

Example 17

There is one quite different situation where to undertruff is the only play. If you achieve at the table the coup described below, you will not have lived in vain.

♠ 9 8 ♥ J 9 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ AK 10 9 8 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ A 5 2 ♥ 8 6 4 3 ♦ AK Q 8 7 ♣ 5	♠ 7 6 4 3 ♥ 10 7 5 2 ♦ 10 6 5 3 ♣ J
N	E						
W	S						
♠ K Q J 10 ♥ AK Q ♦ 4 ♣ Q 7 4 3 2							

The contract of six spades by South is not easy to reach. With North the dealer, this is a possible route:

SOUTH	NORTH
—	1 ♦
2 ♣	2 ♦
2 ♠	3 ♥
3NT	4 ♠
6 ♣	pass

West leads the king of clubs and, seeing his partner's jack, follows with a low club. Taking no chances, South ruffs with the ace of spades.

Though East may not realize it, this is the critical point of the deal. Obviously he must not let go a diamond, it may not occur to him to 'discard' a trump, so he will probably let go a heart. This proves a fatal discard, for South makes the slam easily by way of four spade tricks, a ruff with the ace of spades, three diamonds and four hearts.

'That was funny. I was squeezed at trick two', says East.

Precisely—but he could have averted the evil day for ever by undertruffing. Declarer is left with menace cards against East in hearts and diamonds, but he can do nothing with them. This is the end position:

♠ — ♥ — ♦ J 9 2 ♣ A 10	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ — ♥ 8 ♦ AK Q 8 ♣ —	♠ — ♥ 10 ♦ 10 6 5 3 ♣ —
N	E						
W	S						
♠ 10 ♥ — ♦ 4 ♣ Q 7 4							

South leads the ten of spades, but East is not embarrassed, since dummy has to make the first discard.

It is a well known principle of squeeze play that nothing can be achieved when both menaces (in this case the fourth heart and the fourth diamond) are 'under' the player who controls them. For this reason, it does not require superhuman skill for East to avert the possible squeeze by undertruffing on the second trick. And if East fails to do this, and gets the blame, he can always point out that a diamond from West at trick two would be a simple and effective defence.