

THE RIGHT WAY TO FINESSE

After a brief auction you end in 3NT and your LHO leads the ♥6. You see this pretty dummy:

	West	North	East	South
	Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT
		North		
		♠Q6		
		♥A84		
		♦KJ95		
		♣J972		
West				
♥6				
		South		
		♠984		
		♥Q9		
		♦AQ108		
		♣AKQ8		

What would be your plan? Specifically, how would you play the first trick?

Of course, the first thing you do is count the top tricks. You have 4 diamonds, 4 clubs and the ace of hearts. You can get an extra trick by finessing the ♥Q against the king. If West led away from the king your ♥Q will be the 10th trick.

The next thing you must think about is what could go wrong. You are defenseless in spades. If East holds the ♥K and switches to spades, you will lose at least 4 spades (there are 8 outstanding) and that, with the ♥K, is enough to set you. You are risking cold 9 tricks against actually going down. The right play is to rise with the ♥A and take your eight tricks in the minor suits. Look at East's hand and tell me he wouldn't switch to the ♠A!

This is the complete board:

		N North		W N E S	
11		♠ Q6		P 3NT P 1NT	
		♥ A84		P P	
		♦ KJ95			
		♣ J972			
W West				E East	
♠ 7532				♠ AKJ10	
♥ J107653				♥ K2	
♦ 63				♦ 742	
♣ 10				♣ 6543	
		S South			
		♠ 984			
		♥ Q9			
		♦ AQ108			
		♣ AKQ8			
				3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0	

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mh4fvur> . Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick.