



Card Play – Some Common Combinations

Every time you are declarer you have to make decisions about how to handle your suits. There is usually a 'best' way: one approach that will work more often than others.

You do not have time to work this out at the table, so it helps to familiarise yourself with them in advance. That way, you need not worry when what you do does not work - you know you have done your best.

Percentage Plays

a) ♣ AQ10653
♣ J8742

b) ♣ J10653
♣ AQ972

When you have all the honour cards except the king: lay down the ace with 11 cards between the hands. With fewer than 11 - finesse. [When opponents have just 2 cards they are more likely to be divided 1-1 (*a 1-1- break*) than 2-0 (*a 2-0 break*). When they have 3 or more cards a singleton king is very unlikely.]

c) ♣ AK1053
♣ J842

d) ♣ K643
♣ AJ92

When the missing honour is the queen: play out ace-king with 9+cards between the hands: with 8-, finesse

"Eight ever, nine never"

e) ♣ AK105
♣ J942

f) ♣ AK63
♣ J10

g) ♣ 83
♣ AKJ1054

Start by cashing the king in case East has the singleton queen. Then finesse. If East shows out, finesse again.

Finesse on the first round, since that is the only way to win an extra trick.

Finesse first time to pick up Qxxx in the East hand. (4 times as likely as singleton queen with West)

c) ♦ J53
♦ AK72

Cash the ace, then *lead towards the unsupported Honour*, the jack. You make three tricks whenever West has the queen or the suit breaks 3-3.

d) ♦ J3
♦ AK742

Lead towards the doubleton jack at once – if you cash the ace first the jack must lose to the queen in either hand.



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Sure Trick Plays

a) ♥ Q1076
 ♥ AK952

b) ♥ AQ953
 ♥ K1042

It does not much matter how you play this suit unless it breaks 4-0. Start with the ace (high from the hand with two top honours) so that if someone shows out you can take a *marked finesse* against the jack.

Combination Finesses

a) ♠ AJ10
 ♠ 952

Low to the ten, probably losing to the king or queen. Later play low to the jack. You make 2 tricks when West has king or queen or both - 75% of the time

b) ♠ AJ9
 ♠ 432

Start with low to the nine. If East wins the queen or king try low to the jack next. You make 2 tricks if West has K10x or Q10x

c) ♠ AJ5
 ♠ 432

Low to the jack just in case West has both king and queen. A 25% shot is better than no chance at all.

c) ♥ KQ106
 ♥ 532

Play low to the queen (or king). If East wins the ace finesse the ten next. If the queen scores return to hand and lead low to the king

d) ♥ K1094
 ♥ 532

Lead low to the ten, probably losing to the jack or queen. Later try low to the nine, establishing one trick when West has jack or queen, 2 if he has the ace as well.