

ACES ON BRIDGE

BOBBY WOLFF

"For a clever eye, one glance is enough, while a dunce may stare all day long."

— Chinese proverb

	NORTH	
	♠ K 8 6 5	
	♥ A 4	
	♦ Q J 10 2	
	♣ A Q 2	
WEST		EAST
♠ Q 9 4 3		♠ 10 7 2
♥ 8 6 5		♥ 9 7 3
♦ 9 7 5 4		♦ K 8
♣ 5 3		♣ K J 9 7 4
	SOUTH	
	♠ A J	
	♥ K Q J 10 2	
	♦ A 6 3	
	♣ 10 8 6	

Vulnerable: Neither

Dealer: South

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	1♣	Pass
1NT*	Pass	4NT	Pass
6NT	All pass		

*15-17, since an opening no-trump would have been weak

Opening lead: Diamond four

Michelle Brunner, partnering Rhona Goldenfield, is a regular on the England women's team. Here she was in action opposite John Holland in the mixed teams at the European Open Championships, demonstrating her fine technique by bringing home a well-bid slam, courtesy of first a Vienna Coup, and then a double squeeze.

When Holland invited to slam with a quantitative four-no-trump call, Brunner jumped to six no-trump, for although she had a minimum rebid in terms of high cards, she had a solid source of tricks in hearts.

West led a diamond, covered all around. There were now 11 tricks, and Michelle initially sought a 12th via the club finesse. The queen lost to East and back came a diamond. If diamonds broke 3-3, there was the 12th trick, but Brunner also saw squeeze possibilities on the run of the hearts. However, to have sufficient discards in dummy, she had to cash the club ace — the Vienna Coup. Michelle next cashed dummy's high diamond, then ran the hearts.

When the last heart was played, in the three-card ending, West had to retain the diamond nine, so discarded a spade. Dummy's diamond two, having posed its threat, could be discarded, leaving the North hand with king-third of spades. East had to keep his club jack, so was also forced to reduce to a doubleton spade. Now the spade ace and spade jack to the king collected the rest of that suit, and dummy's spade eight was the 12th trick.