

See Finesse Take Finesse

Last Revised May 20, 2016

by Warren Watson

Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/Finesse-SeeFinesse-TakeFinesse.pdf>

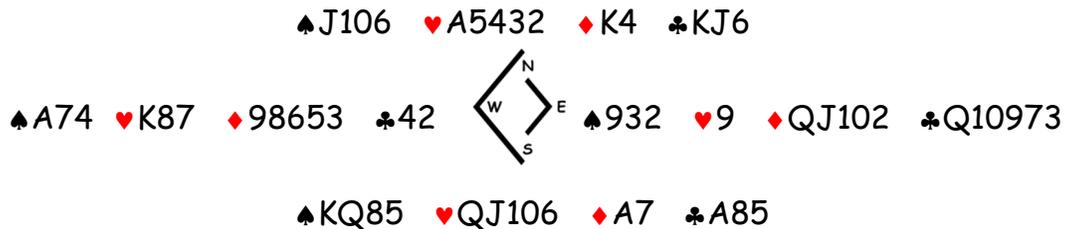
You see a finesse, do you take it?

Not necessarily so. You slate an entry to take the finesse and when you win that entry you probably should take the finesse so at least you do not strand yourself without the ability to take the finesse. However there are other possibilities.

Example 1: Side Source of tricks

Look for a side source of tricks and then assess whether you need short hand ruffs and finesses.

East Dealer North South Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
	P	1NT	P
2♦	P	2♥	P
3NT	P	4♥	All Pass

Opening Lead: ♦9

If one takes the club finesse, one makes only five otherwise one makes six. Do not touch clubs, draw trump and play spades. ♣6 goes on a long spade.

Count your tricks: 3 ♠'s, 5 ♥'s, 2 ♦'s and 2 ♣'s which amounts to twelve tricks.

Count your losers: ♥King onside so no ♥ losers, ♠Ace and ♣Queen only if you take the club finesse which you should not. So no ♣ losers.

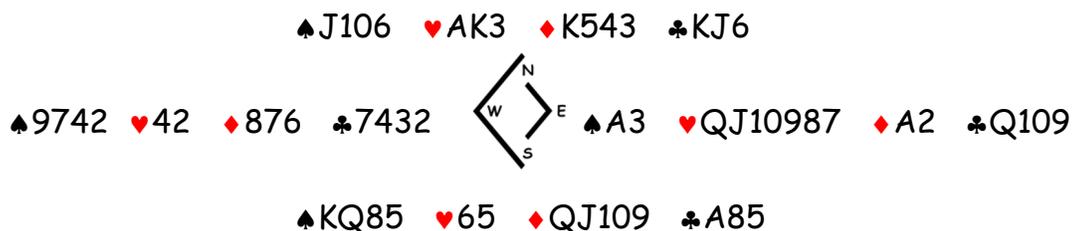
12 winners and 1 loser

You should make 680

Reference: 2016.04.11.HandsForHolly&Diane

Example 2 Do Not Create Another Loser

East Dealer North South Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♦	P	3NT	All Pass

Opening Lead: ♥Q

East cannot double 3NT because if declarer or dummy has a five card suit and dummy has AJ or KJ of clubs, 3NT could be cold. North ducks the first trick because he needs to drive out two cards and if they are split, the contract is cold. Declarer will not take the club finesse here because it does not lead to a fourth or fifth club because declarer is 3-3 not 5-3 in Clubs. The Club finesse could just lead to another undertrick. If declarer does not touch clubs, the loser in clubs just gets pitched on the run of the Hearts.

As the cards are, the outstanding aces are not split and the contract will be down. Declarer will get either 3 ♠'s or 3 ♦'s along with 2 ♥'s and 2 ♣'s. He will lose 2 aces and four ♥'s for down two.

If declarer tries the club finesse, he will be down three.

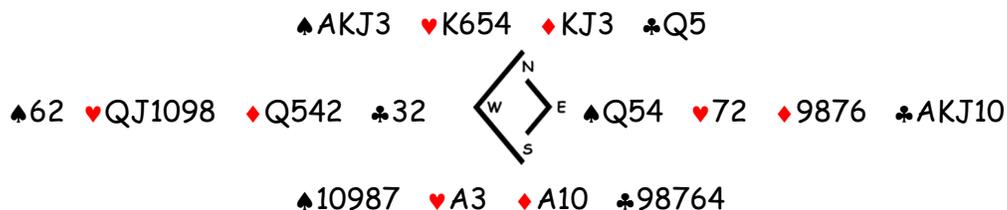
Therefore, do not lose any slow losers that cannot develop additional tricks and that would be just discarded when the opponents run their suit. If the Aces are split, then the losing club can go on a Spade and the finesse is still not taken.

Example 3: Four Ruffs Not Two

You want two ruffs in both hands in a 4-4 trump fit.

North Dealer

None Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	2♠	P
4♠	All Pass		

Bidding Note:

North and South are using four-suit transfers so 2NT directly is a transfer to Diamonds. Therefore to invite, South must go through Stayman. 2♠ is 8-9 with four Spades and 2NT is 8-9 without four Spades.

Opening Lead: ♥Queen

The Play:

Win the ♥Ace and play a club. East will exit a Heart and declarer will win the ♥King and play a last Club in dummy. East will exit a Club. Declarer ruffs it and cashes the top two Spades refusing to take the finesse, and ruffs two Hearts and another Club. The ♦3 will go away on the fifth ♣. East will win his ♠Queen whenever he wants to ruff in.

The Result:

4♠= for +420

Alternatively:

If declarer touches trump before losing two ♣'s or takes the ♠ finesse, the person with the third trump left will just play it eliminating two ruffs for declarer.

The Result:

4♠-1 for -50

Example 4: End Play

You can endplay the opponent

South Dealer Both Vulnerable

♠AKQ98 ♥54 ♦AJ8 ♣AQ4

♠43 ♥K32 ♦765 ♣J10987 ♠2 ♥J109876 ♦Q432 ♣65

♠J10765 ♥AQ ♦K109 ♣K32



	N	E	S	W	
			1♠	P	
	2NT	P	3♠	P	
	4♣	P	4♥	P	
	4NT	P	5♦	P	1 or 4 keycards
We have all keycards	5NT	P	6♥	P	2 Kings
	6♠	All Pass			

Opening Lead: ♣Jack

The Play:

Declarer wins the ♣Ace, draws trump, cashes the remaining clubs thus eliminating ♣ and ♠ exit cards from the defenders, cashes the ♥Ace and exits the ♥Queen. The defenders win the ♥King and have to exit a Diamond or give declarer a sluff and a ruff.

The Result:

6♠= +1430. 6♠ is cold.

Alternatively:

If declarer takes the ♥ finesse and it loses, the defenders will exit a Heart and now declarer has to guess who has the ♦Queen.

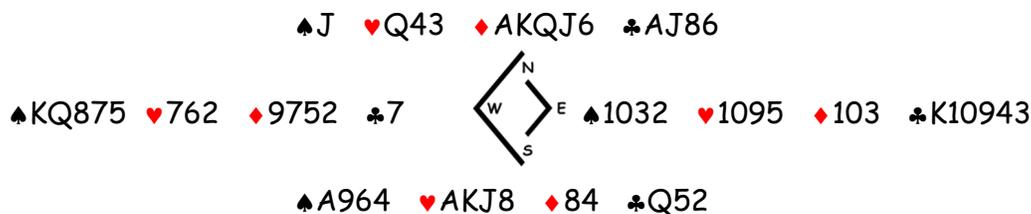
He can make 6♠+1 if the ♥King is onside and declarer finds the ♦Queen, but 6♠ could go down one. End playing the opponent guarantees 6♠ will always make 6 but never plus one and never down one.

At matchpoints or Imps, I would do the end play and take the sure thing.

Example 5: Opening Lead Could be a Stiff

North Dealer

East West Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
1♦	P	1♥	P
3♣	P	3♦	P
3♥	P	4NT	P
5♠	P	6♥	All Pass

North made a delayed heart raise so he has three hearts and likely has a stiff spade.

1-3-5-4

Opening Lead: ♣7

When you have seven or more cards total in the suit, suspect a singleton. You could have fewer cards and it still could be a singleton. Could his partner have six or seven of the suit and decided not to pre-empt?

Analysis:

6♥ is cold. Win the club opening lead from West with the ♣Ace
 Ruff a spade and draw trump. Pitch 2 ♠'s and a club on the Diamonds, concede the ♣King and score +980. You do not have the transportation to take club finesse or ruff enough spades.

File Reference: 2016.05.16.HandsForDot

Example 6: Keep Danger hand off of lead

East Dealer

North South Vulnerable

	♠KQJ10	♥A65	♦QJ3	♣987
♠A32	♥QJ1098	♦K42	♣Q4	♠9654
	♥74	♦1097	♣6532	
	♠87	♥K32	♦A865	♣AKJ10

N	E	S	W
	P	1♦	1♥
Dbl	P	1NT	P
3NT	All Pass		

Opening Lead: ♥Queen

Bidding Note:

Each time No Trump is bid after an opponent bids a suit, a stopper is promised. If North did not have a ♥ stopper, he could not bid 3NT but instead would have to cuebid ♥'s and partner could go to 3NT on his own with an additional stopper or try a ♠ Moysian fit if he had three ♠'s.

Analysis:

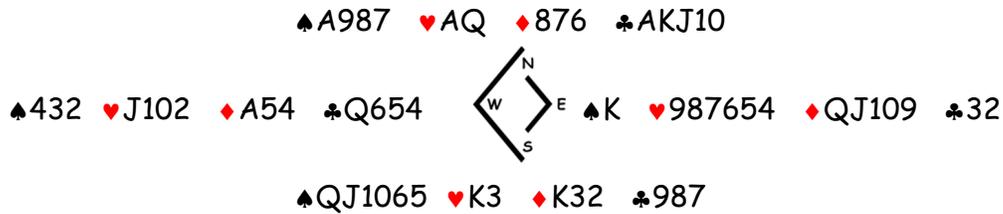
Declarer ducks the opening lead and then wins the ♥Ace. He drives out the ♠Ace and West continues a ♥. South wins the ♥King. He has eight tricks and needs one more. West likely has the ♦King so declarer plays Clubs but refuses the finesse by cashing the Ace and King of Clubs. The ♣Queen falls and the contract is home. If the ♣Queen does not fall, declarer can play a Club and hope East has the ♣Queen. If West has the ♦King and Queen third of Clubs, there is no way to make the contract. Declarer cannot cash the ♦Ace before playing three rounds of clubs because East would exit a ♦ to partner's king. Once the ninth and ten tricks are secured, the ♦Ace can be cashed.

Result:

3NS+1 for +630

Example: Another Danger Hand

South Dealer East West Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
		P	P
1♣	P	1♠	P
4♠	All Pass		

Opening Lead: ♥Jack

Analysis:

Declarer wins the ♥King and puts the ♠Queen on the table. West ducks smoothly and declarer plays the Ace because he wants to prevent East from getting in and playing Diamonds through his unprotected King.

When the ♠King falls, he draws trump and cashes the top two ♣'s to prevent East from getting in with a doubleton Queen. He plays a third Club and East wins the ♣Queen and exits a ♣.

Declarer pitches a Diamond on the club and loses one ♣ and two ♦'s making his contract for +420.

Example 7: Safety Plays

Two typical safety plays are:

1. AQ32

7654

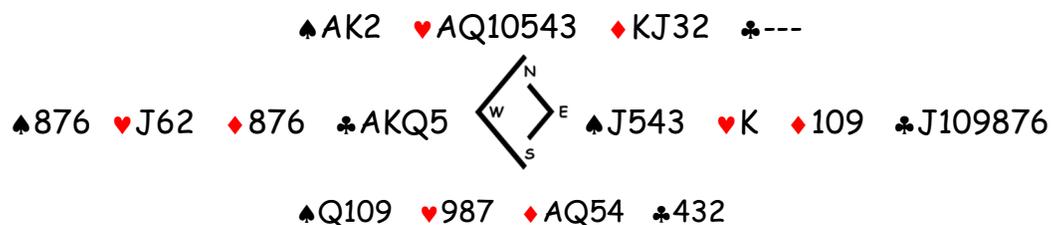
Cash the Ace and play up to the Queen.

2. KJ98

A765

Cash the King and play the 9. If East shows out or covers it, win the Ace otherwise run the 9 through.

North Dealer NS Vulnerable



	N	E	S	W	
	1♥	P	2♥	P	
Splinter	4♣	Dbl	4♦	P	First round Diamond control
	6♥	All Pass			

Opening Lead: ♣Jack

Bidding Notes:

A Double of a splinter is never led-directive. It suggests that clubs could be a sacrifice.

South cannot use keycard Blackwood here. It is not because of three quick ♣ losers because his partner splintered in ♣'s. It is because two key cards with the Queen will force him to 6♥-1.

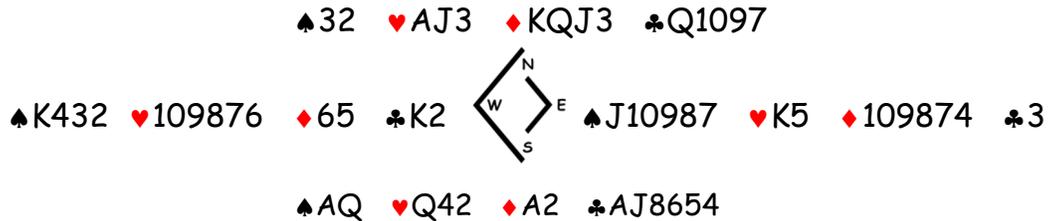
Analysis:

Declarer can afford to lose one ♥ trick but not two. He cashes the ♥Ace and when the ♥King falls, he finesses West for the ♥Jack making 6♥+1 for 1460.

If he takes the ♥ finesse, it loses and declarer has to guess whether to finesse West for the ♥Jack. Likely result will be 6♥-1 for -100.

Example 8: Keep Tempo

North Dealer NS Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
1♦	P	2♣	P
3♣	P	3NT	All Pass

Opening Lead: ♥10

Analysis:

If East wins the opening lead, East will switch to the ♠Jack and now an ice-cold contract will be down. Declarer must win the opening lead with the ♥Ace and take the ♣ finesse. Spades are protected from West so he continues a ♥. East wins the ♥King and the spade switch is not a problem. Declarer wins the ♠Ace and makes +660.