

Lindsay's Challenge - February 2019 newsletter:

Vienna Coup

One of the nice plays in Bridge is the renowned Vienna Coup. It entails the voluntary play of a master card to leave an opponent in command of a suit. But this preliminary step is a Greek gift, for it permits the application of a subsequent squeeze. Here is an example.

North

♠ Q 5 2
♥ K Q 9 4
♦ Q 8 5
♣ A 10 9

West

♠ J 10 9 6
♥ 8 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ 8 7 3 2

East

♠ 7 4
♥ 7 6 5 2
♦ J 10 9 3 2
♣ 6 5

South

♠ A K 8 3
♥ A J 10
♦ A 6
♣ K Q J 4

How can South make 7 No Trumps with J spades lead from West?

Against South in seven no-trumps, West led the Knave of spades which was won by Declarer's King.

A survey of both hands showed South that there were twelve sure tricks in top cards. Of course if the spade suit broke there would be no problem at all, but Declarer was not prepared to put all the eggs in one basket in that anticipation.

At the second trick Declarer cashed the Ace of diamonds - the Vienna Coup. This was followed by the four top hearts - discarding the little diamond from hand.

Look now at West's position. Ten tricks have gone so there are only three cards left. West must keep the King of diamonds to beat the Queen on the table and therefore can keep only two spades. This means the Queen, Ace and eight of spades win the last three tricks and bring home the grand slam.