

## If you do not succeed at first, finesse and finesse again!

They are our last resort. We would take any reasonable line that means we do not have to take a finesse. Most of us would struggle to remember the last successful one in a key situation. Most of us have selective short-term memory loss!

So, you bid to what seems a reasonable 6♠ slam:

**Board 24**  
 West Deals ♠ K 9 3  
 None Vul ♥ A K 6  
 ♦ A Q 10  
 ♣ A 8 6 3



♠ A Q 5 4 2  
 ♥ J 10  
 ♦ 9 8 7 3  
 ♣ K J

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

4♦ was natural and 5♣ showed 1 or 4 key cards, obviously the latter in view of North's opening bid. Not the worst slam and not the best either.

2 out of 3 good things had to happen, well, at least initially. Trumps had to behave (they did) and then we came down to the diamond finesses. Even if one diamond finesse worked, there was also the question of what to do with South's 4<sup>th</sup> diamond should the suit break 4-2.

There was a Plan B if we knew that both diamond finesses were going to fail and that involved needing 3 out of 5 good things to happen. 3 out of 5 did work. Could we therefore make our slam?

7 out of 9 declarers in slam failed when they would all have been warned of the bad diamond position. It seems that in several cases only two rounds of trumps had been drawn. Failing to draw the last trump probably cost dearly.

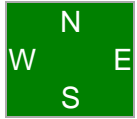
It looks like a case where a really bad break may be more helpful to a declarer than a moderately bad one:

**Board 24**

West Deals  
None Vul

♠ K 9 3  
♥ A K 6  
♦ A Q 10  
♣ A 8 6 3

♠ J 10 6  
♥ Q 9 7 3 2  
♦ 4  
♣ 10 9 5 2



♠ 8 7  
♥ 8 5 4  
♦ K J 6 5 2  
♣ Q 7 4

♠ A Q 5 4 2  
♥ J 10  
♦ 9 8 7 3  
♣ K J

West	North	East	South
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♦	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

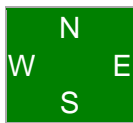
Only drawing two rounds of trumps works only when the hand with long diamonds also has three trumps, a little against the odds. So, draw three rounds of trumps and take your first diamond finesse.

**Board 24**

West Deals  
None Vul

♠  
♥ A K 6  
♦ A Q  
♣ A 8 6 3

♠  
♥ Q 9 7 3 2  
♦  
♣ 10 9 5 2



♠  
♥ 8 5 4  
♦ K 6 5  
♣ Q 7 4

♠ 5 4  
♥ J 10  
♦ 9 8 7  
♣ K J

East does not have an escape card and would probably exit a heart. West can still beat the contract by covering the first round of hearts as there will be no entry back to the North once the hearts have been unblocked and the club finesse taken.

If West fails to cover, declarer can attempt the second diamond finesse. When West shows out, up with the ace and take the club finesse, unblock ♣K and return to the North hand with two rounds of hearts to score 12 tricks.

Plenty of finessing to do...and 2 out of 4 worked!

*Richard Solomon*