

Double Finesse

Finessing is a common method of generating extra tricks. For example:

Your hand:

♠ 6 4 3

Dummy:

♠ A Q J 5

You lead the ♠3 and as long as the ♠K doesn't appear you play the ♠Q. If the king is with left hand opponent this will win the trick - and with this particular arrangement you can go back to your hand and repeat the finesse. If the king is with right hand opponent you will lose the trick. This is a 50/50 chance.

Now consider a slightly different set up:

Your hand:

♠ 6 4 3

Dummy:

♠ A Q 10 5

You are now missing both the ♠J and the ♠K. This time you should lead the ♠3 and as long as neither the ♠J nor the ♠K appear you should play the ♠10.

The impact of playing the ten is:

Left hand opponent	Right hand opponent	Outcome	Tricks won
♠K and ♠J		You will win the trick and can repeat the finesse	Three (♠ A Q 10)
♠K	♠J	You will lose this finesse but can repeat for the king	Two (♠ A Q)
♠J	♠K	You will lose this finesse but can repeat for the jack	Two (♠ A 10)
	♠K and ♠J	You will lose both finesses	One (♠ A)

If instead you play the queen the impact is:

Left hand opponent	Right hand opponent	Outcome	Tricks won
♠K and ♠J		You will win the trick but if you try to repeat it the opposition will play the ♠K or the ♠J to force out the ace	Two (♠ A Q)
♠K	♠J	You will win this finesse but if the jack isn't played you cannot repeat it	Two (♠ A Q)
♠J	♠K	You will lose this finesse but can repeat for the jack	Two (♠ A 10)
	♠K and ♠J	You will lose both finesses	One (♠ A)

So in three layouts it makes no difference. In one layout you get an extra trick. This could mean the difference between making your contract and going down.