

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

A "FREE" FINESSE

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ AJT ♥ A6543 ♦ AK3 ♣ K7	
♠ 9732 ♥ KJ87 ♦ J6 ♣ 653	North West East Declarer	♠ Q854 ♥ Q2 ♦ QT54 ♣ A84
	♠ K6 ♥ T9 ♦ 9872 ♣ QJT92	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

When West led a Spade against 3NT, she offered a "free finesse", allowing Declarer to score three Spade tricks without having to guess which defender held the Queen. But, in actual fact, that finesse came with a hefty price tag.

"How kind of West to lead a Spade", thought Declarer as he played Dummy's Jack, covered by the Queen and the King. Having ensured three Spade tricks, Declarer then paused to look at the whole hand. But it was a bit late for that, wasn't it?

At this point, Declarer could count three Spades, one Heart, and two Diamonds, which got him up to six, so he looked to the Club suit to make up the shortfall, leading the ♣K at Trick 2. But East didn't have to be a genius to duck this, killing Declarer's hopes in that suit. His last hope was a 3-3 Heart break, but that failed too, and Declarer (deservedly) went down in a cold contract.

Declarer would have made his contract if he had given up his free finesse in exchange for setting up the Club suit. He wins the opening lead with Dummy's Ace (goodbye, third Spade trick), and leads the ♣K (hello, second, third and fourth Club tricks, as the ♠K provides an entry to Declarer's hand). Nine easy tricks for those Declarers who paused to think at Trick 1.

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