

Board 5
 North Deals
 None Vul

Double Finesse

♠ K 7 6 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ Q 6 5 3 ♣ A Q 9		♠ 9 4 ♥ A Q J 8 6 2 ♦ A J 10 ♣ 6 3	♠ A J 5 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ K 10 7 4
♠ Q 10 8 3 ♥ K 10 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ J 8 5 2			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥	All pass	

Opening Lead: ♣ 4 (You could also lead a trump, not wishing to lead away from either King. But in a suit contract, never underlead an Ace!)

Planning the Play: In a suit contract, Declarer counts losers. There are 2 ♠ losers, and 2 ♣ losers, and 2 ♦ losers. We can only afford 5 losers, and this is one too many.

Using a technique called the Double Finesse, in this hand you can earn an extra trick when the two missing ♦ honors are split, one in each defender's hand. To do this finesse twice, though, you need to be in the South hand twice. There are not many opportunities to get there!

Declarer is fortunate to hold all the top trumps, though. Assuming East's opening lead is ♣ 4, the defense will take the first two ♣ tricks, and you'll ruff the third one in your hand. The plan is to use your trumps as transportation to the Dummy hand. So play a small heart to dummy's ♥ 10, and lay a ♦ on the table. When West plays small, insert the ♦ 10. This will lose to the ♦ K in East. They'll probably return a safe ♣, which you will trump. (And if they decide to take their ♠ winners now, it's okay! We planned on those!) When you get in again, use another trump to travel to Dummy's ♥ K. Play another ♦, watch East play small, and bravely insert the ♦ J. It wins! The Double Finesse gained you the trick you needed to make this contract.

Now draw trumps and you're home free.

Finessing in NT - Which Finesse First?

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ 4 3	♠ J 9 5	♠ A Q 2									
♥ A K 3 2	♥ Q 9 7	♥ J 4									
♦ A K Q	♦ 10 8 7 5 3	♦ J 9 6 2									
♣ J 10 5 4	♣ 9 8	♣ A K Q 2									
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	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 10 8 7 6										
	♥ 10 8 6 5										
	♦ 4										
	♣ 7 6 3										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	6 NT	All pass

Auction Commentary: Responder knows that partner has 15, 16 or 17 HCP. Adding the hands together there are close to 33 HCP, so East decides to bid the small slam.

Opening Lead: ♣ 9 (Choosing a lead against a slam is not easy. A good passive lead would be from something you DON'T have - like the ♣ suit. Give them what they're already going to win, and save any honors you might have in the case of a finesse by Declarer.)

Planning the Play: In a NT contract, Declarer counts winners. There are 11 sure winners, (1 ♠, 2 ♥s, 4 ♦s, and 4 ♣s), and 2 possible winners. Either a finesse of ♠ K or the ♥ J would pick up the 12th trick.

Win the ♣ J and lead a small ♦ toward the ♥ J. If the ♥ Q is "on side," (meaning it's in the place you want it to be, in front of the ♥ J), then the ♥ J will win, and will make your contract. If the ♥ Q is in the South hand instead, you still have the opportunity to take the ♠ finesse.

Give yourself a double chance, and take the second finesse later if the first choice does not work. If you do the ♠ finesse first and it fails, it is too late to play the ♥s -- you've then already lost this finesse, and making your ♥ J good requires you to lose to the ♥ Q!

Remember: We play towards our honors to make a trick!

Finessing in NT - Which Finesse First?

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

	♠ A 6 4					
	♥ K 9 5					
	♦ A 10 7 6 2					
	♣ Q 3					
♠ J 10 9 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 8 3 2	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ Q 6 2		♥ 10 8 4 3				
♦ J 9 5		♦ K 4 3				
♣ 10 8 6		♣ 9 4 2				
	♠ K Q 5					
	♥ A J 7					
	♦ Q 8					
	♣ A K J 7 5					
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			
Pass	6 NT	All pass	2 NT			

Auction Commentary: A 2 NT opener shows 20 or 21 HCP, balanced. Responder has 13 HCP, and we need 33 points for a small slam in NT. We can't be off 2 Aces, holding 33 HCP, so take the bull by the horns and don't give the opponents any information!

Opening Lead: ♠ J (The top of a sequence of 3 is a great lead, because it doesn't give anything away.)

Planning the Play: In a NT contract, Declarer counts winners. 5 ♣s, 1 ♦, 2 ♥s and 3 ♠s. That's 11 winners, and we need another one. You have the ♥ finesse in your pocket, but first you should try the obligatory finesse up toward the ♦ Q. If it fails, the ♥ finesse will be your fallback play. If the ♥ finesse fails, it means you just lost one trick, and the ♦ finesse requires you to lose to the ♦ K for your second loser!

Get to dummy's ♣ Q, and play a small ♦ towards the ♦ Q, hoping the king is on your right. Now play for the diamond suit to break 3/3. If not now take your second chance, the ♥ finesse.

Give yourself a two chances and not only one!