

**TAKING A FINESSE**  
**INSTRUCTOR NOTES**  
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**PLACE** a deck of cards at each table. **ASK** the students to sort the cards into suits and put the ♥AQ face up on the table in the North hand, and the ♥64 face up in the South hand.

**TELL** them to place the remaining hearts face down in the middle of the table and to place the clubs, diamonds and spades on the corner of the table face down or on the floor.

**EXPLAIN** that today they are going to learn a new technique for taking tricks called a Finesse. **TELL** them their goal is to win a trick with the ♥Q. **ASK** them to discuss at their table how they might be able to attain that goal. Give them 5 to 10 minutes to talk and discuss.

**ASK** them which hand should they lead from? Ask them which position (East or West) needs to hold the ♥K. **ASK** them if anyone had a plan to accomplish that goal. **NOTE** Invariably at least one student in the room will say that if East held the singleton ♥K, then we could play the ♥A, and capture the ♥K.

**TELL** them to shuffle the remaining hearts together and put one heart in East and eight cards in West. **ASK** "What if I said that if you guessed which hand held the ♥K, I would give you a \$100 bill. Which hand would you choose?" (Everyone will say West.) **TELL** them, "You recognize that the ♥K, being singleton is not very likely". Therefore, playing the ♥A is not likely to help you fulfill your goal of winning a trick with the ♥Q."

**ASK** the students "If the ♥K, is in the East hand and is not a singleton, will you ever be able to win a trick with ♥Q? (they will say 'no'). **TELL** them, "So hoping that the ♥K is in the West hand is your best chance to win a trick with the ♥Q". That is a Finesse.

**TELL** them, "A finesse is not a risk, it's an opportunity".

## The Finesse

A Finesse is an opportunity to take a trick with a card that is not yet a winner. An example would be a suit which held an Ace and a Queen. The Ace will always win. The goal is to win a trick with the Queen.

Creating an opportunity to win a trick with the Queen is called Finesse. How can that opportunity be created? Let's look at an example. South is the Declarer. South would like to win a trick with the ♥Q.

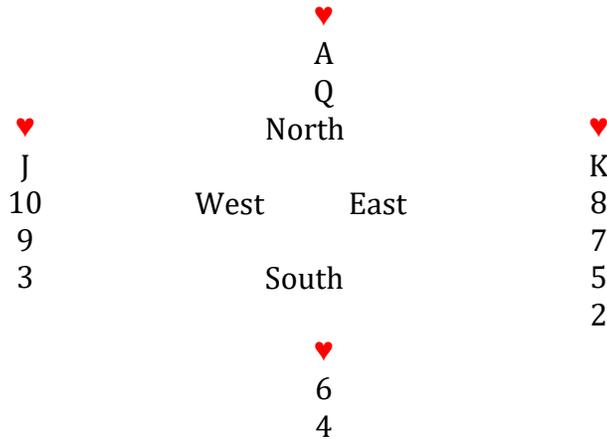
		♥		
		A		
		Q		
		North		♥
♥				10
K				8
J	West		East	7
9				5
3		South		2
		♥		
		6		
		4		

If South leads his ♥4 towards the ♥Q, he will see which card West plays before he has to play a card from Dummy (North).

- If West does not play the ♥K, South will play the ♥Q from Dummy and the ♥Q will win the trick.
- If West plays the ♥K, South will play the ♥A from Dummy and capture the ♥K. Then the ♥Q will be highest heart remaining.

It is true that if the layout is as below and

- South leads his ♥4 towards Dummy
- West plays the ♥3,
- South plays the ♥Q,
- South will lose his Queen to East's ♥K.



South would never have a chance to win a trick with his ♥Q. Half the time the ♥K will be in East; half the time it will be in West...a 50/50 chance!

But stop and think. If South plays the ♥A, he'll win the trick, but won't he have to lose a trick to the ♥K later in the hand? The answer? Yes.

A Finesse is an opportunity to take a trick with a card that is not the highest card, since the player that can win your card has to play before you choose which card to play.

***A Finesse is not a risky play, it's a smart play!***