

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

FINESSES ARE EASY

By: Brian Gunnell

Of course they are! You just lead towards the AQ or KJ or some such holding, and, when fate is kind, an extra trick materializes. But, if they can, experienced players will avoid the whims of fate, as in this deal.

	♠ JT765 ♥ 652 ♦ A7 ♣ AT8	
♠ 98 ♥ QJT7 ♦ KJ6 ♣ Q652	North West East South	♠ 4 ♥ 983 ♦ QT9852 ♣ K97
	♠ AKQ32 ♥ AK4 ♦ 43 ♣ J43	

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West leads the ♥Q, and Declarer can see a certain loser in Hearts and another in Diamonds. So, if 4♠ is to make, then Declarer must avoid losing two Clubs. Any ideas?

One way to play Clubs (after drawing trumps) is to finesse the Ten, hoping

that West has the King *and* the Queen. That's somewhat unlikely (around 25%). Another possibility is to finesse the *Eight*, and later finesse the Ten, hoping that West has K9 or Q9. That's a 37% chance. Or, Declarer might run the Jack, giving himself the extra chance that West might neglect to cover with his honor.

Which finesse will you choose? The correct answer is that you don't care for *any* of these finesses, you much prefer the 100% method! Draw trumps, cash the red suit winners and exit with a Heart (or a Diamond). The defenders can take their Heart and Diamond tricks but now their goose is cooked. If they lead another red card then Declarer pitches a Club loser from one hand and ruffs in the other hand (the so-called "ruff and sluff"). And if they break open Clubs then Declarer will lose only one trick in the suit. Yes, finesses are easy, especially when you can avoid taking them!

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