

Combination Card Play

General tips and guidelines

- Sometimes the best percentage game is to go for deep finesse
- With King missing, if there is no finesse opportunity, we should cash the ace first and play towards the Queen.
- Even with Ace in one hand and Queen Jack in other, if a trick must always be lost, it is usually best to cash the ace and then play towards the Queen, or Queen Jack.
- When finessing for the King, we should not play an unsupported honour unless we benefit if the next person covers with the King.
- Missing Queen with 8 cards, we should finesse (8 Ever, 9 Never). However if we can afford it (eg AKJ in one hand), best is to play the Ace or King first as a safety play to cater for a singleton Queen.
- Missing Queen with 9 cards, if we don't have any evidence of shape of opponent's hand, we should play ace and king and go for 2-2 distribution and for Queen to drop (8 Ever, 9 Never).
- When finessing, use a card to retain the lead in the same hand should you have to finesse again.
- Missing the King, with 11 cards, we should play the ace, going for king to drop.
- Having 10 cards, to cater for a 3-0 break we should see how we can play safe if one of the opponents has the 3 cards and we can avoid losing to that opponent.
- With 9 cards, Queen and Jack are missing. We play the king and one opponent plays the Queen. We should finesse for the Jack. It works $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the time (Law of the Restricted Choice)
- Sometimes we need to win all the tricks and sometimes most of the tricks to ensure the contract. The way to play the suit could be quite different.
- With the following examples, test yourself. Email me your answers if you want to get the correct answers.
- You can play from your hand or dummy and assume enough entries to go to either hand.

1- Missing K Q T how to play this needing 3 tricks?

Dummy

A J 9 8

4 3 2

Declarer

Missing K Q T how to play this needing 3 tricks?

Dummy

A J 9 8

K T 7 6

Q 5

4 3 2

Declarer

Here we play 2, deep finessing playing 8, hoping Q or K is played from East. Once back in hand we play 3 and if West plays low, we play 9.

2 - Missing K J T 9 8 how to play this needing 3 tricks?

Dummy

A 4 3 2

Q 7 6 5

Declarer

Missing K J T 9 8 how to play this needing 3 tricks?

Dummy

A 4 3 2

9 8

K J T

Q 7 6 5

Declarer

There is no finesse opportunity so we should cash the ace first and play 2 towards the Queen. It works when East has the king.

3 - Missing K T 9 8 how to play this to make all the 4 tricks?

Dummy

A Q 4 3

J 7 6 5

Declarer

Missing K T 9 8 how to play this to make all the 4 tricks?

Dummy

A Q 4 3

K 9

T 8 2

J 7 6 5

Declarer

When finessing for the King, we should not play an unsupported honor unless we benefit if the next person covers with the King. Here it is a mistake to play the Jack. The only possible way to pick up all 4 tricks is that West has King Doubleton. So we play low towards A Q playing the Queen and if works cash the ace hoping for the King to drop.

4 - In NT contract, we need 3 tricks from this hand. How to play?

Dummy

J 2

A K 4 3

Declarer

In NT contract, we need 3 tricks from this hand. How to play?

Dummy

J 2

Q T 6 5

9 8 7

A K 4 3

Declarer

It is a mistake to play the Jack towards A K as if it is covered by East or loses to Q in West, we are going to make 2 tricks only. We should assume West has the Queen and play low towards the Jack.

5 - Missing Queen (8 Ever, 9 Never) - Needing 4 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

J T 5 4

A K 7 6

Declarer

Needing 4 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

J T 5 4

3 2

Q 9 8

A K 7 6

Declarer

With 8 cards and Queen missing, we should finesse. However best is to play the Ace or King first as a safety play to cater for a singleton Queen and then go to dummy play the jack and finesse the Queen.

6 - Needing 3 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

A 3 2

Q J 5 4

Declarer

Needing 3 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

A 3 2

9 8

K T 7 6

Q J 5 4

Declarer

If a trick must always be lost, it is usually best to cash the ace. Here missing King, T, 9 and 8, it is a mistake to play Queen towards ace. We should cash the ace and play low towards Q J.

7 - Needing 4 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

J 4 3 2

A K 7 6

Declarer

Needing 4 tricks how to play this?

Dummy

J 4 3 2

Q 5

T 9 8

A K 7 6

Declarer

Here we have no ten to finesse. We should play ace and king hope for the Queen to drop.

8 - Needing all the tricks. We have 9 cards and Queen is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

6 5 4 3

A K J 8 7

Declarer

Queen is missing with 9 cards, How to play this?

Dummy

6 5 4 3

Q 2

T 9

A K J 8 7

With 9 cards, if we don't have any evidence of shape of opponent's hand, we should play ace and king and go for 2-2 distribution and for Queen to drop.

9 - We have ten cards and king is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

T 6 5 4 3

A Q J 9 8

Declarer

We have ten cards and king is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

T 6 5 4 3

-

K 7 2

A Q J 9 8

Missing the King, finesse works most of the time. We should play the ten from Dummy intending to finesse and to keep the lead in dummy to finesse again.

10 - We have 11 cards and king is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

T 9 8 7 6

A Q J 5 4 3

Declarer

We have 11 cards and king is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

T 9 8 7 6

K

2

A Q J 5 4 3

Missing the King, with 11 cards, we should play the ace, going for king to drop.

11 - We have 10 cards and Queen is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

K 4 3 2

A J 8 7 6 5

Declarer

We have 10 cards and Queen is missing. How to play this?

Dummy

K 4 3 2

- Q T 9

A J 8 7 6 5

To cater for a 3-0 break with all cards with East, we should safely play by playing King first and if West shows out, finesse the Queen. If all cards are with West, we can't avoid losing a trick.

12 - With 9 cards, Queen and Jack are missing. We play the king and East plays the Queen. What next?

Dummy

A T 5 4 3

K 8 7 6

Declarer

With 9 cards, Queen and Jack are missing. We play the king and East plays the Queen. What next?

Dummy

A T 5 4 3

K 8 7 6

We play the king and East plays the Queen. We should finesse for the Jack next. It works 2/3rd of the time.

13 - In this hand we play K and then Q when Q is played East plays the Jack, what next?

Dummy

A 9 5 4

K Q 2

Declarer

We play K and then Q when Q is played East plays the Jack, what next?

Dummy

A 9 5 4

10 8 7 6

J 3

K Q 2

Here we should finesse for the T, 2/3rd of the time it works.

14 - In this hand Queen is missing and we can finesse either way. How should we play this?

Dummy

K 9 7 6

A J T 8

Declarer

Psychological play - In this hand Queen is missing and we can finesse either way. How should we play this?

Dummy

K 9 7 6

3 2

Q 5 4

A J T 8

Declarer

We should play Jack, if west covers, problem solved. If west hesitates, we can let it run, otherwise overtake with the King and finesse for the Queen at East.

15 - Needing all 3 tricks, in this hand we think West has the Queen. How should we play this?

Dummy

K 3 2

A J 9

Declarer

Needing 3 tricks, in this hand we think West has the Queen. How should we play this?

Dummy

K 3 2

Q 6 5 4

T 8 7

A J 9

Declarer

We should play the Jack if not covered, let it run. If covered overtake with King and finesse for Ten.

16 - Sometimes we need to win all the tricks and sometimes most of the tricks to ensure the contract. The way to play the suit could be quite different.

How to play each hand to make all the tricks? Lose one trick only?

Two sets off answers for each case.

a) A Q 7 6 5	b) Q 5 4 3	c) A J 6 5	d) K J 4 3
8 4 3 2	A T 8 7 6 2	K 4 3	A 9 5 2

- a) To make all the tricks finesse the Q and cash the ace hoping West has Kx. To win 4 tricks, cash the Ace, back to hand and to lead to Q.
- b) To win 6 tricks we cash the ace hoping for K singleton. To win 5 tricks, we lead towards A T and finesse the Ten.
- c) To win 4 tricks, we cash the K and finesse the Jack. For 3 tricks we cash the Ace and King and play towards the Jack.
- d) For 4 tricks we cash the ace and finesse the Jack. For 3 tricks we cash the king and play towards A 9 covering anything that East plays. If East shows out, we cash the Ace and play towards Jack.