

TO FINESSE or NOT TO FINESSE

To finesse or not to finesse? We hope to improve our odds by finding alternatives to the finesse. A loser-on-loser play is a common way to avoid a finesse. Here's a straightforward one.

	KQ54	
	AJ3	
	A86	
	K95	
AJ87		109632
9742		Q106
Q42		10753
43		2
	Void	
	K85	
	KJ9	
	AQJ10876	

As South, you arrive in 6 clubs and West leads a trump. This should be easy to play because you have two big clues, don't finesse (in hearts or diamonds, in this case) and use a loser-on-loser play. Draw trump ending in dummy and lead the K of Spades discarding a red-suit loser. Now you can eventually discard the other red-suit loser on the Q of Spades.

Players need to learn how and when to finesse, and then they learn to take their game to the next level and know when not to finesse

A simple finesse wins only half the time. You can improve these odds with other plays. Listen to the bidding. Sometimes counting the points revealed in the bidding will show you how to avoid or take a finesse.

Finesse is actually a poor word choice in bridge. The dictionary says that finesse is "an artful or skillful way of doing something."

Here's a tough no-finesse hand. Can you make 7 Spades, the lead is the K of Clubs.

	987	
	KQ2	
	AKJ6	
	543	
654		3
J1098		76543
97		Q108
KQJ10		9876
	AKQJ102	
	A	
	5432	
	A2	

This one takes some planning. Win the A of Clubs, draw 2 rounds of trump in hand leaving one out. Next cash the A of Hearts and the AK of Diamonds. No finesse! If the Q has not dropped, throw 2 Diamonds on the AK of Hearts and ruff a Diamond high. Now lead the carefully preserved 2 of Spades to the board and throw your losing club on the good Diamond.

Remember to search for a way to avoid a finesse. Even though you have to understand finessing positions and take them when you must, always look for an alternative and make the finesse the last resort.

"A finesse that works early in the hand will work later also."
Try some alternatives first.

The Beatles love song, "Here, There, and Everywhere" might help you as declarer. "Is it better to start playing a suit starting from my hand ("here") towards the dummy ("there")? Or maybe better to start leading the suit from the dummy ("there") Towards my hand ("here"). Or, maybe, because I have solid honors or equal cards in Both hands or completely solid cards in one hand, it doesn't matter which hand I Start in ("everywhere").

Here to there? Or
There to here? Or
Everywhere? Either will do