

## **Esther Discusses "On Defense, 'Take Control' Once You Know the 'Correct' Line of Attack"**

**Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen<sup>1</sup>**

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**Bruce:** Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through "**On Defense, 'Take Control' Once You Know the 'Correct' Line of Attack**". Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking the time to be with us today!

**Esther:** D\*\*n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther!

**Bruce:** Errr, well, sorry again about that, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther.

**Esther:** Well, Bruce. Please try to exercise at least a modicum of empathy, assuming you have at least the limited capacity to do so. Can you imagine how relentlessly all the other girls in grades K through 4 of my elementary school years relentlessly, endlessly tormented me about my last name, Klinktoast-Houstonhousen?

**Bruce:** Well, yes, sorry again, Esther! I do understand that young girls can indeed be quite vicious to each other. Well, in any case, Esther, could you show us an example Board so that your explanation is concrete?

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, [https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA\\_1\\_24.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf), Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by **Bruce Thompson**.

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. First, I feel obligated to note that the present discussion is drawn from **Tip #95** (p. 137) from Ron Klinger's 2003 book, 100 WINNING BRIDGE TIPS for the Improving Player. The example has been somewhat modified by Esther.

**Bruce:** Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther. Who is this Mr. Klinger fellow? Could you tell us a little about him, please?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, of course. **Ron Klinger** (1941- ) is an Australian contract bridge player who has written more than **70** bridge books including his 1990 book, Guide to Better Card Play, which won the "American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Bridge Book of the Year Award." His book, Right Through the Pack Again, won the 2010 "International Bridge Press Association Book of the Year Award." He was Editor of Australian Bridge for 13 years (1972-1985). For many years he has written, and still currently writes, a weekly bridge column for both the Sydney Morning Herald and The Sun-Herald.

Klinger is also the inventor of the Ron Klinger "**Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score**". The "**SQT Score**" is computed by adding together (1) the number of cards you hold in a Suit plus (2) the number of Honors (including the Ten) that you hold in the Suit. *Suit contracts* set no higher than "**SQT Score**" - 6 are generally pretty "safe".

**Bruce:** Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther. Thanks! What is your example Board for this lesson?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, here is your example Board.

**Bruce:** Errr, Esther. Would you mind talking us through the correct bidding of these Hands before we get into the primary focus of your lesson? I need all the help I can get, and every opportunity to review helps me learn more and faster.



**Esther:** Well, Bruce, sitting EAST I *would* DOUBLE for penalty. I think Partner WEST will be "short" in Diamonds and I hold **2** Aces and a "protected" King. I do not think we will set N/S by much, but we *must* take what we can when we can!

**Bruce:** OK. Well, now let's turn our attention to E/W playing on Defense against the N/S **5D** contract. WEST leads his Partner's bid Suit, by leading his Spade King. What should EAST do?

**Esther:** Well, Bruce, EAST knows that E/W must take **3** or more Tricks to set the N/S **5D** contract DOUBLED. EAST sees possibly **1** or **2** E/W Spade Tricks, **1** Diamond Trick, and **1** Club Trick. EAST also sees that with EAST holding **5** Spades and Dummy holding **2** Spades, if WEST holds **5** rather than **4** Spades there will be no 2<sup>nd</sup> E/W Spade Trick. And WEST's "jump" to **4S** does suggest that WEST indeed holds **5** Spades! In such situations, in the words of Ron Klinger's **Tip #95:**

**"Take control of the defence if you know what to do and [P]artner may not be sure."**

If EAST does not overtake WEST's Spade King with EAST's Spade Ace WEST may (1) continue Spades or (2) switch to Hearts or Clubs. Either decision is *fatal* for the E/W Defense. SOUTH will "win" Trick **#2**, on Trick **#3** draw **1** Round of Trump Diamonds, and then play **4** Rounds of Hearts and "dump" his Declarer Club "loser" **8** during the 4<sup>th</sup> Round of Hearts.