



## Tuesday Night Tips

### The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

The Tuesday Night at City has developed its own vibe – a group of bridge enthusiasts playing a friendly competitive game with Phil Halloran and Martin Clear as the hosts. Phil organises the session to make sure there is no sit-out, and Martin continues to lead the group for bridge discussion after the session. He will pick an interesting hand from the face-to-face session for the Tuesday Tips column.

### See Finesse, Take Finesse

F2F at City – Tuesday Night 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

<b>22</b>	♠ T42	Dlr: E
	♥ 6	Vul: E-W
	♦ KJT63	
	♣ T943	
♠ A3	♠ KJ	4
♥ KQT7	♥ AJ983	18 14
♦ AQ842	♦ 975	4
♣ K8	♣ AJ6	
	♠ Q98765	
	♥ 542	
	♦	
	♣ Q752	

	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	4	5	1	4
W	1	4	5	1	4

If there's one 'technique' all bridge players, from beginner on up, feel they're on top of, it's the finesse. In fact, some seem to operate from a principle of 'see finesse, take finesse'. This often happens on the opening lead, where the finesse wields its unearthly charm even when the card led suggests it is 'top of nothing'.

A finesse is seen by a lot of declarers as a way of gaining a trick on the 50% of the time it works. However sometimes it seems to me it would be better if they thought of it as a 50% chance to LOSE a trick. Top bridge players spend a lot of time trying to find an alternative to the mere 50% chance a finesse offers, because there are a lot of situations where

alternatives are clearly better.

Consider a suit where dummy has AQ432 and declarer has 765. Let's assume the contract is no-trump, and you have ample entries to dummy and to hand to maximise the number of tricks you make from the suit. A cursory analysis would suggest two things that affect your result: whether the King is sitting under the AQ tenace, and how the suit breaks: 3-2, 4-1, or 5-0. Having correctly analysed this, and at least vaguely away that 3-2 is the most common break, a lot of declarers come to hand and lead toward the Queen: see finesse, take finesse. Simple, right?

Well, no. What happens if you play a small card first from both hands? Perhaps the King might pop singleton from your right. And if it doesn't, surely you can take the finesse on the SECOND round of the suit, and still gain the same 50% the see-finesse-take-finesse declarers get. There is a clear small advantage in doing this. In fact, if you stay in dummy and lead the first round away from the AQ432 toward the closed hand, a right-hand-opponent clutching Kx is likely to assume you are leading toward the Jack, and will rise up with his King immediately. Even defenders with Kxx sometimes do this if they feel it is urgent to get partner's suit continued as soon as possible.

Taking the finesse on the first round isn't even the second-best play on that arrangement of cards. Playing the Ace and then coming to hand in a different suit to lead toward the Queen will again only drop the same number of tricks that the first-round finesse drops, but has that King-singleton-on-the-right bonus again.

There are many other ways a finesse is not a good choice, but I will mention only one more because it is a personal bugbear of mine: the 'practice finesse'. A practice finesse is when you take a finesse that if it loses drops a trick, but if it wins does not gain a trick. There was one that several declarers took on Board 22 of the 31-May Tuesday night face-to-face game at the Sydney Bridge Centre. And it had another suit where "don't take the finesse" might have helped too!

All declarers ended in a heart contract by East, most in the doomed 6♥, some in 4♥. One 6♥ declarer got a club lead, but most got a spade lead, neither helping nor hindering declarer. The declarers drew trumps in 3 rounds, cleared the spades, then played clubs ... and a couple took the club finesse.

One of these was in 6♥, but one was in 4♥, where this is pretty much a practice finesse. If the finesse wins, it gains nothing, simply allowing you to throw away a 5th diamond from dummy, and if it loses it concedes a trick that could have been ruffed in dummy.

Now there's another finesse on this hand, in diamonds. AQ842 in dummy, 975 in hand ... the see-finesse-take-finessers must have been salivating! But a funny thing happened on the way to the finesse: South shows out. The finesse is doomed - it's 100% guaranteed that the King is sitting over the Queen!

What can be done? Well, the person who received the initial club lead had no problem. Having received the club finesse for free on the first round, he was able to draw trumps and clear all the clubs and all the spades without having to ruff. Then a lead from hand toward the AQ842 got that revealing void from South, and he was able to stop and think. If he played the Queen, it would lose to the King, and the ♦J return would ensure another diamond loser. However ... playing the ♦8 let North win with the Ten, but now North has to lead back a diamond away from KJ+ into the Ace-Queen tenace, or lead another suit for a sluff-ruff, with declarer discarding his other diamond and ruffing in dummy. Making 12.

Now it is important to note that after a spade lead, you cannot make 12 by getting these two finesse positions 'right', because if you ruff the third club in dummy, you no longer have a trump in dummy to force North to return a diamond in the throw-in position. So the slam cannot legitimately make except on that club lead. Two declarers made 10 tricks, presumably taking the club finesse and also getting the diamond position wrong. Two declarers made the par 11, and two made 12, one by the helpful club lead, and one in 4♥ by an error-fest. The club finesse was taken, but South failed to put the Queen on, being supremely confident that such a pointless finesse would not be taken (in my defence, it was a long night). Declarer then led toward dummy and incorrectly played the Queen, losing to the King, but North then exited with a spade to give a sluff-ruff, and declarer made 12 by winning the error count 2 to 1.

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

## SBC Christmas in July – Pairs and Teams



Let's celebrate Christmas in winter! Sydney Bridge Centre is going to run a Christmas in July Congress on 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at the NSWBA clubrooms on Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney – a one-day Pairs event on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and a one-day Teams event on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>. 10am start for both days.

The SBC Congresses are well known for its great atmosphere and good food! A delicious Christmas themed morning tea, snacks and lunch will be included.

Attractive prizes. \$50 per player (lunch included). **RED** masterpoints.

The Program Brochure will be published soon. Please enter via the [NSWBA website](https://www.nswba.com.au). Please contact Wing if you need a partner and/or teammates!

## F2F Night Game in the City

Yes most of our regular sessions are run during the day, however, the night game culture is not lost! The SBC evening games are run by our volunteers who contribute their time for the love of the game.

The **Tuesday PM (Tuesday Evening hosted by Phil and Martin)** has created its own special vibe which attracts a steady growth in table number. The session starts at 7.15pm, 24 boards will be played. Martin Clear will be your host of the session with Phil Halloran and the après in which drinks & snacks will be served. We are trying to avoid sit-out for a proper competitive night, so please [contact office](#) if you would like to join the group on the first time. Promotional table money fee at \$6 per person! Limited time only.

For players who have just started their bridge journey and are looking for a more social game night, please join our **Wednesday night Supervised session** instead. The session starts at 6.30pm, with a 20 – 30 minutes pre-game talk by Jake Andrew (on the current Supervised Play) and Wing Roberts (on the upcoming Beginners Supervised Play). The session is run on duplicate movement, so players can get to meet other people. We aim to finish at around 9pm, so only 12-16 boards will be played. Table money fee \$12 for member and \$15 for visitors. No need to book, walk-ins are welcome.

There are more sessions during the day, both F2F and online, please refer to our [session timetable](#) on our website.