

## Finesse hands or the art of not taking finesses

Finesses are to be taken *when needed* .....

A cursory glance at this 4Sp contract might lead you to think that you will be finessing in Hrts and clubs; that the number of tricks you make will depend on the success of those finesses.

a)AKQ87	J109
KJ3	A42
AQ7	KJ1098
32	AQ

Perhaps surprisingly there 13 tricks *on top* - ie you will make 13 tricks just by taking your 5 Spades tricks + 2 Hrts tricks + 5 Diamonds tricks + 2 Club tricks. {{ You might realise this by working out that although you did have two losers ( one Hrt + one Club) these could be thrown on the Diamonds ; another way would have been to realise that after drawing trumps the hand could be treated as if it was a No Trump contract and that a count of the *top-trick* winners amounted to 13. The easiest way to approach the hand though is to plan to only take finesses when you have tried everything else ; to leave finesses as a last resort. This will be the theme of this handout ; that finesses although useful should not be the be all and end all; finesses should only be taken when everything else fails.

This statement does need some qualification - there will be finesses that are unavoidable { often in the trump suit } or perhaps because the opponents have led a suit before you were quite ready....

This time one of our finesses is in the trump suit Spades.

b)AQ876	J109	No amount of ducking or diving is going to help here.
KJ3	A42	The Spade finesse <b>MUST</b> be taken ( for good or ill );
AQ7	KJ1098	after that we can avoid playing the Heart finesse (entirely)
32	AK	by just playing winning Diamonds and leaving Hearts well alone.

Again we are in Spades. We will have to lose the Ace Spades but as before it looks like our potential losers { one Club and one Heart } can be thrown on the Diamonds , that no finesses are needed.

c)KQ876	J109
KJ3	A42
AQ7	KJ1098
32	AQ

BUT ...if a small club is led then unfortunately you are "forced" into taking that finesse ( whatever your misgivings about the liklihood of the finesse working ).

The point is that if you spurn the club finesse and play the Ace , later when the opponents take their Ace Spades they will play the King Clubs anyway.

On a Club lead you have to take the finesse . NB if a Diamond had been led then the play would go as in our very first hand (a) above -we would draw trumps and then play our winning diamonds throwing away our losing Heart and Club cards.

