

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.

Board 6		♠ J 10 7 6 5				
East Deals		♥ 6 5 2				
E-W Vul		♦ A 7				
		♣ A 10 8				
♠ 9 8		♠ 4				
♥ Q J 10 7	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♥ 9 8 3	
N						
W E						
S						
♦ K J 6		♦ Q 10 9 8 5 2				
♣ Q 6 5 2		♣ K 9 7				
	♠ A K Q 3 2					
	♥ A K 4					
	♦ 4 3					
	♣ J 4 3					
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	1 ♠			
All pass		Pass	4 ♠			

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 ♠10, hoping that West has the ♣K *and* the ♣Q. That's somewhat unlikely (around 25%). Another possibility is to finesse the ♣8, and later finesse the ♠10, hoping that West has ♣K9 or ♣Q9. That's a 37% chance. Or, declarer might run the ♣J, 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.