when you can pitch it on the HK? That doesn't seem right. Still it can't hurt to think this through. What will LHO play if you ruff the CJ at trick four? If he throws a diamond it's easy to draw trump and lose only one diamond; if he throws a heart you only have to ruff one more heart (and cash HK) to strip him of hearts and you will have enough trumps in hand to draw them without risking the S9 finesse; and finally if he throws a spade you can over-ruff and only have to draw two rounds of trump. LHO is squeezed in three suits, one of them trump! WOW! So to prepare the plan in Part Two first ruff the CJ to "pre-squeeze" LHO and eliminate the need for the spade finesse. The squeeze doesn't win a trick, it merely forces LHO to play a card - puts him in Zugzwang!

As Bobby Fischer said (although he speaking of chess, of course), "When you find a good move look again, you may find a better one."

The full hand:

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| S - A Q 9 | |
| H - K 10 4 3 | |
| D - K 7 5 2 | |
| C - 7 2 | |
| S - 8 6 2 | S - 10 3 |
| H - Q 7 5 2 | H - A J 9 8 6 |
| D - Q J 8 6 | D - |
| C - Q 5 | C - A K 10 9 8 4 |
| S - K J 7 5 4 | |
| H - | |
| D - A 10 9 4 3 | |
| C - J 6 3 | |

An Extra Regional in Calgary Next Year

Calgary Unit 390 and the Canadian Bridge Federation are hosting a Fund-Raising Regional Bridge Tournament March 21-27, 2005. That's the week before Easter. It will be held at the Marlborough Community Hall, the same place we have our Calgary Sectionals. Hotel costs are so high now that we are practically forced to find a non-hotel venue. Steve Bates and I have checked out the site and there seems to be plenty of room with extra space available upstairs in the community hall. We have booked the entire facility for the week of the tournament.

This is a full regional with lots of gold points, Blue Ribbon qualifications, and everything else you have come to expect. But it is a fund-raising event for the CBF in order to provide monies for international travel for bridge players to represent Canada in international competitions so we are advertising it as a "No Frills" regional.

CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT PROGRAM

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR: Steve Bates
TOURNAMENT CHAIRPERSONS: Frank Ayer & Delores Hedley

FLIGHTS: *A: Unlimited *B: 0 - 1500 C: 0 - 300
STRATS: *A: 1500+ *B: 300 - 1500 C: 0 - 300

BRIDGE RATES: \$13.00 All Events
ACBL surcharge of \$1.00 for non-members and unpaid Life Masters

MONDAY, MARCH 21

Emily Follensbee Charity 99'er Pairs 7:00 p.m.
Emily Follensbee Charity Open Pairs 7:00 p.m.
Kickoff Bracketed K.O. Teams (Rd. 1) 7:00 p.m.
(continues Tues. 9:00 a.m.; 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.)

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

Kickoff Bracketed K.O. Teams (Rd. 2) 9:00 a.m.