

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## A PRACTICE FINESSE

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The humble finesse is the first thing we learn, and we also learn that some finesses win, some lose. Later we learn that some finesses are purely for practice and serve no useful purpose. Here is a case in point.

	♠ QJ965 ♥ KJ97 ♦ A2 ♣ AQ	
♠ 843 ♥ ♦ KJ983 ♣ J9875	<i>North</i>  <i>West</i> <i>East</i>  <i>South</i>	♠ ♥ Q65432 ♦ QT4 ♣ KT63
	♠ AKT72 ♥ AT8 ♦ 765 ♣ 42	

### Both Vulnerable

*South West North East*

1♠ 2NT Dbl 5♣

Pass Pass 6♠ All Pass

West's 2NT was the "Unusual No Trump", showing both minors, and North eventually plunged (some would say recklessly) into slam. West leads a Club, your job is to make 12 tricks.

A Diamond loser is unavoidable, so you must guess the whereabouts of the ♥Q if this slam is to make. And

then there is the small matter of the Club suit. Do you take the finesse? Surprisingly, it's not necessary! We've already determined that you need to bring in the Hearts, and if that is the case then the 4<sup>th</sup> round of Hearts can be used to pitch the Club loser.

OK, you hop up with the ♣A, and draw trumps, ending on the board. Who has the ♥Q? Surely East! West's bidding showed both minors (usually 5-5) and later he played three Spades. That doesn't leave room for many Hearts! So, Declarer runs the ♥J around and West predictably shows out. Another Heart finesse, the ♥A is cashed, over to the ♦A, then the Club loser goes on the ♥K. Making 12 tricks, losing just a Diamond.

Getting the Heart suit right did not require rocket science. Realizing that the Club finesse was not needed? Not so obvious. The winning train of thought was: I must lose a Diamond ... so I cannot lose a Heart ... if I don't lose a Heart then I can park the losing Club on the 4<sup>th</sup> round of Hearts.

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