

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0175:
"As Declarer Running an 'Avoidance Play' Against
the 'Dangerous Opponent':
Examples from Ron Klinger's 2005 Book,
'52 Great Bridge Tips on Declarer Play' "**

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Editor's Note. Elle "Ely" Culbertson (1891-1955) "was an American [contract bridge](#) entrepreneur and personality dominant during the 1930s. He played a major role in the popularization of the new game and was widely regarded as 'the man who made contract bridge'. He was a great showman who became rich, was highly extravagant, and lost and gained fortunes several times over... Culbertson founded and edited The Bridge World magazine, which is still published today, and wrote many newspaper articles and books on bridge."²

One of Culbertson's books was Culbertson's Own Contract Bridge Self-Teacher: 1933 Culbertson System.³ The "avoidance play" example Esther presents in her "Esther Bridge Dialog Lesson #82:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/avoidance.pdf>

was based on a Board presented as one example in Culbertson's 1933 book. Esther presents another example drawn from "BBO Bridge Master Level-2 Lesson A-11" in her "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz" #174: **"Playing NT Contracts as Declarer:**

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¹ 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, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

² Wikipedia entry for Ely Culbertson: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ely_Culbertson

³ See: <https://archive.org/details/culbertsonsownco00culb>

Running an 'Avoidance Play' Against the 'Dangerous Opponent' and 'Promoting' 'Winners':

https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0174_q.pdf

As explained by Fernando Lema in his 2018 web article, "The Avoidance Play":⁴

"In contract bridge, avoidance play is a play technique whereby [D]eclarer prevents a particular [D]efender from winning the trick, so as to eschew a dangerous lead from that hand. The dangerous hand is usually the one who is able (1) to finesse through declarer's honors, (2) to give a ruff to the partner or (3) to cash one or more established winners." (enumeration added)

For example, let's say you are sitting SOUTH as Declarer playing a 3NT contract:

	NORTH (10)	
	S: 4 3	
WEST (8)		EAST (7)
S: A Q 9 8 7		S: T 6 5
	SOUTH (15)	
	S: K J 2	

WEST leads the Spade 8 as 4th from the "top" of his "longest and strongest" Suit. On these holdings EAST is the "Dangerous Player" from whom you must run an "Avoidance Play" to keep EAST from leading through your Spade K, J, 2 to WEST's Spade A, Q, 9 cards. Sometimes the "Dangerous Player" sits before you as Declarer and sometimes the "Dangerous Player" sits before the Dummy.

These examples of "Avoidance Plays" presented here are drawn from Tip #34 (pp. 106-107) in David Bird's excellent 2005 book, 52 Great Bridge Tips on Declarer Play. Esther may have altered some of the cards in some of the Hands.

About David Bird

David Bird is a highly regarded British bridge writer. He has authored more than 140 bridge books and has claimed that he is the most prolific bridge author of all time. Bird's 2005 treatise, 52 Great Bridge Tips on Declarer Play, is one of these 140+ books. Bird also is the bridge correspondent for both the Mail on Sunday and the London Evening Standard newspapers. He also over 30+ years has authored in Bridge Magazine a series of humorous instructional bridge

⁴ See: <http://youth.worldbridge.org/thinking-bridge-the-avoidance-play-by-eddie-kantar/>

stories about fictional bridge-playing monks in the fictional St. Titus Monastery.

NORTH (14)

S: A 6 2
H: A T 6
D: K 9 5 2
C: K 7 3

WEST (7)

S: 8 5 4
H: K J 9 7
D: Q T 6
C: J 9 4

EAST (9)

S: 3
H: Q 8 5 3 2
D: J 7 4
C: A Q T 5

SOUTH (10)

S: K Q J T 9 7
H: 4
D: A 8 3
C: 8 6 2

Bidding*

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2S	PASS	4S	PASS
PASS	PASS		

*The bidding here is by Esther.

WEST leads the Heart 7.

1. Once the NORTH Dummy comes "down" what "losers" can Declarer SOUTH see?
2. If there is a "Dangerous Opponent", is WEST the "Dangerous Opponent" or is EAST the "Dangerous Opponent"?
3. What cards should Declarer SOUTH play on Trick #1? Why?
4. What is Declarer SOUTH's optimal "Line of Play"?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0175_a1.pdf