



Lesson 39 Teacher's Notes

Card Play: Coping with Common Combinations

Aims

- To expand our abilities as declarer by advance preparation
- To teach the best way to play some common card combinations
- To remind the class that there are no Absolute Rules

Content

- 1 When dummy goes down we usually have four suits to cope with. It is helpful to know in advance the 'best' way of dealing with the various possible holdings- you do not have time to work it out at the table. The more interesting combinations take time to learn, but the effort is worthwhile.
- 2 Discuss *Percentage Plays* – what we do when we play our cards in the order most likely to win the maximum number of tricks. They do not guarantee success, they are just 'best' in abstract terms.
Rule 1: When the only missing honour card is the **king** we lay down the ace when we have **11 cards** between the hands: with **fewer than 11** cards we finesse.
Rule 2 When the missing honour is the **queen** we play ace and king if we have 9 (or more) cards in the suit. With 8 or fewer we finesse. "*Eight Ever, Nine Never*"
- 3 Look at "*Best Plays*" – when playing our cards in the right order ensures that we make as many tricks as possible. Sometimes we can ensure no losers with a "*Sure Tricks Play*".
- 4 Look at *Combination Finesses* where you finesse twice against 2 or 3 cards
- 5 Emphasise that *Logical thought is more important than any rule.* Sometimes the whole hand makes it right to ignore rules. If the bidding tells us something we should listen to that.
- 6 Introduce the idea of a "safety play" as a kind of insurance policy. You *pay a premium*, conceding a trick you might not have to lose, in order to safeguard your contract against bad breaks.
- 7 This lesson is quite dense, and some may find it dull. It is not necessary to introduce all the combinations at once! Remind the class that all reputable books on card play will cover these, and that no-one can learn them all at once. It pays to revise them regularly.