

Mastering the Finesse

Part 2 – The Two Way Finesse

By Mick Riccio

dynamick747@gmail.com



The Two Way Finesse is a card combination in which either defender can be finessed for a missing Queen.

Several factors may influence your decision to finesse in one direction rather than the other. They are:

Adverse bidding

Analysis of the lead card

Counting points that the opponents have played

Restricted choice—you cannot afford to finesse into the hand of the dangerous opponent

You may need to put the enemy on lead to force them to lead the difficult suit to you.

North

♠87

♥AK54

♦K1098

♣432

South

♠A105

♥873

♦AJ52

♣AKQ

You find yourself playing 3NT. West has bid 1♠ over your opening bid of 1♦. West lead the ♠K and you held up twice, winning the 3rd Spade in your hand. How must you play the Diamond suit and why?

South can count 8 top tricks. If West has ♦Qxx and gains the lead, West will cash two more Spade tricks for down 1. If East has the ♦Q, East cannot return a Spade. I hope you do not play your Hearts too soon. The whole hand.

North

	♠87	
	♥AK54	
	♦K1098	
	♣432	
West		East
♠KQJ93		♠642
♥J9		♥Q1062
♦Q64		♦73
♣1085		♣J976
	South	
	♠A105	
	♥873	
	♦AJ52	
	♣AKQ	

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♠	Dbl	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

This example demonstrates playing carefully, thoughtfully and illustrates a hand in which no one should go set. But many did. Go figure.

If there is a two way finesse to take, and there is no adverse bidding, you might find yourself counting the opponents points. The revelation to be gained by this technique might show you where the missing Queen might be sitting. Consider the following hand:

	North	
	♠AJ95	
	♥65	
	♦AQ76	
	♣J32	
West		East
♠Q43		♠862
♥Q982		♥AK103
♦95		♦K83
♣Q765		♣1098
	South	
	♠K107	
	♥J74	
	♦J1042	

♣AK4

West	North	East	South
			1♦
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	2NT	P	P
P			

West leads a small Heart and East wins the ♥A, ♥K, then the ♥10, West wins the ♥Q and returns the ♦9. The finesse fails with East winning the ♦K and returning the ♣10. If East had the ♠Q she might have bid.

Sometimes you do not have to guess. There is another way. In the following hand you, South, reach 4♠. You duck the first Heart and then win the Ace to strip your hands of Hearts. You pull trump with West winning the second Spade and returning a Spade. You have a two-way finesse in the Diamond suit. You have a losing Spade, Heart and Club. If you also lose a Diamond you are defeated.

	North	
	♠K7542	
	♥A8	
	♦K105	
	♣987	
West		East
♠A98		♠—
♥QJ109		♥K7632
♦Q976		♦432
♣32		♣QJ654
	South	
	♠QJ1063	
	♥54	
	♦AJ8	
	♣AK10	

West	North	East	South
			1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Play the ♣A and ♣K, put your opponents in with a Club which you must ALWAYS lose. Now they give you the Diamond finesse, or they give you a ruff and a sluff if they lead a Heart. ♣