

PLAY OF HAND – SESSION 1

By Baloney Bill

OK, we've talked about some of this before, *but it's worth repetition*, so here goes...

Let's talk about how to take more tricks as a declarer than what might be obvious at first glance when looking at your hand and dummy's hand. One technique is the use of a finesse, defined as "a technique for taking tricks with lower honor cards (jacks, queens and kings) when your opponents have higher honor cards (queens, kings, and aces) (dummies.com).

- Here's an example: You hold the A and Q of hearts, and your dummy has the 9 6 3 and 2 of hearts.
 - If you lead the ace, then the queen, you will most likely lose the queen.
 - But if you lead a heart from the dummy (from your weak holdings to your strength (A Q), you have a 50% chance of taking two tricks.
 - If RHO plays a heart other than the king, after which you insert the queen, it just might take the trick.
 - If so, you have finessed successfully.

OK, so you know all of that. So, think about this example:

- Your dummy has the Q 8 5 of diamonds.
- Your hand possesses the A 9 7 of diamonds.
- If you lead the Queen from the board, if RHO does not play the King, you can play low and win the trick, right?
- Please check any or all correct answers:
 - GOOD GRIEF. THIS ISN'T A FINESSE. If you play with anyone with brains, you will never take more than one diamond trick by playing the diamond suit this way.
 - I've seen many players do this, and I do it myself!! So, I object to your Good Grief choice!!!!
 - Well, I do see a way to finesse and have a 50% chance of taking two diamond tricks, but certainly not the way you noted above.

Another example: Dummy holds Q J 8 2 of clubs. You hold A 5 3 of clubs. Is there a way to take more than two club tricks? Yes. No. Please explain:

Another example: Dummy holds 9 7 5 4 2 of spades. You hold K 8. Is a finesse possible with this combined holding? Explain.

Another example: You hold A J 10 8 of hearts. Dummy holds 7 5 2 of hearts. How might you endeavor the finesse route to possibly secure 3 tricks?

One last example (at least for this lesson): Dummy has the Q 8 5 of diamonds; you are declarer's RHO. You have the K 4 of diamonds. Which diamond do you play to the trick? Why?