

Extended Menace Squeeze

by: Mr. Robert Frick

Source

The following represents the information as presented by Mr. Robert Frick.

To review, a simple squeeze occurs when you have two threats against one person. The count must be correct -- you must have winners to cover all of the remaining tricks but one. In other words, you have one loser. When the simple squeeze works, you win all of the remaining tricks. For example:

| | |
|-------|--------|
| | ♠ A109 |
| | ♥ AJ |
| | ♦ |
| | ♣ |
| ♠ KQJ | |
| ♥ KQ | |
| ♦ | |
| ♣ | |
| | ♠ xx |
| | ♥ x |
| | ♦ |
| | ♣ AK |

There are five tricks remaining, you have four winners, and you have two threats against LHO (your left-hand opponent). When you cash your first club, LHO pitches as spade, as does dummy; on the second club, LHO is forced to unguard one of the majors, making your jack on the board good.

In the above card position, the dummy happens to have an "extended menace" in spades, though it is irrelevant to the simple squeeze. The 10 is the threat against LHO, but the 10 is accompanied by the 9. On the first club, LHO had to pitch a spade, which essentially made the 9 good. Of course, to actually withdraw that 9 from the bank, you would have had to first lose a spade trick. Because you already had enough winners to win all of the tricks but one -- your goal was to win all of the remaining tricks -- it did not help you when LHO was forced to unguard your extended menace.

The other point to notice, which is critical to understanding extended menace squeezes, is the squeeze on the extended menace operated one trick sooner than the simple squeeze. Essentially, the need to guard the extended menace put an extra busy card in LHO's hand.

The Simple Extended Menace Squeeze

Okay, let's take away a club winner.

| | | |
|-------|--------|---------|
| | ♠ A109 | |
| | ♥ AJ | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ KQJ | | ♠ |
| ♥ KQ | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQxxx |
| | ♠ xx | |
| | ♥ xx | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ Ax | |

Now, you have two threats against LHO, but there is no squeeze because you have not rectified the count. However, the squeeze against the extended menace works one trick sooner, so the count is rectified for purposes of the extended menace squeeze.

So, you lead your ace of clubs, and LHO is squeezed. If LHO discards a heart, your jack of hearts is good; if LHO discards a spade, you duck a round of spades and now your nine of spades is good. You had to lose a trick to make your extended menace good, but that's all right -- you started out with two losers and a goal of just losing one of the remaining tricks.

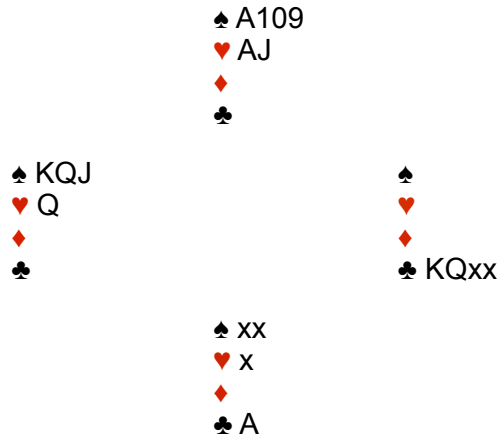
Extended Menace Squeeze Vs. Simple Squeeze

In the above hand, you could have led a small club, rectifying the count for a simple squeeze. Then on RHO's forced club return, you would win the ace of clubs and have a simple squeeze. In general, if you can rectify the count for a simple squeeze, you should choose the simple squeeze over the extended menace squeeze. This is because you can usually run a simple squeeze so that you do not have to guess what people have saved (though not in the above example). In the extended menace squeeze, you have to peer into the opponent's distribution. In the above example, what you lead after the squeeze card depends on what you guess LHO has unguarded. Most players wait until the squeeze card to make the critical discard. A good player might try to trick you, which is rarely a problem, but a bad player simply might not understand which cards are valuable.

Of course, if we give RHO a diamond, RHO has a winner to cash and you cannot afford to let RHO win a trick; if we give RHO a spade or heart, RHO can return that suit and ruin your squeeze. So it is often the case that you cannot afford to lose a trick to rectify the count for a simple squeeze. If you have only single menaces, you have to try to rectify the count; if you have an extended menace, you can run the extended menace simple squeeze.

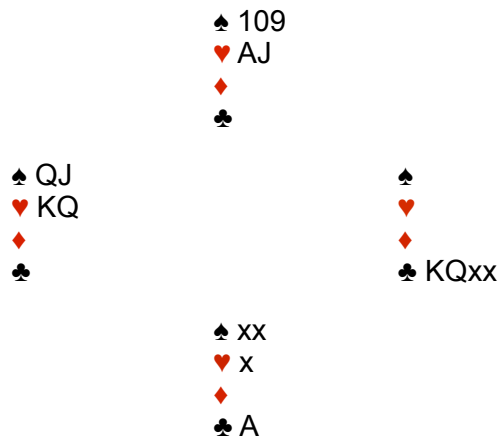
Control in the Short Suit

In the extended menace squeeze, you must have the top card (or at least a control) in the other suit. If you don't, the opponent cashes the winner in that suit. For example:



The lead of the ace of clubs forces LHO to release a spade, making the extended menace in spades good. However, when a spade is ducked to LHO, LHO cashed a good heart.

A winner in the extended threat suit is not necessary:



On the lead of the Ace of clubs, LHO pitches a spade. You pitch a heart from dummy, lead a spade, and the dummy takes the last two tricks.

Difficulties

There are three things that make the extended menace squeeze more difficult than the simple squeeze. The first, already mentioned, is that you can usually arrange your simple squeeze so that you do not have to guess what distribution your opponent started with. For the extended menace squeeze, you always have to know your opponents distribution to know what suit to lead after the squeeze is completed.

The second is that you need an entry to the extended menace even after a trick has been lost in that suit. So, for example,

| | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| | ♠ A109 | |
| | ♥ J10 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ KQJ | | ♠ |
| ♥ KQ | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ x |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQxx |
| | ♠ x | |
| | ♥ Ax | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ Ax | |

This extended menace squeeze does not work for lack of entry to the long spade. LHO pitches a spade on your Ace of clubs, but there is no way for you to lose a spade trick and still have an entry to the dummy. Give declarer a second spade:

| | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| | ♠ A109 | |
| | ♥ J10 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ KQJ | | ♠ |
| ♥ KQ | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ x |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQxx |
| | ♠ xx | |
| | ♥ Ax | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ A | |

and the extended menace squeeze now works.

The third problem is this. In the simple squeeze, if one opponent cannot stop either of the two threats, that opponent is out of the picture. In the extended menace squeeze, you have to lose a trick to make your extended menace good. If the second opponent can win this trick, the second opponent has to be considered. For example:

| | | |
|-------|--------|-------|
| | ♠ A109 | |
| | ♥ J10 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ KQx | | ♠ Q |
| ♥ KQ | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ x |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQx |
| | ♠ xx | |
| | ♥ Ax | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ A | |

This extended menace squeeze fails. The first club forces LHO to unguard the extended menace in spades. But if you lose the first round of spades to RHO, RHO cashes clubs. You can play the ace of spades and then lose the second round of spades to LHO, but then there is no entry to the long spade.

Triply-Extended Menaces

What if you have a triply extended menace? Now the squeeze works with 3 losers, and you have to have two winners in the short suit:

| | | |
|---------|--------|-----------|
| | ♠ A987 | |
| | ♥ AK9 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ KQJ10 | | ♠ |
| ♥ QJ10 | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQxxxxx |
| | ♠ xx | |
| | ♥ xx | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ Axx | |

There are potential complexities when there is only one heart stopper but LHO cannot afford to lead the suit. I cannot imagine this arising (at least in a way that you would read the situation).

| | | |
|----------|---------|-----------|
| | ♠ A9876 | |
| | ♥ xx | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ QJ10xx | | ♠ |
| ♥ KQ9 | | ♥ |
| ♦ | | ♦ |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQxxxxx |
| | ♠ Kxx | |
| | ♥ AJ108 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ Axx | |

Trumps as Controls

Here, if the queen of hearts was the king, it would be obvious that you have an extended menace in hearts. But in any case, there is an extended menace in hearts. You need first-round control in the single menace suit, so your trump will have to serve as the first-round control -- it is just like the ace of diamonds, if you are in dummy and leading a diamond.

So, the final end position has to be you winning a trump trick in dummy, with you still having one trump in your hand:

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ♠ K | |
| ♥ Axx | |
| ♦ Jx | |
| ♣ | |
| | ♠ |
| | ♥ KJxx |
| | ♦ Q8 |
| | ♣ |
| ♠ Qx | |
| ♥ Qxxx | |
| ♦ | |
| ♣ | |

To get to this position, you have to shorten your trumps in your hand by ruffing two rounds of clubs. Fortunately, you have the entries to do this.

Two Extended Menaces (Advanced)

The situation gets more interesting when you have two extended menaces. First, I will present the boring instances.

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <p>♠ A876 ♥ K5 ♦ ♣ 32</p> | | <p>♠ ♥ ♦ AKQ ♣ QJ1098</p> |
| <p>♠ QJ109 ♥ QJ109 ♦ ♣</p> | | |
| <p>♠ K5 ♥ A876 ♦ ♣ A4</p> | | |

I have added a club winner, so that there the loser count is only two. Now the squeeze works on the next to last free winner.

In the first case, there is still a loser to fight over. However, I cannot think of very many interesting ramifications. Lefty can't be squeezed for the last trick, and by definition there are no winners in the other suits, so righty can't be squeezed either. Once a trick is ducked to set up the extended menace and the menace is cashed, the loser count is one, so a throw-in would be useless. So the opponents usually get the last trick. The only exception I can think of is when the throw in can occur when the trick is lost to set up the extended menace. For example:

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <p>♠ A1076 ♥ K5 ♦ ♣ 32</p> | | <p>♠ ♥ ♦ AKQ ♣ QJ1098</p> |
| <p>♠ QJ98 ♥ Q1098 ♦ ♣</p> | | |
| <p>♠ K54 ♥ AJ76 ♦ ♣ A</p> | | |

On the last club, no matter which suit LHO abandons, LHO is thrown in to establish the extended menace in that suit and to endplay LHO in the other suit.

The more interesting situation is when there is a free winner. This free winner can be used to compensate for potential problems with the extended menace squeeze. For example:

| | | |
|---------|--------|--------|
| | ♠ A876 | |
| | ♥ A432 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ QJ43 | | ♠ 1098 |
| ♥ J1075 | | ♥ Q98 |
| ♦ | | ♦ KQ |
| ♣ | | ♣ |
| | ♠ K5 | |
| | ♥ K6 | |
| | ♦ A | |
| | ♣ A | |

I have set this up so that no simple squeeze is possible -- both lefty and righty stop both suits. However, only lefty guards the two extended menaces, so lefty is squeezed on the next-to-last minor suit minor. If declarer cashes the ace of diamonds, lefty is squeezed. But when declarer tried to lose a trick, righty can win the trick and cash a good diamond.

However, if declarer cashes the ace of clubs, then righty has no good card to set up. In this setup, so matter which suit lefty unguards, declarer will have a winner in the other suit. Here is another one. In this case, diamonds are trump:

| | | |
|--------|-------|---------|
| | ♠ A87 | |
| | ♥ A32 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ | |
| ♠ J104 | | ♠ Q2 |
| ♥ J107 | | ♥ Q5 |
| ♦ | | ♦ |
| ♣ | | ♣ KQJ10 |
| | ♠ 6 | |
| | ♥ 6 | |
| | ♦ 9 | |
| | ♣ A32 | |

More typically, the extra winner is used for communication. In this situation:

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| | ♠ A1092 | |
| | ♥ 2 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ K2 | |
| ♠ J1043 | | ♠ Q |
| ♥ J107 | | ♥ Q |
| ♦ | | ♦ A |
| ♣ | | ♣ QJ109 |
| | ♠ K6 | |
| | ♥ A109 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ A3 | |

If LHO unguards spades, there is no entry to the long spade except for the king of clubs.

Source

The above represents the information as presented by Mr. Robert Frick.