

## ♠♥♦♣ A RUFFING FINESSE ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and this is your hand:

<b>S</b>	South
♠	KQJ9752
♥	6
♦	A95
♣	73

You have a good 7-card spade suit and only 10 HCP, but this hand is too good to open a pre-emptive 3♠. This is only a 6 loser hand, and if partner has only 3 "cover" cards that can take care of 3 of those 6 losers, you will have a game.

Partner responds 1NT, which is discouraging. You rebid your spade suit to show a minimum hand - 2♠; and partner invites with a 3♠ raise. This means he was going to jump to 3♠ if you bid 2 of one of your other suits. This would have shown a 3-card limit raise - 10-12 points. You will certainly accept this invitation and 4♠ becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♦K and you see this dummy.

<b>N</b>	North
♠	1084
♥	AQJ
♦	1064
♣	AJ85

West leads ♦K

<b>S</b>	South
♠	KQJ9752
♥	6
♦	A95
♣	73

How are you going to make you 4♠ contract?

You have 4 losers - the ♠A, two diamonds and a club. You have to find a way to eliminate one of the losers. You could depend on the heart finesse. But this has only a 50% probability and if you lose, you are set. They will take their two diamonds immediately, and with their ♥K and ♠A, you can take only 9 tricks.

There is a 100% methods for making this contract. Do you see it? The title of this column might give you a hint.

Don't take the heart finesse. Win the  $\spadesuit A$  and lead the  $\heartsuit 6$  to dummy's  $\heartsuit A$ . Now lead the  $\heartsuit Q$ . If East plays low, discard a losing diamond. West can win his  $\heartsuit K$ , but now can take only 1 diamond trick, the  $\heartsuit K$  and the  $\spadesuit A$ . You can discard the losing club on your  $\heartsuit J$ . If East plays the  $\heartsuit K$  on the  $\heartsuit Q$  lead, ruff and go back to the dummy with the  $\clubsuit A$  and play the  $\heartsuit J$ ; this time, discarding the losing diamond.

This is called a ruffing finesse and I encourage you to try it out using the link below. Once you get used to this technique, you will see it popping up in many hands.

Look at the entire deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	$\spadesuit$ 1084 $\heartsuit$ AQJ $\diamondsuit$ 1064 $\clubsuit$ AJ85	P 1NT P 1 $\spadesuit$ P 3 $\spadesuit$ P 2 $\spadesuit$ P P P 4 $\spadesuit$
W West		E East
$\spadesuit$ 63 $\heartsuit$ 10743 $\diamondsuit$ KQJ3 $\clubsuit$ K92		$\spadesuit$ A $\heartsuit$ K9852 $\diamondsuit$ 872 $\clubsuit$ Q1064
	S South	
	$\spadesuit$ KQJ9752 $\heartsuit$ 6 $\diamondsuit$ A95 $\clubsuit$ 73	4 $\spadesuit$ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/yygfpupl> Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.