

**Two-Way Finesse
By Roger Lord**

Dealer: South
Vul: Both

North

♠ KQ
♥ AKJ43
♦ A1063
♣ J6

West

♠ 109
♥ 975
♦ KJ92
♣ 10872

East

♠ J7653
♥ Q1082
♦ 87
♣ 93

South

♠ A842
♥ 6
♦ Q54
♣ AKQ54

South	West	North	East
1 Club	Pass	1 Heart	Pass
1 Spade	Pass	2 Diamonds	Pass
3 Diamonds	Pass	3 Hearts	Pass
3 Notrump	Pass	4 Notrump	Pass
6 Clubs	Pass	6 Notrump	All Pass

Contract: Six Notrump

Opening Lead: Spade Ten

This deal presents three problems: Getting to the optimum contract, finding enough tricks, and managing entries and unblocking to enable taking the tricks.

South opened one club, North responded one heart, and South rebid one spade. North decided to employ “fourth suit forcing (two diamonds), which means nothing except that the bidder wants to go higher but has no appropriate natural bid available.

South’s next bid also is problematic. He solved it by raising the fourth suit to three diamonds. (This third-round temporizing bid should not be construed as an attempt to play in diamonds.) North tried three hearts, which South rejected with a signoff three notrump.

North had enough extra for a move toward slam. His four notrump was not Blackwood, inasmuch as no suit had been agreed upon. Rather, it was “quantitative,” asking partner to pass or move on to slam. South accepted the try by leaping to six clubs, offering his partner a choice of slam contracts. North took it back to six notrump. For a review, see the diagram above.

The ten of spades is led, and you as South can count eleven probable tricks: three spades, two hearts, one diamond, and five clubs if they break no worse than 4-2. (If clubs misbehave, you'll need to take a revised line of play, but you'll still have a chance.) You win the queen, and (of primary importance) unblock the spade king so that the ace can be cashed later.

Some of us might look forward to finessing the jack of hearts, only to suffer a let-down when the queen covers and the 50% proposition fails.

A superior line is to count on one of two finesses in the diamond suit, along with an extra chance of dropping the heart queen doubleton. For the first finesse, lead a small diamond toward your queen. If RHO flies up with the king, or if he ducks and the queen holds, you have the needed trick—but be careful with your entries.

Let's say your diamond queen loses, and back comes a club. Take the jack, cash the heart ace-king, run the clubs and cash the spade ace. Assuming that the heart queen has not appeared, at trick 12, take another diamond finesse, toward the ace-ten. If the jack is to your left, you will win the last two tricks.

Opener's Rebids

You hold: S) KJ4 H) AQ753 D) Q8 C) AQ5

You open the bidding with one heart. Partner responds two diamonds, which you play forcing to game. What do you rebid?

Answer: A calm two notrump, anticipating further rebids. Not only is it unnecessary to jump to show your 18 HCP, it would mislead partner to do so. On hands with balanced distribution, opener's rebids can be divided into three ranges. The minimum range is 12-14 HCP. The intermediate range is 15-17 HCP.* The maximum range is 18-20. These ranges can be stretched up or down, depending upon texture (10's and 9's) and/or extra length in a suit.

*Whereas the intermediate 15-17 HCP rebid range coincides with the requirements for an opening one notrump, some players when holding a five-card major prefer to open one of the major, instead of one notrump, and some players when holding 5-4-2-2 distribution with a five-card minor prefer to open the five-card minor, instead of one notrump.

After responder's first bid is two of a suit, when opener decides to bid notrump, opener with a minimum 12-14 HCP bids two notrump. Or, with an intermediate 15-17, opener jumps to three notrump. Or, with a maximum 18-20, opener bids two notrump (the same bid as with a minimum), followed by a further rebid of four notrump to clarify the range. This third-round four notrump rebid is "quantitative" (not Blackwood), non-forcing, invitational to slam, giving responder a choice either to pass or to go to slam.

Using the hand above as an example, holding S) KJ4 H) AQ1075 D) Q8 C) AQ5, the opener bids one heart, his partner responds two diamonds, opener bids two notrump (minimum or maximum), responder rebids three notrump, and opener goes to four notrump. Responder would either pass or, with something like S) A72 H) K9 D) AJ1076 C) J64, he would accept the invitation by jumping to six notrump.