

## RESORTING TO THE FINESSE

This is how the uncontested auction went between North and South:

	North ♠72 ♥KQ92 ♦Q732 ♣Q875	
West		East
	South ♠AQ763 ♥AJ1043 ♦865 ♣-----	
North	South	
	1♠	
1 NT	2♥	
3♥	4♥	
Pass		

What do you think of this auction?

With two 5-card majors, it's always best to open the higher ranking major. Then you can show the second major in the next round of bidding at the 2-level – giving your partner a choice of passing 2♥ or showing preference for spades.

North has only 9 HCP's and lacks support for the spades. His correct bid was 1NT. Now when South shows his heart suit (could be with 4 or 5 hearts), North invited to game with a general game try bid of 3♥. He wants to show his good 4-card heart suit and now his doubleton in spades has some value.

Was South correct to accept the invitation? He has a bare minimum opening, with only 11 HCP's. However, when his partner shows support for hearts, his hand increases significantly in value.

South's first great feature is the 5<sup>th</sup> heart. There is a world of difference playing in a 9-card fit vs an 8 card fit. The second positive feature is the void in clubs. Voids very often perform magic. Instead of the hand worth 13 total points, the positives increase its value to about 18 points. In fact, most hands should accept the invitation if it only holds a 5-card suit with the responder's 4-card suit.

West leads the ♥6. Try to plan the play to take 10 tricks.

You must lose all 3 diamonds and your spades are not going to take many tricks. You are solid in trump and, of course, you will have no club losers. Had West not led the heart, your plan would have been to cross ruff spades and clubs, scoring each of the trump separately. That nine trump tricks plus the ♠A. But those nasty opponents have scuttled that plan by leading a trump. Now you have only 8 trump tricks and the ♠A. Where can you get that extra trick? Much as you don't like the risk, you have to rely on the spade finesse!

You win the first trick in the dummy with the ♥9 and lead the ♠2 toward your ♠Q. East plays low and the ♠Q holds. Now you play the ♠A and discard a diamond. You ruff a third spade in the dummy with the ♥2 and hold your breath. East follows with a spade. Now all the rest of the dummy's trumps are high. You continue cross ruffing clubs until you are left with the ♥A in your hand. After taking that ace you have 10 tricks and you can turn over your 3 diamonds to the opponents.

This is the complete board:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ 2 ♥ KQ92 ♦ Q732 ♣ Q875	P 1NT P 2♥ P 3♥ P 4♥ P P P
W West		E East
♠ J94 ♥ 76 ♦ AJ10 ♣ A10932		♠ K1085 ♥ 85 ♦ K94 ♣ KJ64
	S South	
	♠ AQ763 ♥ AJ1043 ♦ 865 ♣	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ktxj3le> . 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.