

DOUBLE FINESSES

A simple finesse is one where you are missing just one key honor card in a suit. However, there are many card combinations where you are missing two honor cards. These combinations occur with enough frequency that it is necessary for an advancing player to know as many as possible. This lesson will cover the most frequent.

The AK10 combination—this combination depends on how many total cards you have in the suit and whether you need all the tricks or can afford to make a Safety Play.

With 8 cards or fewer and you cannot lose any tricks

AK10 Lead the 2 and finesse the 10 if LHO plays low. While this is only only a 25% chance, it is better than any other play for all the tricks.

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AK102 Lead the three and finesse the 10 if LHO plays low. While this is only a 25% chance, it is better than any other play for all the tricks.

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However, if you can afford to lose one trick, cash the AK first.

If no honor has dropped, play another round and hope for a 3-3 split.

If RHO played an honor, come back to hand and lead back towards the 102

With exactly 9 cards your aim should be to take ALL the tricks

AK1032 Cash the Ace.

7654 If no honor drops, cash the King and hope for a 2-2 split.

If RHO drops and honor under the Ace, go back to your hand in another suit and lead towards the K10 and finesse. Restricted Choice says this is a 2-1 favorite.

Rule of

With 10 or more cards in the suit your aim should be to take ALL the tricks.

Cash the Ace. If the suit breaks 2-1 (78% of the time) you take all the tricks. If they split 3-0, too bad. You would have to be psychic or a peeker to finesse on the first round.

The AQ10 combination

With 8 cards or fewer and you want the maximum number of tricks

AQ10 Finesse the 10 first. If that wins or the 10 loses to the Jack, then finesse the Queen later.

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However, if you need only TWO tricks and do not want to lose the lead, finesse the Queen first.

With 9 or 10 cards and you want the maximum number of tricks

AQ1032 Finesse the Queen first (not the 10). If the Queen loses, then it is just barely better to cash the Ace next rather than finessing again.

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However, if you can afford to lose one trick (Safety Play), cash the Ace first and then lead toward the Q1032.

With 11 cards and you want the maximum number of tricks

The odds slightly favor cashing the Ace and not finessing.

With 12 cards

You have to figure this one out all by yourself.

The AJ10 combination

With 10 cards or less and you want the maximum number of tricks

AJ1098 Finesse the Jack and go back and finesse again if necessary when you have fewer than 10 cards. The odds are 75% in your favor and this is an

76543 example of the LAW OF RESTRICTED CHOICE.

The AJ9 combination

AJ9 Should you finesse the 9 or Jack first? The best chance for two tricks is to finesse the 9 first. If this loses to the 10, too bad. If it loses to the King or

432 Queen, go back to your hand and finesse the Jack next. This wins when LHO has Q10xx or K10xx and loses when LHO has KQxx. Finessing the 9 is twice as likely to win as finessing the Jack.

The KQ10 combination

With 10 cards and you want the maximum number of tricks

KQ1098 Lead low to the King. You will know the layout after the first trick.

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With 9 cards and you want the maximum number of tricks

Lead low to the King first.

If the King wins, go back to your hand and lead low towards the Q10. This holds the losers to one whenever possible.

If the King loses to the Ace, cashing the Queen and hoping the Jack drops, is slightly better than finessing the Q10.

With 8 cards or fewer and you want the maximum number of tricks

Lead low towards Dummy and play the King.

If the King wins, go back to your hand and lead low towards the Q10 and you have a pure guess if LHO plays low again. Good luck! I hate these guesses.

If the King loses to the Ace, go back to your hand, lead low towards the Q10 and finesse the 10.

The KJ2 combination

If you just need one trick from this combination

KJ2 Lead low from your hand and guess whether to finesse the Jack or play the King.

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If you want the maximum number of tricks from the combination

Lead low and finesse the Jack first. If this loses to the Queen, go back to hand and lead towards the king. You win ONE trick whenever LHO has either the Ace or the Queen. You win TWO tricks whenever LHO has BOTH the Ace AND the Queen.

You are DEAD if RHO has BOTH the Ace and the Queen.

The KJ10 Combination

If you want just one trick or the Maximum number of tricks

KJ109 Lead low and finesse the 10. If (when) the 10 loses, go back to your hand and lead low and finesse the J. This play wins whenever LHO has the

432 Queen, the Jack or the Queen and the Jack (a 75% play). Leading to the King only works when LHO has the Ace (a 50% play).

The Q109 Combination

If you want one trick or the Maximum number of tricks

Q109 Lead low and finesse the 9. If (when) it loses, go back to your hand and lead low to the 10. This play wins whenever LHO has the Jack regardless
432 of the location of the Ace and the King.

The QJ2 Combination

If you want one trick or the Maximum number of tricks

QJ2 Lead low towards the QJ and play the Jack if LHO plays low. Assuming
543 this loses to the Ace or King by RHO, go back to your hand and lead low towards the remaining Q2. Play the Queen if LHO plays low. You win one trick whenever LHO has the Ace, the King or both the Ace and the King (a 75% play).