

I'm going to start with hand 8, which was usually played in 2S, with a trump lead.

♠ KJ863	♠ AQ10
♥ 74	♥ QJ93
♦ 7	♦ A962
♣ AJ943	♣ 65

It looks sensible to try ruffing clubs in the East hand, setting up the suit in the process. One club will be lost in the process, and the defenders are likely to lead a second round of trumps when they get in. As a result declarer will only be able to ruff clubs once. This will be enough to set up the suit if it breaks 3-3 in the defenders hands, but if the outstanding clubs are 4-2 declarer needs to make

something out of the Jack and nine. So what should West do on the first round of clubs, when the 5 is led from East and South follows with the 2? One might try the Jack, which works if West started with both the King and Queen. However it is better to insert the nine. If North wins with the King or Queen one can then return to the East hand and lead another small club, planning to finesse against the other honour. This works if South started with either K 10 or Q 10, which is twice as likely as the KQ holding required for the initial finesse of the Jack. Indeed the nine was the winning play on the night, but several declarers tried less successful lines.

Let's move on to Board 17, which was played in 2S by West at every table. Deep Finesse

	♠ Q6	
	♥ A5	
	♦ AJ1042	
	♣ KQ54	
♠ AK1032		♠ J97
♥ K6		♥ Q10743
♦ K987		♦ 5
♣ J2		♣ A763
	♠ 854	
	♥ J982	
	♦ Q63	
	♣ 1098	

says that nine tricks are available, and in practice declarer took 8, 9 or 10. The play followed a number of different lines. Some Norths started with ♥ A and ♥ 5, hoping for a ruff. Declarer might want to draw North's trumps so as to use the ♥ Q for a discard; or perhaps one should concentrate on trying to ruff Diamonds in dummy?

At one table Declarer pulled just one round of trumps, crossed to the ♣ A, and attempted to cash ♥ Q, discarding West's second club. However North ruffed and exited with ♣ K, which West ruffed.

This left:-

	♠ -	
	♥ -	
	♦ AJ1042	
	♣ Q5	
♠ K103		♠ J9
♥ -		♥ 107
♦ K987		♦ 5
♣ -		♣ 76
	♠ 85	
	♥ J	
	♦ Q63	
	♣ 10	

Declarer has taken 4 tricks so far and can still reach the total of 9 given by Deep Finesse, but at this point only one card from West is good enough. Can you see which?

At the table West led $\spadesuit 7$, and North played the 10; but South overtook with the $\spadesuit Q$ and led a trump. Now Declarer could ruff just one Diamond and ended up with only 8 tricks.

The winning card for West in the position above is $\spadesuit K$. North can win but has no trumps to lead. Should West have found this? The danger of the defence leading trumps was clear, and after North ruffed $\heartsuit Q$ with $\spadesuit Q$ it was evident that South held both remaining trumps. When West led $\spadesuit 7$ the defenders had a choice who should win the trick, but with the $\spadesuit K$ there is no choice, and providing that it is North who holds the Ace declarer will be safe.

Roger Heath-Brown