


A ruffing finesse occurs when you lead the top of a sequence from one hand while having a void in the other hand. Sometimes you will find a situation such as the one shown below.

Dummy	A Q J 10
Hand	5

You have a choice of taking the direct finesse or of playing the A and taking the ruffing finesse. It is almost always better to take the **ruffing finesse**. The direct finesse risks losing a trick that you do not have to lose (50% chance).

If you attempt the ruffing finesse and discover that you are going to lose to a king that is on your left, you can sluff a loser. (Loser on loser play)

Hand No. 5
Opening Lead K♣

		♠ 6 4 3	West	North	East	South
		♥ Q 9 6 3		1♦	P	1♥
		♦ A Q J 10	P	2♥	P	4♥
		♣ A 10	P	P	P	
♠ A Q 7 2						
♥ 8 5		♠ J 9 5				
♦ 8 6 3 2		♥ 7 2				
♣ K Q J		♦ K 9 7 4				
		♣ 9 8 6 2				
		♠ K 10 8				
		♥ A K J 10 4				
		♦ 5				
		♣ 7 5 4 3				

After winning A♣, draw trump and play A♦ followed by Q♦. If K♦ appears, ruff it. You can now sluff two spade losers on the J and 10 of diamonds, making five.

If instead, you lead toward dummy and play Q♦, you will go down. On winning K♦, east will lead a spade (toward weakness in the dummy). You will end up losing a diamond, two spades and a club.

Suppose that it is west who has K♦. You still succeed by sluffing a spade (loser on loser). When west wins K♦, he can cash K♣ and A♠ but you then have the rest of the tricks. If he fails to cash A♠, you can sluff two spades on the J and 10 of diamonds, making five.

Hand No. 6

Opening lead Q♦

	West	North	East	South
♠ 10 9 7 5 3			1♥	P
♥ J	2♥	P	3♥	P
♦ K 5 3	4♥	P	P	P
♣ J 9 7 3				
♠ A Q J	♠ 6			
♥ Q 8 5 2	♥ A K 9 7 4 3			
♦ 8 7 2	♦ A 9 4			
♣ 6 5 2	♣ K Q 4			
♠ K 8 4 2				
♥ 10 6				
♦ Q J 10 6				
♣ A 10 8				

After winning A♦, draw trump and play A♠. Now lead Q♠ and sluff a diamond when K♠ does not appear (loser on loser). The opponents will win K♠, A♣ and a diamond. A club loser can eventually be sluffed on J♠. You will make four.

On the other hand, if declarer were to take the spade finesse, it would win, but he would still have to lose a diamond and two clubs. He will not be able to get a trick with J♠. The ruffing finesse is almost always as good as, or better than the direct finesse.