

Finessing Demonstration

North East South West

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ K8754 ♥ JT842 ♦ 6 ♣ JT	♠ AT2 ♥ Q95 ♦ A754 ♣ K87 ♠ QJ3 ♥ AK7 ♦ 982 ♣ A432	♠ 96 ♥ 63 ♦ KQJT3 ♣ Q965
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Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♦K #101

There are 7 top winners. 1 in ♠, 3 in ♥, 2 in ♣ and 1 in ♦.

It costs us nothing to duck the first round of diamonds, but when West discards on the second round, it is clear that we must make 9 tricks without losing the lead. The only hope is that West has ♠K. We cross to dummy with a heart. Then play the ♠Q from dummy and play low from hand if West plays low, repeating the finesse by playing ♠J (or ♠3).

Note: We only lead a high card for a finesse when we have a sequence of honour cards and don't mind if the opponents cover the honour.

Without a sequence of honour cards we lead low towards the honour we hope to make.

East South West North

1♦ Pass 1♠ Pass
1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ AQ74 ♥ 742 ♦ 43 ♣ 9763	♠ J9 ♥ A5 ♦ JT962 ♣ KJT8 ♠ KT85 ♥ K9863 ♦ 87 ♣ Q2	♠ 632 ♥ QJT ♦ AKQ5 ♣ A54
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Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♥6 #132

We have 5 top winners (1 in ♠, 3 in ♦, 1 in ♣). One extra trick will come from hearts and there is a possible finesse in spades.

North wins with ♥A and returns ♥5. South wins with ♥K and returns another heart. This gives us a trick with ♥Q. Only one more trick is now required.

We next lead a low spade to dummy's ♠Q, which wins the trick. We can then cash our remaining winners to make seven tricks.

Note for more experienced players: after winning trick 4 with ♠Q we could try for an overtrick by leading a low spade from dummy. This would give us an eighth trick if spades break 3-3. In practice the 4-2 spade break means that we have to be content with seven tricks.

South West North East

1♦ Pass 1♥ Pass
1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ QJ86 ♥ QJ72 ♦ KT6 ♣ 87	♠ K542 ♥ T864 ♦ Q8 ♣ Q54 ♠ A73 ♥ 953 ♦ A743 ♣ AK6	♠ T9 ♥ AK ♦ J952 ♣ JT932
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Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♠6 #133

We have 6 top winners (2 in ♠, 1 in ♦, 3 in ♣). Diamonds are the best chance of an extra trick.

We win trick 1 in hand and hoping that West has ♦K, lead a low diamond towards dummy. If West plays low, play the ♦Q. If West plays the ♦K, the ♦Q will be a winner later. Either way we will make 7 tricks.

Note: Leading the ♦Q is wrong. Even if East had the ♦K he would cover the ♦Q so you will end up playing the ♦Q and the ♦A on the same trick and the opponent's ♦J will be promoted.

Without a sequence of honours it's generally right to lead a low card towards the honour you hope to make.

West North East South

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ QJ62

♥ 72

♦ Q6543

♣ 62

♠ 953

♥ QJ5

♦ K87

♣ AKJ4

♠ T874

♥ K643

♦ A9

♣ 873

♠ AK

♥ AT98

♦ JT2

♣ QT95

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♦4 #134

We have 4 top winners (2 in ♦, 2 in ♣). Hearts will provide at least two more tricks, and there is a possible finesse in clubs for the 7th trick.

In order to take advantage of a possible 3-3 heart break, we win the first trick in hand with ♦K (keeping ♦A as an entry to dummy). We lead ♥Q which wins, followed by ♥J, which also wins. We now play a 3rd round of hearts, hoping for a 3-3 break.

Hearts don't break 3-3 but we win the return with ♦A, then finesse in clubs by leading low to the Jack. This wins and we have our 7th trick.