

# 42- 2023 – take your Finesses early

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Dealer N All Vul

You have ended up in 6NT by South on this Hand

	<b>NORTH</b>	
	A	
	AQ10	
	Q943	
	AKJ43	
	<b>WEST</b>	<b>EAST</b>
	K94	108765
	K762	983
	865	K107
	1082	75
	<b>SOUTH</b>	
	QJ32	
	J54	
	AJ2	
	Q96	

## THE LEAD

West leads H2, plan the play

[Generally, you should not lead away from a King in situations like this, but that's what West did]

## THE PLAY

You count your tricks. Provided Clubs behave, you have 5 Clubs plus SA, HA and DA. That's 8 Tricks

You need 4 more

In Diamonds, you are missing DK, D10, D8 and D7. So realistically, it will be hard not to lose 1 Diamond

If you lose a Diamond, and have played HA at trick 1, then you will lose a HK quickly after that, for 1 down

So, the best thing you can do is finesse the HK at Trick 1 by playing H10 from Dummy

As the cards lie, it wins. So, you know West has HK, and you will make 3 Hearts by finessing HK through HA and HQ later

Now you have 10 Tricks (including DA). You should now play a small Diamond, and play DJ. As the cards lie, it holds. You take the marked Heart finesse, and play another small Diamond from Dummy. East plays the 10, you win with the Ace, and then you play another Diamond, covering West's D8 with D9. East wins DK, your last Diamond in Dummy is best and you now have 12 Tricks, slam made

## COMMENT

At the Club, I often see that Players fail to take their finesses early – you must count the Tricks you need at the outset, and play accordingly. If you played HA at Trick 1, then if you lose a Diamond, you are down

I also see Players cash their easy winners early – such as the 5 Club winners, hoping to find a divine outcome later

### **MORAL OF THE STORY**

It can be hard to make tough decisions early, but often you must do this. Here, take the Heart finesse at Trick 1

[Even if it loses to HK, you have a chance that you can still make the Contract (most probably, a Spade would be returned to knock out SA in Dummy, then I would run all the Clubs, watching carefully for any Diamond discards and hoping DK is with East and D10 falls early)]

### **A REST FOR THE WICKED**

I am taking a few weeks break, and looking forward to the birth of grandchild No 2 very soon

Merry Xmas to you all, I will write again in early Jan 24

My aim is to write simple and informative hints to help us all improve (me included!). Thank you for the kind words many have given me over the year

**Ian Morison**

Bridge lover

22 December 2023