

# Learning Points – One Finesse Too many

by Steve Moese (Mike Purcell ed.)

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Declarer Play LEVEL: Basic

Tuesday Evening September 22, 2009 International Fund Open Pairs, Mike Lipp, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 .

East Deals None Vul MPs	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		Steve
♠ QJ10643 ♥ Q8 ♦ AK ♣ AQ7	N W 18 E S	♠ A72 ♥ J1092 ♦ 942 ♣ KJ6	
Mike	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	EW: 4♠, 4N NS: 2♦	

Match Points put a high premium on overtricks. Many times declarer will put the contract to gain one additional trick. Here's a devilish hand few got right because they took 1 finesse too many.

## The Bidding

South's weak 2 in diamonds removes some bidding space, but doesn't preempt West much. West starts the bidding sequence with a Double intending to show a strong hand. East contributes a jump in hearts to show 9-11 HCP and 4+ hearts. Given the original pass, East cannot have a much stronger hand.

East	South	West	North
Pass	2♦	Dbl	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		
North Leads ♦J			

West's simple new suit bid shows a hand worth 17+ HCP and at least 5 spades. West implies low interest in hearts by not raising immediately. East has an easy raise to game, having shown the full value of the hand on the 1<sup>st</sup> response.

## The Play

West can count 2 losers in ♥s and one loser in ♠s. West can also count 10 winners: 5 in trumps and 5 in the minors. The lead of the ♦J is suspicious. Winning the ♦A, declarer tables the ♠Q. When West ducks, declarer calls for the dummy's ♠A!! A 2<sup>nd</sup> ♠ clears the suit and South wins the ♠K. Declarer claims 10 tricks. 4♠ making 4 is worth +420 and 6 of 7 Match Points.

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MPs	6	6	2	2	2	6	2	2
Score	420	420	-50	-50	-50	420	-50	-50

The score tells all – either you finessed for the ♠K or you didn't. Top or bottom. 3 declarers didn't, 5 did. Was West lucky? Did declarer peek? Or did my partner know something 5 other declarer's didn't see?

East Deals None Vul MPs	♠ 86 ♥ A653 ♦ J ♣ 985432		Steve
♠ QJ10643 ♥ Q8 ♦ AK ♣ AQ7	N W 18 E S	♠ A72 ♥ J1092 ♦ 942 ♣ KJ6	
Mike	♠ K9 ♥ K74 ♦ Q1087653 ♣ 10	EW: 4♠, 4N NS: 2♦	

## Post Mortem

Before playing to trick 1, try to reconstruct South's hand. We know South has 5-11 HCP and 6 or 7 diamonds. Missing the AK and J of diamonds, South is marked with points in the outside suit. Since North did not lead the ♥A or ♥K, we can conclude these honors are split. The lead of the ♦J is either a singleton or a doubleton.

One more fact: North failed to cover the ♠Q. West assumed South held that card. Once you give the ♠K to South, then you need to eliminate North's trumps ASAP or risk losing a ♦ ruff (the defense has transportation in ♥). So West judged South held 8 or 9 HCP and 6 or 7 diamonds. Yes, South didn't need the ♠K

for the opening weak 2 bid. However opening at the 2 level on 5 HCP with only 2 HCP in your suit is risky. Most won't.

### **Learning Points**

1. Take the time to reconstruct opponent's hands. When someone makes a weak two their holding can be easy to decipher.
2. Beware – if you hold 5 or 6 cards in a suit opponents have bid a weak 2 in, be ready for the lead to be from shortness and plan accordingly.
3. Most players will cover an honor when declarer offers a finesse. Sometimes not covering suggests their partner holds that key card.

Key Words: Competitive Bidding, Reading Cards, Estimating opponent's hands