

FINESSES

Definition: - An attempt to gain power for lower ranking cards by taking advantage of the assumed favorable position of higher-ranking cards held by the opposition. **NOTE:** - In all cases, the burden of finessing is eliminated, or at the very least reduced if the Opponents lead the suit instead.

Purposes and Types:

1. **To Avoid Losing a Trick:** - In (a), South would lead towards the **Q** hoping the **K** would be held by West, thereby finessing against the **K**, hopefully winning the **Q** and avoiding losing a trick in the suit (**A Simple Finesse**). In (b), when West leads the **3**, South plays the **9** from Dummy, hoping to force the King thereby promoting the **Q** in Dummy and thus avoiding losing any tricks in that suit (**A Deep Finesse**).

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| (a) | (b) |
| <u>AQ</u> | <u>QT92</u> |
| <u>XX</u> | <u>A54</u> |
| | <u>J63</u> <u>K87</u> |

2. **To Gain a Trick With Low-Ranking Cards:** - In (a), Needing two tricks in the suit, South would cash the Ace and then lead towards the **Q** hoping that the **K** is held by West. In (b), needing one trick, South would lead towards the **Q** twice, hoping both the **A** and **K** are held by West.

| | |
|------------|------------|
| (a) | (b) |
| <u>QXX</u> | <u>QXX</u> |
| <u>AXX</u> | <u>XXX</u> |

3. **To Prepare For a Second Finesse in the Same Suit:** - In (a), South would lead towards the **10**, losing trick (1) to the **Q** or the **K** in the East, and then a second time towards the **J** hopefully winning trick (2) with the alternate missing honor hopefully being held by West. In (b), South leads towards the **9** hoping West started with either the **Q 10**, or the **K 10**, thereby promoting the **J** in the North hand on a second finesse towards the **J**.

| | |
|------------|------------|
| (a) | (b) |
| <u>AJT</u> | <u>AJ9</u> |
| <u>XXX</u> | <u>XXX</u> |

4. **The Double or Deep Finesse:** - A finesse against two outstanding honors. The only serious chance of making three tricks is to finesse the **10**, and then the **Q**. At least two tricks will be gleaned if the honors are split between East and West.

AQT
XXX

5. **The Ruffing Finesse:** - A play in a Suit contract which is successful if the missing honor lies behind the finesse holding; i.e., to the right of the Void. In the example shown, Play the Ace, then the Queen letting it ride.

AQJT
(Void)

6. **The Backward Finesse:** - Used either because 1) a belief that the missing card is off-sides, or 2) an avoidance play so as to keep one Defender from leading, or 3) to gain a needed top score. In the example below, one would lead the Jack towards the Ace, instead of playing the Ace first and then finessing through the **KJ**.

AXXX
KJTX

7. **The Continuing Finesse:** -The play of the cards such that the finesse, once begun, can be continued repeatedly from the same hand without the need to return to that first hand to repeat the process. It is used when no further re-entry cards are available to return to the origin of the finesse, or when one does not wish to use up additional entries in order to continue the finesse. In the example shown below, one would play the **Jack** towards the **AQ103** and then continue by playing the **9** towards the **AQ10** if the finesse wins.

J92 AQT3

The Law of Restricted Choice

When holding nine cards in a suit, missing the **QJXX**, and an honor drops on the first round, play it for a singleton. Only one out of three times will it be from the **QJ** Doubleton. (**AXXXX** and **KXXX**)