

Combination Card Play

Missing Cards	Split / %	Split / %	Split / %	Split / %
2	2-0 / 48	1-1 / 52.0		
3	3-0 / 22	2-1 / 78.0		
4	4-0 / 9.6	3-1 / 49.7	2-2 / 40.7	
5	5-0 / 3.9	4-1 / 28.3	3-2 / 67.8	
6	6-0 / 1.5	5-1 / 14.5	4-2 / 48.4	3-3 / 35.5

Cardplay technique

Dummy

K 2

A J 9 8 4

Q 7 6 5

T 3

Declarer

One of the most important techniques in cardplay is one of the simplest:

To score a trick with the king you must lead towards dummy's king. You have
50% chance of scoring a trick if West has the ace

Cardplay technique

Dummy

K Q 2

A J 9 8

7 6 5 4

T 3

Declarer

Sometimes you need to lead twice towards the dummy:

- If West rises with the ace, your king and queen are good.
- If plays low, you win with king, get back to hand in another suit, and lead towards the queen.

50% chance of success if West has the ace

Cardplay technique

Dummy

A 8 2

Q 5 4

Declarer

In this case to make 2 tricks:

- You cash the ace and then lead towards the queen
- You score when East has the King

50% chance of success if East has the King

Cardplay technique

Dummy

J 7 4 3

A K 2

Declarer

In this case you cash the ace and king and then lead the 2 towards the jack.

You make 3 tricks in 3 cases:

- when queen drops after 2 rounds,
- when West has the Queen and
- when suit is divided 3-3 (making your last card a winner)

The Simple Finesse

Dummy

A Q 2

7 3

Declarer

Sometimes the honor we are leading towards is accompanied by a higher non touching honor, a familiar form of play called **Finesse**.

Here we lead towards the queen hoping that West has the king.

50% chance of success if West has the King

The Simple Finesse

Dummy

K J 2

A 7 3

Declarer

Here you cash the ace and
- lead towards the jack hoping West has the queen.

The Simple Finesse

Dummy

9 6 4

J 8 2

A K T 5

Q 7 3

Declarer

Even when you only hold the queen, you can setup a trick. In this case if East holds the ace and king, you can score a trick. When you lead from dummy towards the queen, East should raise immediately with king or ace to stop you scoring an immediate trick. You can then go back to dummy and repeat. You are lucky to find East with both king and the ace.

25% chance of success is better than 0%

The Simple Finesse

North

♠ 7 6 3

♥ A Q 8

♦ 8 5 2

♣ K Q 6 2

♠ Q T 8 2

♥ J 9 6 3

♦ K T 4 3

♣ T

♠ J 9 5

♥ T 7 5

♦ A 9 7

♣ J 9 8 4

♠ A K 4

♥ K 4 2

♦ Q J 6

♣ A 7 5 3

West leads ♠ 2 against your 3 NT contract

Finesse by leading a high card

	<u>Dummy</u>	
	A 4 2	
K 9 7 3		8 6 5
	Q J T	
	<u>Declarer</u>	

You lead the queen and if West duck, you lead the jack.

If West covers the queen with the king. Just kill the so and so by your ace!!

Finesse by leading a high card

	<u>Dummy</u>	
	A J 7 2	
K 8 6 3		5
	Q T 9 4	
	<u>Declarer</u>	

This is a similar case, if you lead low towards the jack, you are in the wrong hand.

Best is to lead the queen and if wins you simply repeat the finesse.

A similar position, but not so!

	<u>Dummy</u>	
	A J 7 5 3	
K		T 9 2
	Q 8 6 4	
	<u>Declarer</u>	

This is a similar case, but it is wrong to lead the queen as will be covered by the king and East will score a trick.

You should play low towards the ace jack, intending to finesse the jack. Once stiff king appears, you will score all 5 tricks.

Most will get this one wrong

Dummy

A 8 2

Q J 4 3

Declarer

Here no point in playing the queen.

Best is to cash the ace and play low towards Q J 4 3. you score 3 tricks

- when suit breaks 3-3 and
- when East has the king

The two-way finesse

Dummy

A T 2

K J 4

Declarer

If you think West has the queen, you finesse the ten. If you think East has the queen, you finesse the jack.

A Tip!

In absence of a clue, best is to play **the other suits** and if one opponent has majority of the cards in this suit, we should assume he has the queen

The case of missing jack!

Dummy

K 9 3

Q T 4

Declarer

This is a similar case; you are going to lose one trick to the ace.

Remember previous tip!?

With jack, you should play the **other suits** and place the jack with defender with majority of the cards in the suit.

Should you finesse or go for drop?

Dummy

K J 6 3

A 7 5 2

Declarer

With 8 cards, we finesse. Cash the ace and finesse the jack.

Finesse is 50% and drop is 33%.

Eight Ever, Nine Never

Should you finesse or go for drop?

Dummy

A J 6 4 3

K 7 5 2

Declarer

With 9 cards, odds are marginally in favour of drop.
We play the king and then low towards ace with intention of going for drop.

However if East was known to have a long side suit, odds are better for finessing the jack.

Eight Ever, Nine Never, but never say never

Should you finesse or go for drop?

Dummy

A J 6 4 3

K 7 5 2

Declarer

With 9 cards, odds are marginally in favour of drop.
We play the king and then low towards ace with intention of going for drop.

A similar tip!

However if East was known to have a long side suit, odds are better for finessing the jack.

Eight Ever, Nine Never, but never say never

Missing King with 10 cards!?

Dummy

A J 9 8 4 2

Q T 7 6

Declarer

With a combined holding of 10 cards, we play the queen and run it if West plays low.

A Tip!

With 11 cards, we go for the drop.

Should we cash a high card before finessing?

Dummy
A K 9 2

J T 5 3
Declarer

Here with 8 cards, odds are in favor of finessing

A Tip!

Before finessing, we should ***cash the ace first***
- so we won't lose to a singleton queen at East.

What about this combination?

Dummy

A K J T 9 2

6 3

Declarer

With 8 cards, odds are in favour of finesse

If we cash the ace, we can only finesse once after that.

If West has Q x x x, we can't pick up the queen.

- We should finesse on the first trick

A Tip!

Bridge is a thinking game !!

Double Finesse

Dummy

A Q 10

4 3 2

Declarer

Here we are *missing two honors* needing two finesses
We lead a low cards and play dummy's 10

- If west holds both K & J, luck is with us. 10 wins and we return to hand and play towards Queen.
- More often honors are split and we make two tricks

A Tip!

We need to finesse the lower card (10) in first round

Double Finesse – Similar Combination

Dummy

K J 7

4 3 2

Declarer

Trying to make as many tricks as possible

We lead low to dummy's Jack on the first round

- If West has both Ace and Queen we make two tricks
- If honors are split, we make one trick
- If East has both honors, none

Again we need to finesse the lower card (Jack) first round

Double Finesse

Dummy

K T 9

4 3 2

Declarer

Trying to make one trick

- Leading low to King is a 50% chance
- Leading low to T (or 9) is an immediate success if West has both Q and J
 - More often T with lose to Jack or Queen
 - We finesse the 9 in second round

This will score when West holds Queen or Jack or Doubleton Ace

We will score 75% of the time

Rising with King on second round scores 62% of the time

Double Finesse – a choice of play

Dummy

Q T 9

A 4 2

Declarer

How to play this suit for 2 tricks?

- Playing the ace and then low towards the Queen is about 50%

A better idea is a Double Finesse

- Leading the Queen towards Ace
 - If East has the King, cover or not you make two tricks
 - If Queen loses to King at East, you run the Ten

With this line, we will score 75% of the time

Double Finesse – a choice of play

Dummy

J T 9

A 4 2

Declarer

Here we replaced dummy's Queen with the Jack

Strangely prospects are exactly the same as before

A better idea is a Double Finesse

- Leading the Jack towards the Ace
- If it loses, we then run the Ten

We should score two tricks unless West has both missing honors

Something a bit different

Dummy

J 6 5 2

Q 9 4

K 8

A T 7 3

Declarer

You aim to make 3 tricks:

- Play low towards the Ten, it will be an immediate success if East started with K Q X
- Also you make 3 tricks in this case where East has a doubleton honor

The Deep Finesse

Dummy

A Q 9

J T 8 2

K 5 4

7 6 3

Declarer

You aim to make 2 tricks, you lead towards 9. It is called **deep finesse** as defenders have **3 cards** higher than card that you are finessing:

- If West has the Jack and Ten, you make 2 tricks if West plays low or insert Ten or Jack
- If 9 loses to jack or ten at East, you still can finesse Queen, nothing lost

The Deep Finesse

Dummy

A J 9

K T 8 4

Q 7 2

6 5 3

Declarer

A similar position

If you lead low to Jack, you only succeed when West has both K and Q

A better idea is to take a deep finesse of the 9

- It will succeed if West holding is headed by K-T or Q-T (twice more likely)
- The nine will force West honor and set up a successful finesse of the Jack

The Deep Finesse

Dummy

Q T 3

K J 9 2

A 8 5

7 6 4

Declarer

Deep finesse is very common, a third example:

You lead low to Ten on first round, forcing East's ace.

You can then lead towards dummy's Queen establishing a trick in the suit

As long as King and Ace are split and West has the Jack, you make it

The Deep Finesse

North

♠ Q 7 4

♥ Q 9 3

♦ A J 9 8

♣ K 9 3

♠ T 8 6 3

♥ 5

♦ K T 7 2

♣ Q J T 5

♠ K J 9 5 2

♥ 8 7 2

♦ Q 5

♣ 7 6 4

♠ A

♥ A K J T 6 4

♦ 6 4 3

♣ A 8 2

West leads ♣ Q against your ambitious small slam in hearts:

The Backward Finesse

North

♠ T 6 3
 ♥ K 9 7 4 2
 ♦ A 5 3
 ♣ K Q

♠ A K J 7
 ♥ T 5
 ♦ Q 8 2
 ♣ A J 9 4

♠ 9 8 5 4
 ♥ ---
 ♦ T 7 6 4
 ♣ T 8 6 3 2

♠ Q 2
 ♥ A Q J 8 6 3
 ♦ K J 9
 ♣ 7 5

West
 1NT (15-17)
 Pass

North
 Pass
 4 ♥

East
 Pass
 Pass

South
 2 ♥
 Pass

The Ruffing Finesse

	<u>Dummy</u>								
	A	Q	J	T	3				
8	6	4				K	9	7	2
			5						
	<u>Declarer</u>								

If this is a *side suit* in a *suit contract*

You can catch East's King with a **ruffing finesse**

You cash the ace and then lead the Queen:

- If East covers with king, you will ruff
- Otherwise you discard a loser and continue playing dummy's honors until king is played

The Ruffing Finesse

North

♠ A T 4 3
♥ K Q J T 6
♦ J 5
♣ A 6

♠ 5
♥ A 9 7 4 2
♦ K 8 3
♣ J T 9 3

♠ 9
♥ 8 5 3
♦ 9 7 6 2
♣ K Q 8 4 2

♠ K Q J 8 7 6 2
♥ ---
♦ A Q T 4
♣ 7 5

West leads ♣ J against your ambitious small slam in spades:
We have a loser in C and one potential loser in D.

A successful D finesse, a 50% chance will work.

You can increase your chance to 100% by a Ruffing Finesse

Let's Play

North

Hand 1

♠ A
♥ T 5 4 3
♦ J 4 3
♣ K Q J T 9

♠ Q T 9 5 4
♥ 7 6
♦ K 8 7 6
♣ 8 7

♠ 8 7 6 3
♥ K Q 9 8
♦ T 9 5
♣ A 6

♠ K J 2
♥ A J 2
♦ A Q 2
♣ 5 4 3 2

South (Dealer)

3 NT contract, lead 5 of ♠ , plan the play

Let's Play

North

Hand 2

♠ A J T
♥ T 9 8 7
♦ 6 5 4 3
♣ K J

♠ K Q 9 8 7
♥ 3 2
♦ Q J 9
♣ 6 5 4

♠ 6 5 4
♥ A
♦ K T 8 7
♣ A T 9 8 7

♠ 3 2
♥ K Q J 6 5 4
♦ A 2
♣ Q 3 2

South (Dealer)

4 ♥ contract, lead K of ♠ and in first opportunity switch to ♦