

Marty Bergen Online Voice Lesson Transcript Example To Finesse or Not To Finesse

This document contains one example hand from the transcript for Marty Bergen's online voice lesson entitled *To Finesse or Not To Finesse*.

Hand # 6 - Counting to Ten

Contract: 4♥

Lead: ♥6

North

♠ 2
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ Q 7 3 2
♣ Q 8 7 5

West

♠ J 9 4
♥ 7 6
♦ A J 10
♣ A 10 9 3 2

East

♠ K 10 8 5
♥ 8 5
♦ K 9 4
♣ K J 6 4

South

♠ A Q 7 6 3
♥ A J 10 4 3
♦ 8 6 5
♣ —

South

1♠
2♥
4♥

North

1NT
3♥

You open 1S with your attractive hand. Regardless of methods, North responds 1NT. You rebid 2H, and partner invites game by raising to three. Many players would think, "I only have a minimum opening bid, so I'll decline the invitation." And, if partner were inviting game in NT, you clearly would not love your hand.

But, once partner raises you, this hand got a lot better. You have a void, which almost always results in winning extra tricks. Having all your strength (including two aces) in your two longest suits is a huge plus. However, the real key is your extra trump. All players have heard, "5-5 come alive," which is definitely not a myth. However, the real key is your extra trump.

I suggest the following guideline which has worked out very well for me over the years: On the auction (1S, 1NT, 2H, 3H), when you have a 5-card heart suit, you should almost always accept partner's invitation. Yes, there are some ugly hands where I would not bid on, but not very many. In addition, hands with voids tend to have fewer losers than your point-count would indicate, so they almost have "magical properties." Therefore, I'm bidding 4H, case closed.

Against 4H, West leads the H-6, and when I see dummy, I am not happy with that opening lead. Partner has his bid, but in addition to the C-Q being worthless, his D-Q is probably not worth much. However, if West had led a club, this would have been an easy hand. I'd ruff the club, cash the S-A, and could win all nine of my trumps by cross-ruffing. The only thing I'd need to do is to make sure that I ruffed with my small trump early so I could ruff with high trump later on.

But after the trump lead, I have to use up two of our side's trumps, so after winning this trick, we will have only a total of seven trumps remaining. If I cross-ruff, I'd win only eight trump tricks rather than nine. Because our only side-suit winner is the S-A, I'd only have nine tricks. We have to find an extra winner.

Although I don't love it, what we have to do to get a 10th trick is take the spade finesse. Therefore, the correct way to play the hand is to win the opening lead in dummy; lead dummy's S2 and, when East plays low, finesse the queen. Once West limited us to eight trump winners, we need two high-card winners in the side suits, and the best chance is to win the S-Q. Fortunately for us, when we finesse the S-Q, West plays low. Yesss!

Now we cash the S-A and discard a diamond. We're looking good. Lead the S3 and ruff with dummy's H2; lead a club and trump it with our H4; and now all our trump are high, so we're 1000% sure to make the hand.

We'll continue with a spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, club ruff, and still have a high trump in our hand. We will cash it for our 10th trick, and cheerfully concede the last three tricks. The opponents are sitting with diamond winners and some trump, so they can fight over the remaining tricks, but we've scored up our 4H game.