

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## ESCHEWING THE FINESSE

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ A943 ♥ AQJ5 ♦ A54 ♣ KQ	
♠ Q86 ♥ 98 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ 9532	North West      East Declarer	♠ T2 ♥ T643 ♦ T632 ♣ 876
	♠ KJ75 ♥ K72 ♦ 97 ♣ AJT4	

### Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Your writer cannot recall seeing the word “eschew” other than in bridge books. Football players and golfers never eschew, nor do NASCAR drivers, but bridge players seem to do it all the time. Here, North charges into slam (eschewing Blackwood), now see how Declarer makes her contract.

6♠ is a fine place to be but, after the lead of the ♦K, Declarer is in danger of losing a Spade and a Diamond. Declarer could take the trump finesse now, and that is certainly the percentage play when looking only at the Spade suit. Of course, the danger is that, if the Spade finesse loses, Declarer will be down one in a hurry. Declarer can do better by combining her chances in two suits rather than staking everything on luck in the Spade suit.

The right plan is to eschew the Spade finesse and play the ♠A and ♠K. That will be an immediate success if someone has the doubleton Queen but, even if they don't, Declarer has a second string to her bow. Leaving the ♠Q at large, Declarer sets about pitching away Diamond losers. There are two choices ... cash the Hearts hoping for one Diamond pitch from hand ... or cash the Clubs hoping for two Diamond pitches from Dummy. Whichever suit is run, for the contract to make, the defender with the ♠Q must follow three times. Which suit is more likely to succeed?

As the defenders have more Clubs than Hearts, running the Clubs is more likely to succeed. So Declarer wins the ♦A, cashes the ♠A and ♠K, and plays four rounds of Clubs (pitching Diamonds). Making 12 well-deserved tricks. Those Declarers who finessed in Spades, or who ran the Hearts, also get what they deserve, which is only 11 tricks.

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