

VIC'S TIPS

By her majesty's humble servant, Baloney Bill

Developing tricks while playing the hand – the art of the finesse

In each of the following cases, you, the declarer, attempting to take lots of tricks. OK?

North (dummy)	North (dummy)	North (dummy)
A Q 4	A J 8	A Q 10
South (you)	South (smarty)	South (smarty)
5 3 2	K 7 6	9 7 2

In the hand to the left, you have one sure trick, the ace. But you would like to take two tricks! How? Finesse the queen! How? Lead a small card from your hand, and if West does not play the king, insert the queen. If West has the king, your queen takes the trick. Then you can take the ace, and you have taken two tricks in this suit! Happy days are here again!!!

In the middle hand, you have two sure tricks, the ace and the king. That's not good enough for a player of your caliber and wit, so how do you take 3 tricks instead of just two? Play the king first, and hope that the queen drops. If not, play a small card toward dummy and insert the jack of LHO does not play the queen. If LHO does have the queen, your jack will take the trick!! Then you can take trick #3 with the ace.

In the third hand, you have one sure trick, but you would rather take two or three tricks. How? Lead a small card from your hand, and if LHO (West) plays low, insert the 10. If West has both the king and the jack, your 10 will win the trick. If East has one of the missing honors, East will win the trick, but then, you still have a chance to take two tricks! When you get in the lead again, find a way to lead from your hand toward dummy – lead another card in your hand toward the remaining A Q, and if LHO doesn't play the king, insert the queen. Get the picture? If West has the king, you will take two tricks, the ace and the queen – better than just the ace.

Two more examples:

North (dummy)	North (dummy)
K 4	Q J 8 6
South (smarty)	South (smarty)
10 2	A 5 2

In the first case, you have no sure tricks! Ugh. But you might be able to take one. How?

In the second case, you have one sure trick, but you might be able to take three. How?