

Two way finesses

With holdings like :

(declarer) (dummy)
K32 -----AJ4

We all know to lead the low card from declarer's hand and play the J from dummy. The finesse will work whenever the Q is placed before the J.

So if the full layout was :

 Qxxx
K32 -----|-----AJ4
 xxx

the Q is destined never to win a trick.

If the K and A were exchanged of course the finesse would equally work.

 Qxxx
Axx -----|-----KJx
 xxx

As a declarer you simply have to hope that the Q lies before the two card honour holding.

Now sometimes there is what is called a *two way finesse*.

If we include the 10 in our basic diagram above:-

(declarer) (dummy)
K102 -----AJ4

now the presence of the 10 gives the declarer two ways to finesse and not just one.

Suppose the position is like this :

a) xxxx
K102 -----|-----AJ4
 Qxx

Now declarer can succeed by leading the 4 towards the 10.....
of course if the declarer guesses the Q is with the other defender as in

b) Qxxx
K102 -----|-----AJ4
 xxx

then a straightforward finesse of the J (the 2 led to the J) will win the trick.
The addition of the 10 thus allows us to finesse in either direction .

