

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0179:**  
**"When Playing a Small Slam Suit Contract as  
Declarer, Does the '8 Ever, 9 Never' Rule for  
Deciding Whether to Finesse When  
You Are Missing the Trump Suit Queen Apply?"**

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

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>

Esther on her "**Esther Bridge Lessons**" website has previously recommended the "**BBO Bridge Master**" website:

<https://www.bridgebase.com/v3/anon/bridgemaster>

The "**BBO Bridge Master**" website allows you to declare your skill level, then shows a series of Hands and announces the final contract, each of which you then play as Declarer. At the end of play you can then request a solution in which the optimal "Line of Play" is discussed step by step. The present "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz" question is drawn from "**BBO Bridge Master**" Level-2 **Lesson A-33**. Note that across repeated play "**BBO Bridge Master**" may change some Hands in given lessons. Esther may have altered some cards in some Hands.

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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, the purported ACBL Double Triple Emerald Gold Platinum LifeMaster with 20+ million ACBL MasterPoints, in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So, this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

**BBO Bridge Master Level 2 Lesson A-33**

Dealer: **NORTH**

NORTH (18)

**S:** 5 3  
**H:** A K Q 6 2  
**D:** A K Q 6 5  
**C:** 4

WEST (10)

**S:** Q 9 7 6  
**H:** J 7  
**D:** J 7  
**C:** K Q J T 9

EAST (0)

**S:** 8  
**H:** T 9 8  
**D:** T 9 8  
**C:** 8 7 6 5 3 2

SOUTH (12)

**S:** A K J T 4 2  
**H:** 5 4 3  
**D:** 4 3 2  
**C:** A

**Bidding**

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 <b>H</b>	PASS	1 <b>S</b>	PASS
3 <b>D</b>	PASS	5 <b>S*</b>	PASS
6 <b>S</b>	PASS	PASS	PASS

\*SOUTH's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid is "invitational" to Partner bidding 6**S**.

WEST leads the Club King.

1. What does WEST's lead of the Club King "show"?
2. Once the NORTH Dummy comes "down" what "controls" does Declarer SOUTH see across all 4 Suits?
3. What is the only danger to Declarer SOUTH's small slam contract can SOUTH see?
4. Declarer SOUTH holds  $6 + 2 = 8$  Trump Spades but is missing the Trump Spade Queen. Should Declarer SOUTH follow the "8 Ever, 9 Never" "Rule" and finesse in Spades?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0179\\_a1.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0179_a1.pdf)