

♠♥♦♣ A 100% FINESSE ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer with this hand:

S	undefined
♠	AJ8
♥	AJ9642
♦	K7
♣	KQ

You open 1♥ and partner raises you to 2♥. It's back to you. Do you pass, invite or raise to game?

You started with 18 HCP and a 6-card trump suit. That's 20 points. After partner supported your hearts, you get to add 1 more point for the 6th heart and another one point for the two doubletons. That's a grand total of 22 points. Partner promised at least 6 points. You have more than enough for game – 4♥.

West led the ♣A and followed with another club. This was the dummy:

N	undefined
♠	K542
♥	K1075
♦	652
♣	104

West's Lead: ♣A

S	undefined
♠	AJ8
♥	AJ9642
♦	K7
♣	KQ

At first blush, you see a spade loser, a possible heart loser, two diamond losers and one club loser.

Since you have 10 hearts, the chances of the ♥Q dropping under the ♥AK are about 80%. But you still have one too many losers. You have two finesses available – spades and diamonds. Each finesse is 50%, but the probability of one of them working is 75%.

Can you do better?

Yes, you can. Fortunately, both finesses are through the same opponent. If you can get West to lead a spade or diamond, you get a "free finesse." This is a variation of the strip and endplay.

Win the second club with your ♣K and pull trump with the ♥AK. The hearts do break 2-1. Now lead a low spade from the dummy, covering whatever East plays to

it. West has to win this trick. Now he is on the horns of a dilemma. If he leads a spade or a diamond, you get the free finesse that eliminates one loser. If he leads a club, you can ruff in the dummy and discard a diamond from your hand, accomplishing the same end.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; text-align: center;"> 11 <small>D</small> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> N North ♠K542 ♥K1075 ♦652 ♣104 </div>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; text-align: center;"> 0 <small>South</small> 0 </div>															
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> W West ♠Q1097 ♥3 ♦AQ3 ♣A8653 </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> </div>	W	N		E	S			1♥		Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> E East ♠63 ♥Q8 ♦J10984 ♣J972 </div>
	W	N	E	S																
			1♥																	
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥																	
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You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yjtey66n>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.