

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## WRONG QUESTION

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ 9542 ♥ AQJ64 ♦ AT8 ♣ 7	
♠ K ♥ K832 ♦ QJ97 ♣ 8652	North West      East Declarer	♠ JT8 ♥ T9 ♦ K6542 ♣ JT9
	♠ AQ763 ♥ 75 ♦ 3 ♣ AKQ43	

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Once North opens the bidding it is hard for South to stay out of slam. Not that it's a bad slam but it does require a little bit of luck in one or both of the major suits. But good players make their own luck!

West leads the ♦Q, won in Dummy. There are two ways to play the trump suit ... either Declarer can take a first round finesse, which is the best way to play the suit for no losers ... or Declarer can cash the ♠A first, and later lead towards the Queen, a line of play designed to maximize the chances of escaping with only one trump loser (as it caters for singleton King offside). Which line of play do you adopt (we'll pretend that you have not already peeked at the E-W hands)?

Actually, that's the wrong question, the right question is *when* should Declarer play trumps. At Trick 2 Declarer does not know what is the objective in the trump suit. That depends upon the Heart suit:

- If the Heart finesse loses, then Declarer must play the trump suit all out, finessing the Queen on the first round and hoping that the King is doubleton and onside.
- If the Heart finesse wins, then Declarer has some leeway and can improve the chances of not losing *two* trump tricks, by cashing the Ace and later leading towards the Queen.

It's not a difficult hand when Declarer realizes that the success or failure of the Heart finesse will allow the trumps to be played in optimal fashion. On the actual layout, the play goes: Diamond lead won in Dummy, Diamond ruff, successful Heart finesse, and a Spade to the Ace, dropping the King with great aplomb and holding the trump losers to one. Making 12 tricks.

Visit [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) for more about the fascinating game of bridge or email [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org)