

Play Techniques

These play techniques apply to both notrump and suit play.

Promoting Honours

(a) **K Q J** You need to lose to the ace to
 ♠ establish two tricks
 9 6

(b) **Q J 5** You will need to lose to the ace
 ♠ and king to establish two tricks
 10 9 8 7

(c) **Q 5** You will need to lose to the ace to
 ♠ establish five tricks **but**, you must
 K J 10 4 3 2 play the honour from the short suit
 first (ie. play the queen)

Lead towards Honours

You are South in each example

(a) **K 8** You need one trick in this suit. Lead a small card **towards**
 ♠ the king. You hope the ace is on your left. If the ace is
 A Q 7 4 ♠ **J 10 9 2** played, the king is now a winner. If the ace is not played,
 6 5 3 you will play the king and hope the ace is in the West
 hand.

(b) **K Q 8** You need 2 tricks in this suit. Lead a small card **towards**
 ♠ the KQ. You hope the ace is on your left. If the ace is
 A 7 4 2 ♠ **J 10 9 5** played, the KQ are now winners. If the ace is not played,
 6 3 the king will win. Now you must return to the South hand
 in another suit to play towards the queen. **NB: If you play**
 the king first you can never make 2 tricks.

(c) **Q J 4** You need 1 trick in this suit. Lead a small card towards
 ♠ the QJ4. You hope at least one of the high honours (ace
 A 8 2 ♠ **K 10 9 5** or king) is in the West hand. If no honour appears, play
 7 6 3 the queen. This may lose to the ace or king. On regaining
 the lead, return to the South hand and play towards the
 jack. This will win, providing the remaining
 honour is in the West hand.

The Finesse

The principle is the same. You play towards a lower honour hoping to establish it as a winner. Again we look for the **missing honour to be favourably placed**.

(a)	A Q 7	You need 2 tricks in this suit. Lead a low card towards the queen hoping the king is in the West hand.
K 6 4	♠ J 10 9 2	
	8 5 3	
(b)	A 10 9 2	You need 4 tricks in this suit. The king needs to be in the West hand. Play the queen. If it is covered by the king you now have 4 tricks. If the king is not played, play low from dummy and continue to repeat this finesse with the jack.
K 6 3	♠ 8 7 5	
	Q J 4	
(c)	A J 10	You need 2 tricks in this suit. Lead a small card towards the 10. This will lose to the queen. When you regain the lead, return to the South hand and lead towards the jack. This is called a double finesse.
K 6 3	♠ Q 7 5 2	
	9 8 4	
(d)	Q 3 2	You need 2 tricks in this suit. Play the ace first (this may drop the singleton king in one of the opponents' hands). Now play towards the queen hoping West has the king.
K 9 6	♠ J 10 7 5	
	A 8 4	

Establishing a Long Suit

In both notrump and suit play, you often need to establish your best fit (outside trumps). This suit will often be the longest and/or strongest combination.

Try to **count the missing cards**. When the opponents have no more cards in the suit, your remaining cards will be winners.

(a) J 5
 ♦
 K Q 8 6 3 2

You need to lose to the ace to establish this suit. Start by playing the honour in the short hand (ie. play the jack from the North hand). Count your opponents' cards as they are played.

(b) K 3
 ♦
 A Q 7 6 2

Start by playing the king (honour in the short hand). There are six cards missing and if they are split evenly (3-3) in the opponents' hands, you can make five tricks in this suit.

(c) K 5 3
 ♦
 A 8 7 6 2

There are five cards missing including the QJ109. You **cannot** make five tricks in this suit as you will have to lose at least one trick. **When you need to lose a trick, try and lose it early if possible.** Play the king first and then a small card from both hands. If the cards split 3-2 you will have 4 tricks in this suit after playing the ace. If the cards split 4-1 you will have to lose two tricks.