

## ♠♥♦♣ FINESSING CORRECTLY ♠♥♦♣

West passes and your partner opens 1♦. East passes and it's your call:

S	South
♠	753
♥	QJ5
♦	J42
♣	AKQ5

When your partner opens a minor suit, your first priority is to respond with a major suit at least 4-cards long. Remember, you are looking for a major suit fit and if partner also has 4 of your suit, your objective is met. Here, however, you don't have a 4-card major. Therefore, with a balanced hand, you must bid some level of notrumps. With a hand of 6 to a bad 10 points, your call is 1NT. With a good 10 to 12 points, respond 2NT. Here, you have 13 points. With 13-15 points respond 3NT.

After your 3NT response, there are 3 passes. West leads out his top spade and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	AK
♥	1072
♦	KQ63
♣	J932

West leads ♠Q

S	South
♠	753
♥	QJ5
♦	J42
♣	AKQ5

You have 6 top tricks; 2 spades and 4 clubs. You need 3 more. Unfortunately, there is no time to work on the hearts. You must lose 2 hearts and by that time, West's spade will be ready to run. You need all 3 tricks from diamonds. Therefore, you have to be very careful how you play the suit. Try to figure out how you are going to take 3 diamonds before reading on.

You must get to your hand in clubs to lead a low diamond the the  $\spadesuit$ KQ. If West plays low insert the  $\spadesuit$ Q. Then come back to your hand and lead another low diamond. Here, West has to play his  $\spadesuit$ A and suddenly you have 3 diamond winners. If you lead a diamond honor, you will lose that honor and there are only 2 diamonds left, taking only 8 tricks.

This play is not full proof. If East holds the  $\spadesuit$ A or if West holds 3 or more diamonds with the  $\spadesuit$ A, you are toast. But that is the only play for 9 tricks and if you don't take them, you can be consoled that nobody else will be able to take them either.

Look at the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">8</div>	<b>N North</b> $\spadesuit$ AK $\heartsuit$ 1072 $\diamondsuit$ KQ63 $\clubsuit$ J932	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>N</td> <td>E</td> <td>S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1<math>\diamondsuit</math></td> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1 $\diamondsuit$	P	3NT	P	P	P	
	W	N	E	S										
P	1 $\diamondsuit$	P	3NT											
P	P	P												
<b>W West</b> $\spadesuit$ QJ1042 $\heartsuit$ 863 $\diamondsuit$ A8 $\clubsuit$ 1074		<b>E East</b> $\spadesuit$ 986 $\heartsuit$ AK94 $\diamondsuit$ 10975 $\clubsuit$ 86												
	<b>S South</b> $\spadesuit$ 753 $\heartsuit$ QJ5 $\diamondsuit$ J42 $\clubsuit$ AKQ5													
		3NT S      NS: 0 EW: 0												

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/un54835> , 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.