

## PLAYING A SUIT CONTRACT

1. **Listen to opponents' bids.**
2. **Observe the opening lead.**
3. **Plan your offense:**
  - a. Consider number of tricks you can lose.
  - b. Count losers in the hand with the longest trump suit, *the master hand*. Include losses needed to promote high cards.
  - c. Analyze ways to eliminate extra losers:
    - Ruff losers from master hand using trump from other hand.
    - Finesse opponents' high cards.
    - Discard losers from master hand on extra winners in other hand.
4. **Execute the plan:**
  - If your plan does not include ruffs, draw trump early to protect against a bad split of missing cards.
  - If your plan uses a crossruff to gain entries back into the master hand, be sure to take winners in your side suits early.
  - To promote high cards, lead the high card from the short side first.
  - To finesse, lead toward the card that you want to finesse.
  - Be careful to preserve necessary entries to get to the dummy or get back to your hand.
  - Avoid the temptation to try for an overtrick unless the odds are definitely in your favor or a failure will not defeat the contract.
5. **Watch defenders play.**
6. **Keep track of cards played.**

## DEFENSIVE PLAY GUIDELINES

- Return partner's opening lead.
- Play second hand low.
- Play third hand high.
- Cover an honor with an honor.
- Lead through broken strength toward weakness.
- Communicate with attitude and count signals.

### DEFENSIVE SIGNALS

LEAD BY	FOLLOWING SUIT	DISCARDING
Partner	1. <b>Attitude</b> 2. Count	1. <b>Attitude</b>
Declarer	1. <b>Count</b> 2. Suit Prefer	1. <b>Attitude</b> 2. Suit Prefer

#### Attitude Signals

*Encourage:* High card (followed by low)

*Discourage:* Low card (followed by high)

#### Count Signals

*Even Count:* High card (followed by low)

*Odd Count:* Low card (followed by high)

#### Suit Preference Signals

*Higher Rank:* High card

*Lower Rank:* Low card

Some partnerships prefer *reverse* ( *or upside down* ) signals.

## DECLARER PLAY CHEAT SHEET

*Last Revised on August 27, 2015*

### OPENING LEADS AGAINST NO TRUMP

- Develop a long suit by driving out declarer's stoppers in the suit.

#### A Card from Partner's Suit:

- ✓ Top of a doubleton.
- ✓ Top of touching honors.
- ✓ Top of three or four small.
- ✓ Low from three or four with an honor.

#### A Card from Leader's Suit:

- ✓ Top of connecting honors in a three card sequence or broken sequence. *Promises the next lower card in the suit.*
- ✓ Fourth highest card in your longest and strongest suit. *Promises an honor.*
- ✓ Top of nothing (usually a 9, 8, or 7).

### OPENING LEADS AGAINST SUITS

- Take winners in long suit(s) early.
- Play short suit(s) early to setup a ruff.
- Lead trump to reduce declarer's ruffing power.

#### A Card from Partner's Suit:

- ✓ The Ace if you have it.
- ✓ Top of a doubleton.
- ✓ Top of touching honors.
- ✓ Otherwise lead low.

#### A Card from Leader's Suit:

- ✓ Top of connecting honors. *Promises the next lower card in the suit.*
- ✓ Fourth highest card in your longest and strongest suit. *Promises an honor.*
- ✓ Top of a doubleton. *Starts a high-low signal.*
- ✓ A singleton.
- ✓ A trump.

## PLAYING A NO TRUMP CONTRACT

1. **Listen to opponents' bids.**
2. **Observe the opening lead.**
3. **Plan your offense:**
  - a. Consider number of tricks you must win.
  - b. Count sure winners in the combined hands.
  - c. Analyze ways to develop extra winners:
    - Promote high cards.
    - Develop long suits.
    - Finesse opponents' high cards.
4. **Execute the plan:**
  - *If you must lose tricks, lose them early.*
  - It is often best to hold up your ace in opponents long suit.
  - If you have a solid long suit and do not need to preserve entries, run the suit early to force opponents to discard from other suits.
  - Develop a long suit early so you can run the remainder of the suit to force opponents to discard other suits.
- To promote high cards, lead the high card from the short side first.
- To finesse, lead toward the card that you want to finesse.
- Be careful to preserve necessary entries to get to the dummy or get back to your hand.
- Avoid the temptation to try for an overtrick unless the odds are definitely in your favor or a failure will not defeat the contract.
5. **Watch defenders play.**
6. **Keep track of cards played.**

## MISSING CARD DISTRIBUTION

Most of the time, missing cards will divide unevenly but as close to even as possible.

MISS	MOST LIKELY		NEXT LIKELY	
	SPLIT	PERC	SPLIT	PERC
3	2-1	78%	3-0	22%
4	3-1	50%	2-2	41%
5	3-2	68%	4-1	28%
6	4-2	48%	3-3	35%
7	4-3	62%	5-2	31%

## DECLARER'S RULE OF 11

When left hand opponent's opening lead is fourth highest:

- a. Subtract size of lead card from eleven
- b. Subtract number of higher cards you see in dummy
- c. Subtract number of higher cards you see in your hand

The result is the number of higher cards in your right hand opponent's hand.

A negative number means lead was top of nothing.

## WHEN TO FINESSE

If bidding does not reveal likely location of defenders' high cards, there is:

- 50% chance 1 finesse takes 1 trick
- 75% chance 2 finesses takes 1 trick
- 25% chance 2 finesses takes 2 tricks

If defender made a bid, chance is:

- higher if bidder plays second hand
- lower if bidder plays fourth hand

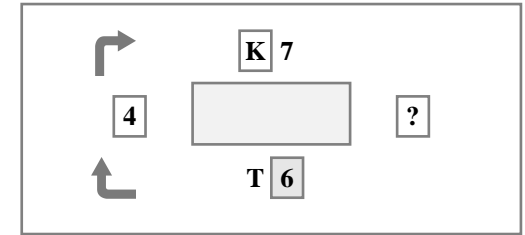
Make a finesse regardless of chance if you:

- ✓ Can not make contract without finesse.
- ✓ Can not lose contract if finesse fails.

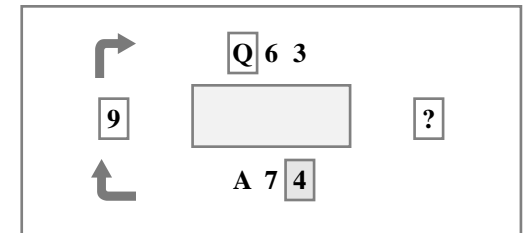
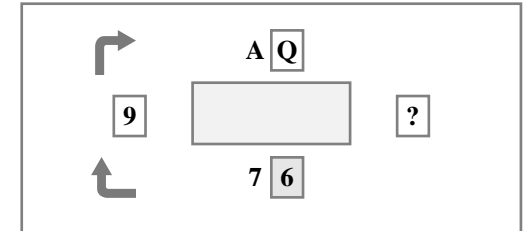
## FINESSING HIGH CARDS

Lead toward the card you want to finesse.

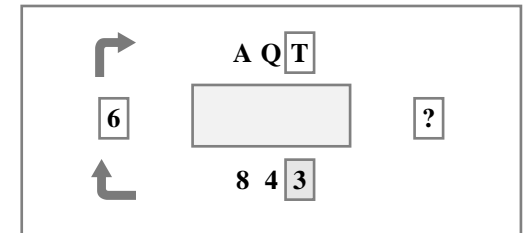
### KING AGAINST ACE



### QUEEN AGAINST KING



### QUEEN-TEN AGAINST KING-JACK



### JACK-TEN AGAINST KING-QUEEN

