

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

WHICH FINESSE?

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	♠ A6432 ♥ 832 ♦ 642 ♣ T6	
♠ KJ87 ♥ K65 ♦ T98 ♣ J72	North West East Declarer	♠ QT95 ♥ 7 ♦ 753 ♣ K9843
	♠ ♥ AQJT94 ♦ AKQJ ♣ AQ5	

When this deal was played in a team match, both Souths charged into 6♥ with little or no encouragement from North. Now, you have probably noticed that Dummy is alarmingly short of entries. So you might think that at Table 1, where West led a helpful Spade, Declarer would be in rather better shape than at Table 2 where West led a distinctly unhelpful Diamond. But, in fact, 6♥ went down at Table 1 and made at Table 2!

At Table 1, Dummy's ♠A won the first trick and Declarer pitched a Club loser. Seeing 12 easy tricks if the ♥K was onside, Declarer ran the ♥8, but was down when West took his King and returned a trump. Declarer had blundered grievously, as there was now no way to avoid a Club loser. Instead of giving himself just one chance to finesse he could have given himself two chances. Yes, on the opening Spade lead Declarer must not throw a Club loser, instead it is a Diamond winner that has to go (the Ace would be the ostentatious choice, of course). Now Declarer takes the Club finesse and, if it loses, then he can get to the board with a Club ruff and try the Heart finesse. Of course, when the Club finesse works, then Declarer cashes the ♣A, ruffs a Club (with the Eight, to be safe), and tries for an overtrick with a Heart finesse.

At Table 2, after the more challenging Diamond lead, Declarer's play at Trick 2 was the clever ♥Q, trying to force an entry to Dummy. But West was just as clever and ducked! Declarer persisted with the ♥J and West brilliantly ducked that one too! But Declarer would not be denied and, leaving West's remaining trump at large, she now played Diamond winners. Whatever West did on the last Diamond, Declarer would score 12 tricks! Great defense, great declaring!

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