

The Standard Plays Of Card Combinations On Flash Cards

For Contact Bridge

By Alan Truscott

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The important basic plays in bridge are included on these flash cards. When you know them, you will be well on the way to becoming a bridge expert. You can play with confidence, and you can devote your thinking to the general strategy of the hand.

Do not start by going through all the cards. You will merely confuse yourself. Instead, take a half dozen and study them thoroughly.

In some cases the play is based solely on common sense. You can lay out a suit from a deck and study the play until you are convinced it is right.

Other plays are based on mathematics. Here you have to take the word of the experts.

Think of the variations of each play. For example, K 10 in the dummy and A x x in the closed hand is the same as A 10 in dummy and K x x in the closed hand.

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In using the cards, please note:

1. **South is always declarer**. North is of course dummy, and his cards are exposed.
2. The Card or cards played before you must make your decision are shown by asterisks. If there is no asterisk, you are on lead.
3. Unless it is otherwise stated, **declarer has plenty of entries and can lead from either hand as often as he pleases**. If it is a suit-handling situation, he can lead from whichever hand he pleases, and he can get back and forth as often as he likes.
4. In most cases **the object is to win a certain number of tricks with the combination**. The question of trumping does not arise. Where it is a factor, it is mentioned.
5. LHO means West, the left-hand opponent. RHO means East, the right-hand opponent.

The cards are grouped by subjects:

1 – 34 -- Plays to the Opening Lead

35 -- 131 – Suit-handling and Finesses

In cases where the opening lead is a factor, the lead is assumed to be standard, as given in any readily available table.

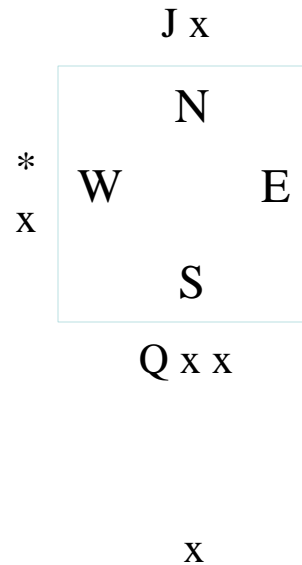
Similar situations are placed near each other, so that you can see the differences. Later, after you are sure you know all the plays, shuffle the flash cards and review them, out of order. This will make it easier for you to recognize the combinations when they come up in actual play.

No matter how expert you become, you should occasionally review these standard plays. They have been misplayed by top international stars.

Best of luck and lots of success at the enjoyable game of bridge.

Alan Truscott
Bronx, New York

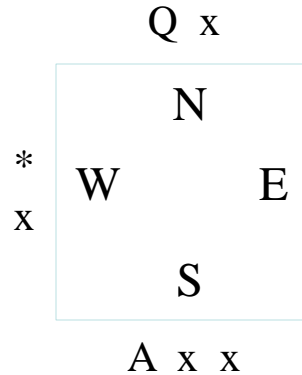
1. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low from dummy, insuring one trick.

With a doubleton Jack in dummy, play low if, and only if, the opponents have exactly to significant cards – in this case the ACE and the King. (The play would be the same with Q 9 x. In this case the Ten is not significant.) This is equivalent to card #5.

2. Plays to the opening leads.

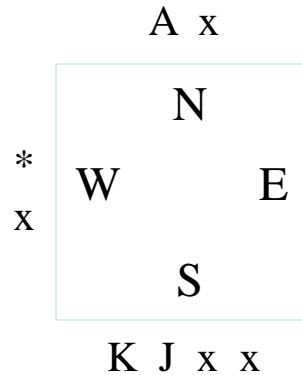


Q

Play the Queen from dummy. The only real hope to score a trick with the Queen is that West had the King. Playing low will only succeed if East makes a foolish error by playing King.

With a doubleton Queen in dummy, play the Queen if the opponents have one significant card – in this case the King.

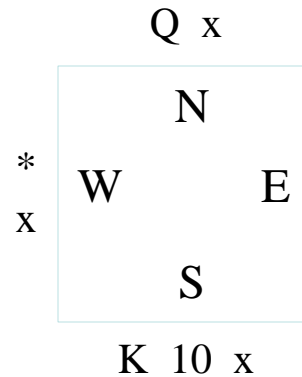
3. Plays to the opening leads.



x

Play low, guaranteeing three tricks in the suit. However, if South will need an entry to his hand later, he may need to win with the ACE. The entry may be more important than scoring a trick with the Jack.

4. Plays to the opening leads.

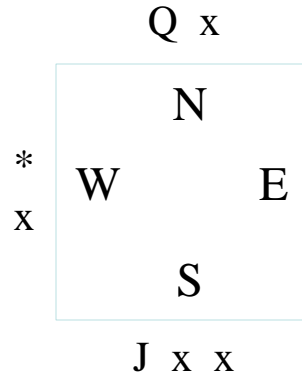


x

Play low from dummy, insuring two tricks.

With a doubleton Queen in dummy, play low if and only if, the opponents have exactly two significant cards – in this case the ACE and Jack.

5. Plays to the opening leads.

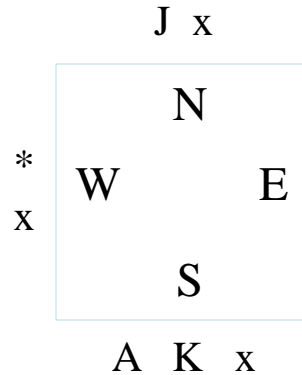


x

Play low from dummy, insuring one trick.

With a doubleton Queen in dummy, play low if, and only if, the opponents have exactly two significant cards – in this case the ACE and the King. (The play would be the same with J 9 x. In this case the Ten is not significant. This is equivalent to card #1.)

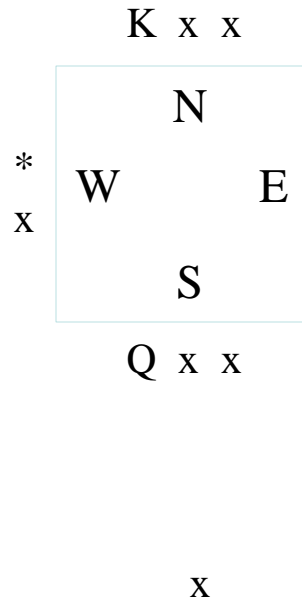
6. Plays to the opening leads.



J

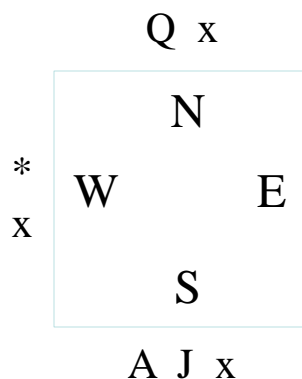
Play the Jack. You must hope that West has Queen. If East has it, there is no hope: If you play low East will play an intermediate card, not the Queen.

7. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low. In notrump it is likely that West has the ACE, and South can win with the Queen and win the King later. In a suit it is a virtual certainty that East has the ACE, but preserving the King has advantages: After East has played a middle card, he will not be able to lead the suit again. And he might have begun with a doubleton ACE.

8. Plays to the opening leads. In notrump case:

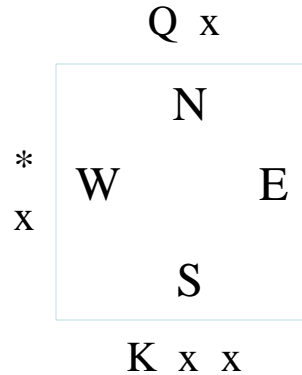


Q

Play the Queen from dummy, hoping the King is on the left. If the Queen wins, the ACE-Jack protects you from another lead from West. Playing low from dummy fails, barring a foolish play of the King by East. If you play low and win with the Jack, either defender can then play the King to remove the Queen.

With a doubleton Queen in dummy, play the Queen if the opponents have one significant card – in this case the King.

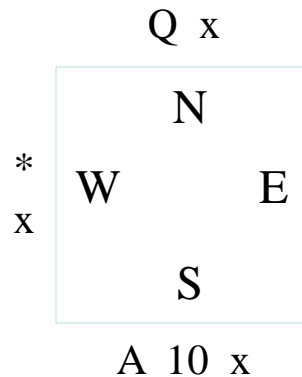
9. Plays to the opening leads.



Q

Play the Queen. If West has the ACE, the Queen wins and the King then protects against another lead by West. If you play low, East will play a middle card, not the ACE.

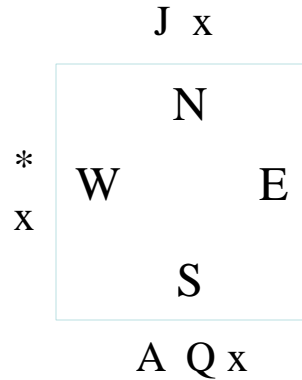
10. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low from dummy, insuring two tricks. If East plays an honor, win the ACE. Then the Queen and Ten will build up to a trick.

With a double Queen in dummy, play low if, and only if, the opponents have exactly two significant cards – in this case the King and Jack.

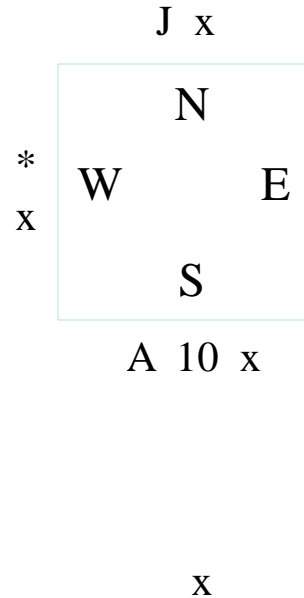
11. Plays to the opening leads.



J

Play the Jack from dummy, hoping that the King is on the left. If the Jack wins, the ace-Queen protects you from another lead from West. Playing low from dummy fails, barring a foolish play of King by East. If you play low and win with the Queen, either defender can then play the King to remove the Jack. Equivalent to card #8.

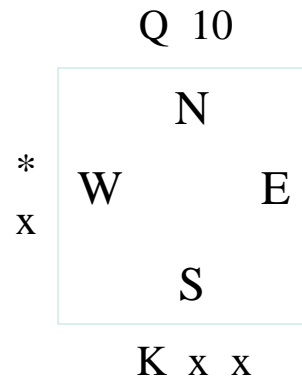
12. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low and win the trick as cheaply as possible. If East plays an honor, the Jack and Ten will build up to a trick later.

With a Doubleton Jack in dummy, play low if, and only if, the opponents have exactly two significant cards – in this case the King and the Queen.

13. Plays to the opening leads.

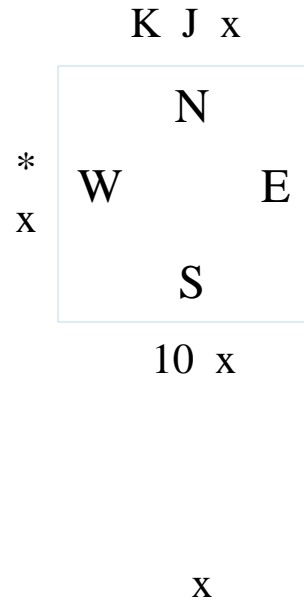


10

Play the Ten, hoping that West has the Jack.

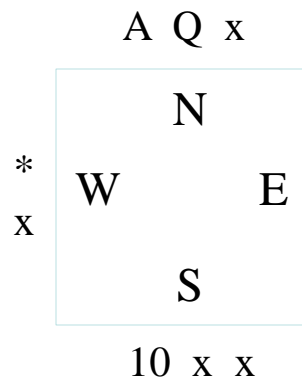
With a doubleton Queen in dummy, play low if, and only if, the opponents have exactly two significant cards – in this case the ACE and the Jack.

14. Plays to the opening leads.



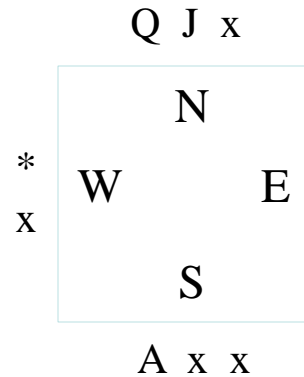
Play low, hoping that West has Queen. In that case, you are sure to make two tricks.
If the Queen is not played by East, finesse the \Jack later.

15. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low. If West has led from a King-Jack holding, you will make three tricks, winning the Ten and later finessing the Queen. If West has either the King or the Jack, but not both, you make two tricks. If East has both the King and Jack you make only one trick – unlucky.

16. Plays to the opening leads.

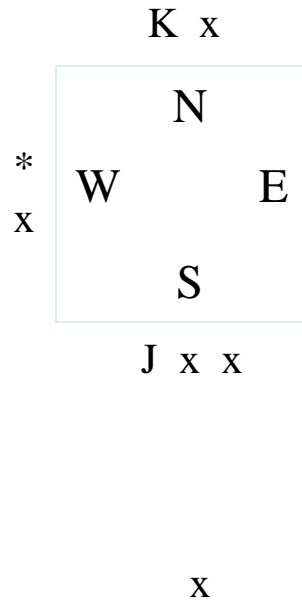


Q or J

Play an honor. If it wins, West will be unable to lead the suit again.

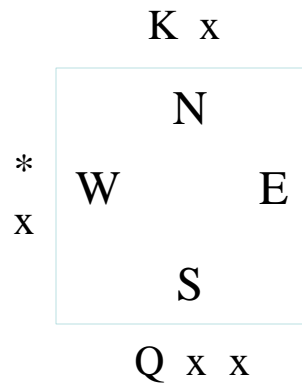
However, play and win with the ACE if you expect to need an entry to dummy later.

17. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)



Play low guaranteeing a trick. (But in a rare situation, with a desperate need for an entry to dummy, the King would be right.)

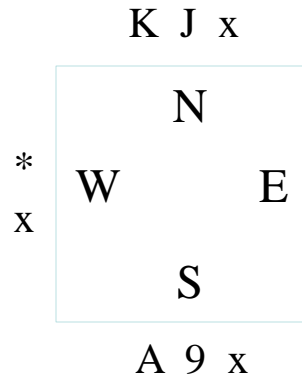
18. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)



K

Play the King. If West has the ACE, the King wins and the Queen then protects against another lead by West. If you play low, East will play a middle card, not the ACE. Equivalent to card #9.

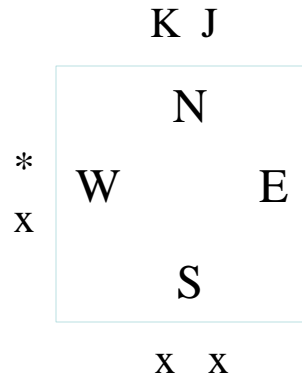
19. Plays to the opening leads.



x

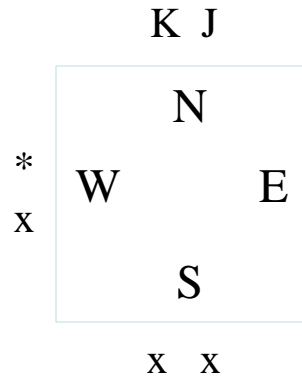
Play low. The Nine is very useful. East will have to play an honor, and if he plays the Ten you can finesse the Jack later. You make three tricks if West has one or both of the missing honors.

20. Plays to the opening leads. (In a trump contract)



Play the Jack. East is almost certain to have the ACE, since it is abnormal and risky to underlead an ACE against a suit contract. You must hope that West has the Queen.

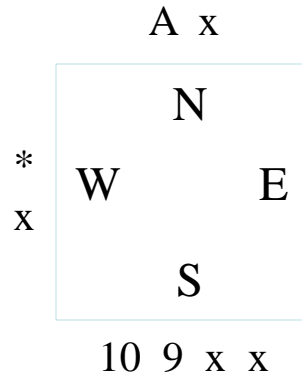
21. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)



?

Play anything. This is a guess, and normally you toss a coin in your head. There may be a slight clue: If either opponent had bid, assume he has the ACE.

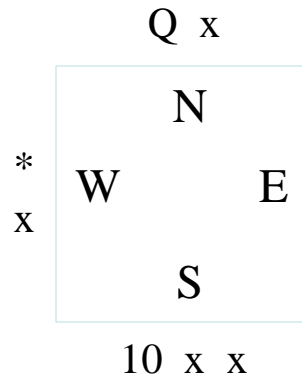
22. Plays to the opening leads. (At notrump)



A

Play the ACE, expecting to block the suit. East is likely to have a doubleton honor, and he cannot afford to unblock his honor. If you play low from dummy, East will win and knock out the ACE, establishing the suit for West.

23. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)

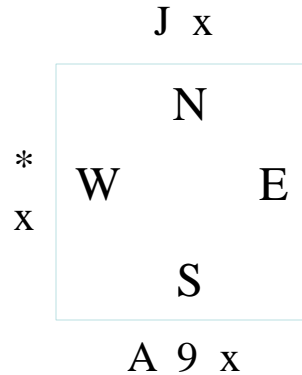


Q

Play the Queen. This is a long shot, hoping that West has underled and Ace-King combination.

Notice that the opponents have three significant cards, not two. But the Queen would be the right play without the Ten: The rule given earlier assumes that South has something of value in his hand.

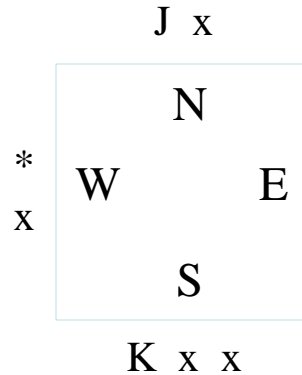
24. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)



J

Play the Jack. The only slight chance is that West has led low from a holding including the King and Queen. Playing low offers no chance. East must have an honor the will force the ACE.

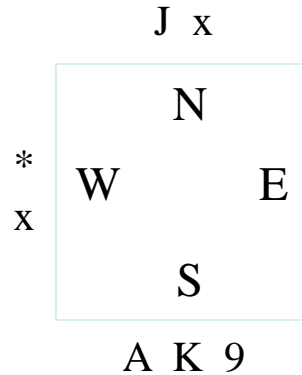
25. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)



J

Play the Jack. You will make one trick whatever you do. The Jack-play has two advantages. If West has led from ace-Queen, the Jack wins and you are protected against a second lead from West. And if West has the Queen and East the ACE, you can force the ACE and hold up the King until the third round.

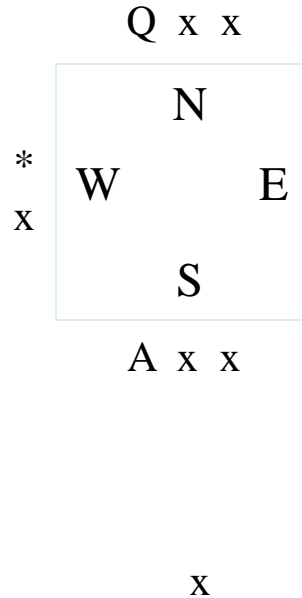
26. Plays to the opening leads.



?

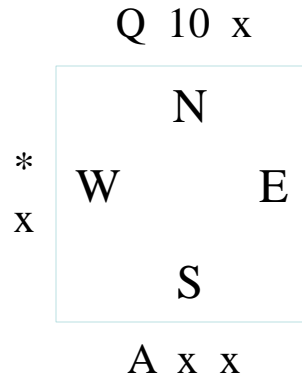
This is a guess. If the Queen and Ten are in different hands, who has what? In general, it is perhaps better to play low, since many West players are reluctant to lead from a Queen.

27. Plays to the opening leads.



Play low, in notrump. Win the ACE. If West has the King, the Queen will score later. In a suit contract it may be right to play the Queen, either because you need the lead in the dummy or because you can arrange a discard of a loser in the suit.

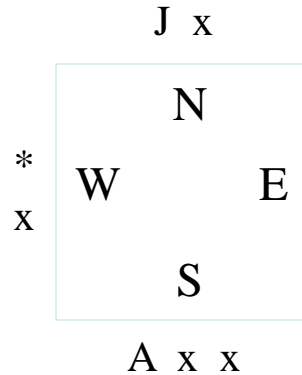
28. Plays to the opening leads.



10

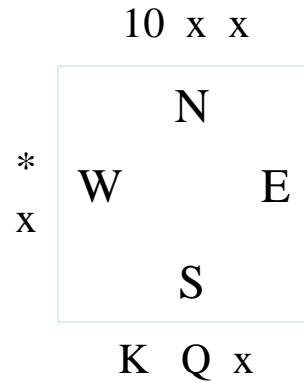
Play the Ten, and take the ACE if East plays and honor. You will make two tricks if West has one or two honors. If he has the King and Jack, the Ten will win and West will be unable to lead the suit again.

29. Plays to the opening leads.



Play the Jack in the faint hope that West has lead from King-Queen. This will never work in a trump contract, since the King would have been led. It has a slight chance of success in notrump.

30. Plays to the opening leads. (In notrump)

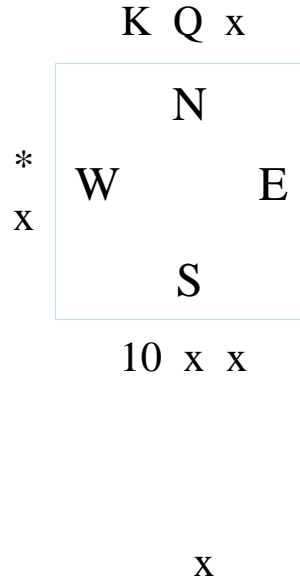


10

Play the Ten. West may have the ACE-JACK and the Ten will win.

(This a not always right. If West has the ACE and East doubleton Jack, it is better to play low and win with an honor. But that is a less likely layout.)

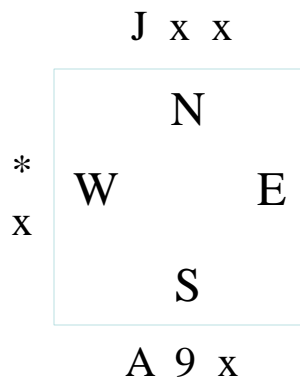
31. Plays to the opening leads. (In a suit contract)



Play low, hoping that West has the Jack. Then you make two tricks. East is sure to have the ACE. However, it will something be right to play an honor. You may need a quick entry to dummy, be afraid of a ruff, or have a discard possibility.

In notrump this is a guess, depending on the position of the ACE and Jack. Play an honor if you are afraid of a shift to another suit.

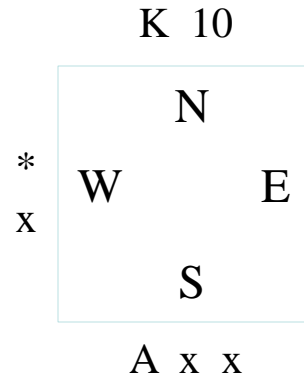
32. Plays to the opening leads.



x

Play low. The Nine is very useful here. You hope that West has led from King-Ten. In that case East will have to play the Queen or King, and a lead toward the Jack later will score a second trick.

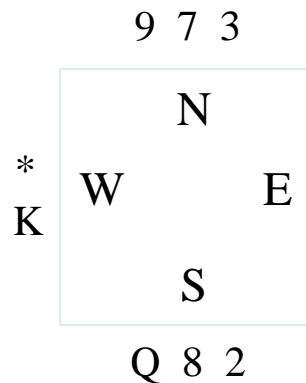
33. Plays to the opening leads.



10

Play the Ten, if you desperately need three tricks from the suit. However, this is most unlikely to work. If West has the Queen-Jack, he will often lead the Queen. So in practice the King is usually the right play, perhaps because you need the lead in the dummy. In a suit contract the King prepares for a third-round ruff, and in notrump it allows for a hold-up of the ACE on the next round.

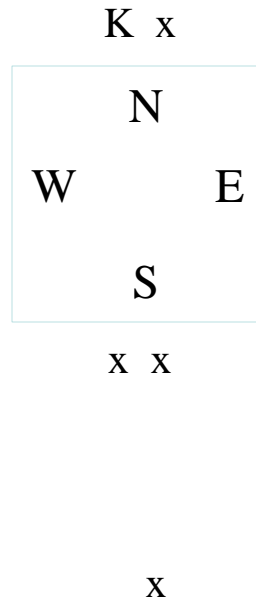
34. Plays to the opening leads. (Make a plan)



Play the 8

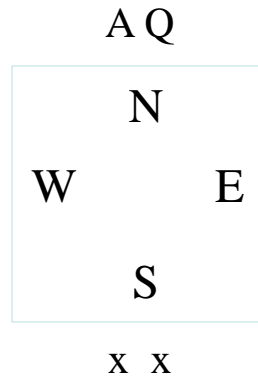
Play the eight, hoping that West will think that his partner has started an encouraging signal. You want him to continue the suit. If you play the two, West will know that his partner has played his lowest card and he will shift. In general, signal just as the opponents would: High to encourage a continuation, low to discourage.

35. How do South play?



Lead low from the South hand, hoping that West has the Ace. If he plays low you play the King, and if he plays the Ace you play low from dummy. This is a 50-50 chances: If East has the ACE, your King is dead. (Barring the rare situation in which can be induced to lead the suit for you.)

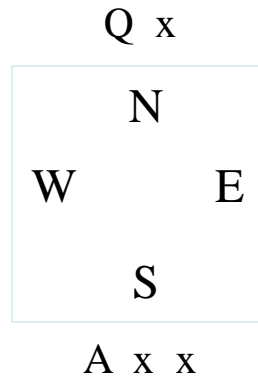
36. How do South play?



X

Lead from South hand and play the Queen unless, most unlikely, West plays the Kings. You are hoping that West has the King, a 50-50 chance. This is the most obvious finesse. You are finessing the Queen, and finessing against the King.

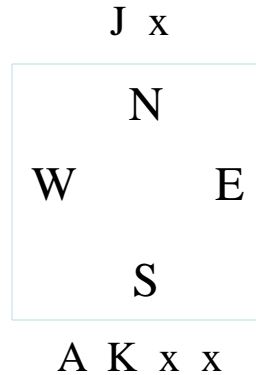
37. What do you play from South?



x

Lead low from South. You will make two tricks if West had the King. The Ace is an automatic trick, but to score the Queen you must lead towards it.

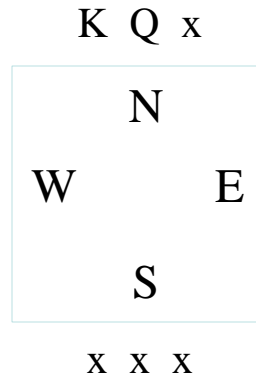
38. What do You Play?



x

Lead low from South. You will make three tricks if West has the Queen. The Ace and King are automatic tricks, but to score the Jack you must lead towards it while it is guarded.

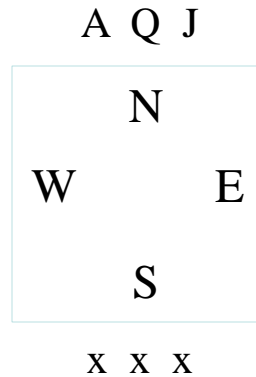
39. What do you play?



x

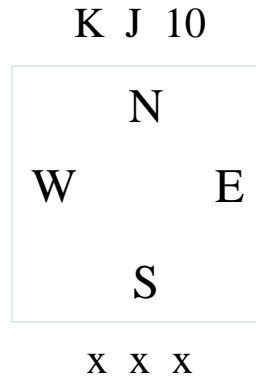
Lead from the South hand and play King or Queen unless West play the Ace. You are hoping that West has the Ace, a 50-50 chance to make two tricks. If North's honor wins, lead another suit and repeat the process later with a second lead from the South hand.

40. How do you play?



Lead from the South hand and play the Jack or Queen unless West plays the King. You are hoping that West has the King, a 50-50 chance to make three tricks. If North's honor wins, lead another suit and repeat the finesse later with a second lead from the South hand.

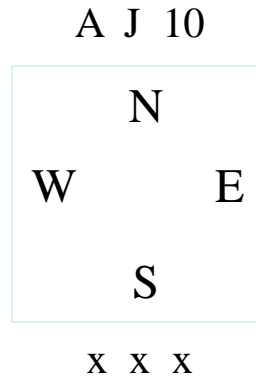
41. How do you play?



x

Lead from the South hand and play the Ten or Jack unless West plays Queen. You are hoping that West has the Queen, a 50-50 chance to make two tricks by finessing. Repeat the finesse later with a second lead from the South hand unless the Queen has appeared. Note that the location of the Ace is unimportant – you are worried about the Queen.

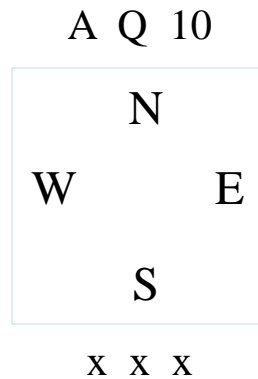
42. How do you play?



x

Lead from the South hand and finesses the Ten or Jack unless West plays an honor. If it loses, repeat the process later with a second lead from the South hand. You win two tricks unless East has both the King and Queen, a 24% chance.

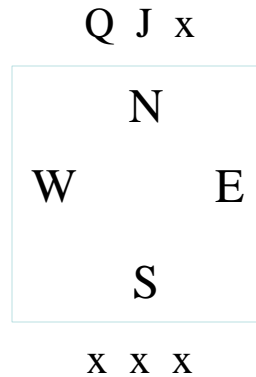
43. How do you play?



X

Lead from the South hand and finesse the Ten. If it loses to the Jack, then lead from the South hand later and finesse the Queen. This makes three tricks if West had both the King and Jack, a 24% chance. This make one trick if East has both missing honors, another 24% chance. Otherwise, it makes two tricks, a 52% chance. The principle is: When in doubt, finesses cheaply.

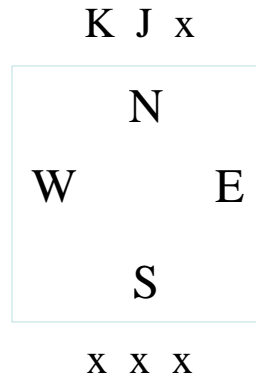
44. How do you play?



x

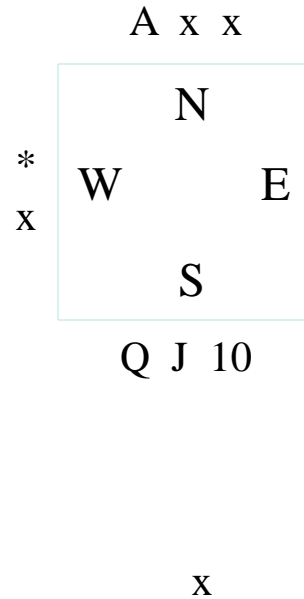
Lead Twice from the South hand, hoping that West has at least one of the missing honors, You will score one trick if West had the Ace, or the King, or both. In theory, this is a 76% chance, but in practice is worse: West had the ace-King he is likely to have led it originally.

45. How do you play?



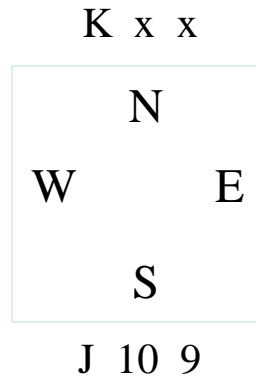
Lead low from South, and if West plays low, finesse the Jack. If this wins or loses to the Queen, lead low again and hope to score the King. This gives you two tricks if you are lucky and West has the ACE and Queen (a 24% chance). It gives you no tricks if East has the Ace and Queen (a 24% chance). Otherwise, you get one tricks.

46. How do you play?



Lead from the South hand and finesse, twice if necessary. You hope that West has the King, a 50-50 chance.

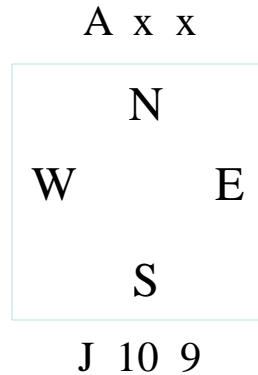
47. How do you play?



x

Lead from South, and play low from the dummy unless West plays Queen. You are finessing with the hope that West has the Queen, and will do it again if necessary. The business of dummy's King it to kill West's hypothetical Queen. You have a 50-50 chance of making two tricks. The Nine is crucial card: Without it your chance of two tricks would be poor.

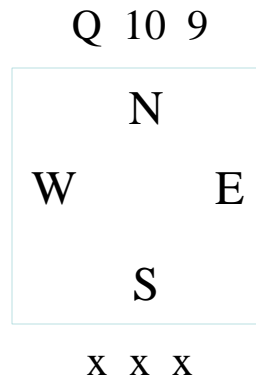
48. How do you play?



x

Lead from South, and play low from the dummy unless West plays an honor. If this loses to East, repeat the process. This finesse produces two tricks, a 76% chance, unless East has both missing honors. The Nine is a crucial card.

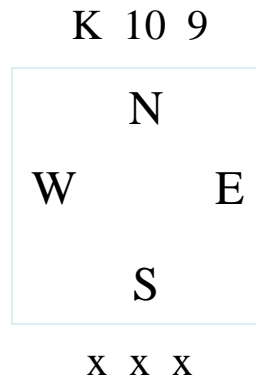
49. How do you play?



x

Lead low from South and play Nine of Ten if West plays low. You hope that West has Jack. If he does, you expect to repeat the finesse, with 50-50 chance of making one trick.

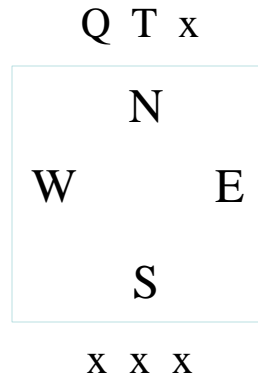
50. How do you play?



X

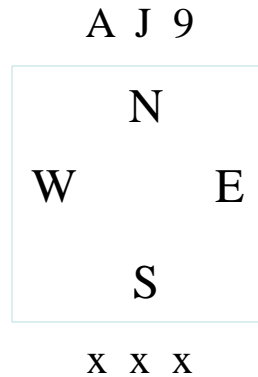
Lead low from South, and play Nine or Ten. If this loses to the Queen or Jack, repeat the process. This gives you one trick if West has the Queen or Jack or both. This is a 76% chance. (There is a slight extra chance. West may have a singleton or doubleton ACE.)

51. Plays to the leads.



Lead from the South hand, and if West plays low finesse the Ten. If this loses to the ACE or King, lead later toward the Queen. This scores a trick if West had the Jack, together with either or both of the top honors. (A 37% chance, but no need to remember this.)

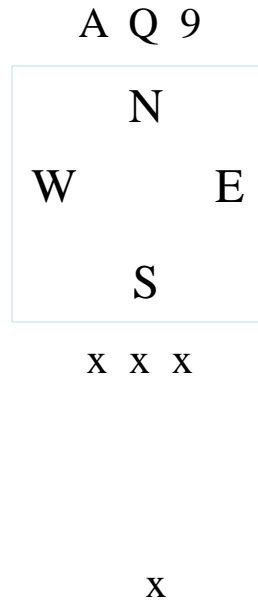
52. Plays to the Hand.



X

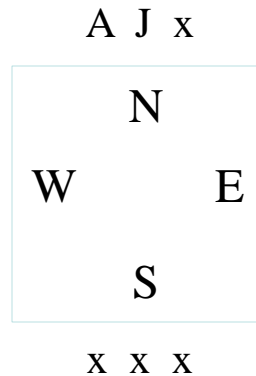
Lead low from the South hand and finesse the Nine. If this loses to the King or Queen, finesses the Jack Later. You make two tricks if West has the Ten and at least one of the higher honors. (A 37% chance, but no need to remember this.)

53. Plays to the Hand.



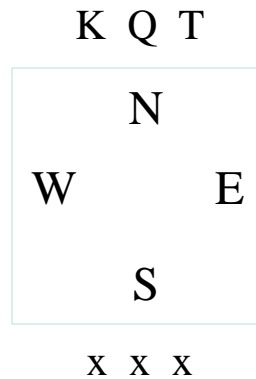
Lead low from the South hand and finesse the Nine. If this loses to the Jack or Ten, finesse the Queen later. (A 62% chance, but no need to remember this.)

54. Plays to the Hand.



Lead low from the South hand and finesse the Jack, hoping that West has the King and Queen and that you will make two tricks. If West plays the King or Queen, you can either win the lead toward the Jack later, or allow him to win and finesse the Jack later. In theory this is a 24% chance. In real life it is much worse: When West has a King-Queen combination, he will often have led it at the first trick.

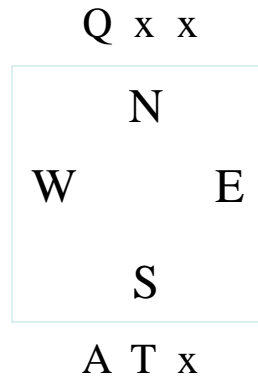
55. Plays to the Hand.



X

Lead low to the King or Queen. If it loses to the ACE, finesse the Ten later. If it wins, lead low again from South and guess if West plays low. This is very difficult. If either opponent hesitates, even fractionally, assume he has the ACE. Lacking that, assume the stronger player had the ACE.

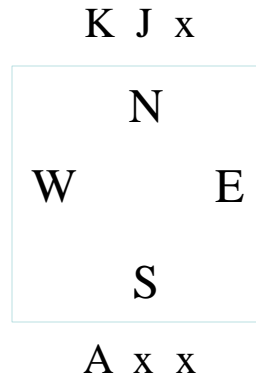
56. Plays to the Hand.



x

Lead low and play the Queen if West play low. If this loses to the King, lead from the North hand later and finesses the Ten. (A 74% chance of make two tricks.)

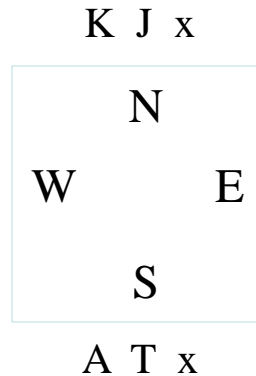
57. Plays to the Hand.



x

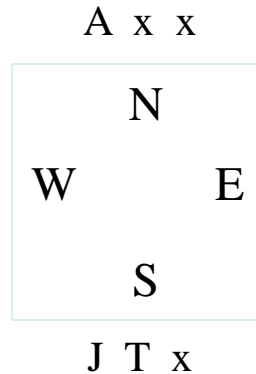
Lead the ACE and then finesse the Jack. You make three tricks when West had the Queen, plus the tiny chance that East has a singleton Queen.

58. Plays to the Hand.



This requires good guessing. If you think West has the Queen, play the Ace and finesse the Jack. If you think East had that card, play to the King and finesse the Ten. If an opponent is long in another suit, assume he does not have the Queen. The fact that the suit was not led offers a slight clue. In a suit contract or a notrump slam, assume West has the Queen. In other notrump contracts, assume East has it.

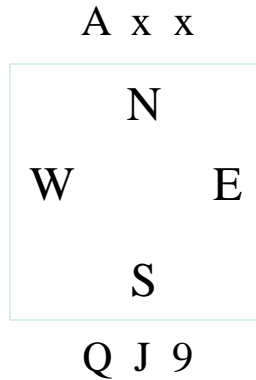
59. Plays to the Hand.



x

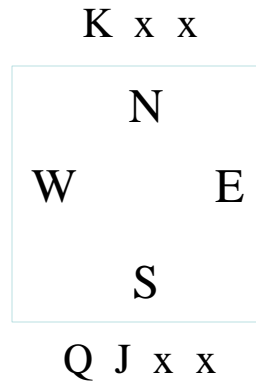
Lead the Jack, hoping that West covers with the King or Queen. If he does, win with the Ace and lead toward the Ten. If West play low, finesse, expecting to lose the King or Queen. Then play the Ace with a slight chance that the other honor will fall. However, if West is likely to have length, start by leading low from the North hand and hope East has a doubleton honor.

60. Plays to the Hand.



Lead the Queen, intending to finesse. You hope that West covers with the King, in which case win with the Ace and finesse the Nine. If the Queen wins, lead the Jack next. Without any clues about length, East is slightly more likely to have begun with a doubleton Ten, which you can pin, than West a doubleton King.

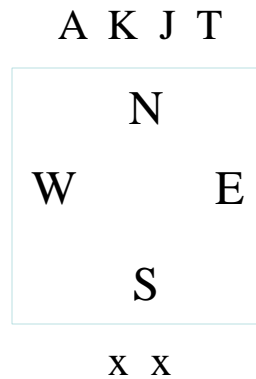
61. Plays to the Hand.



(Lead from either hand)

Lead low from the North hand to the Jack or Queen. If this wins, return to the North and repeat the process. This provides an extra chance: A doubleton Ace in the East hand. All normal plays make three tricks if the opposing cards split three-three. With all such combinations, lead toward the hand with two honors.

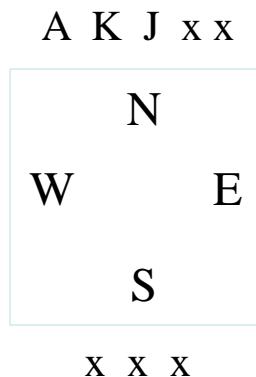
62. Plays to the Hand.



x

Lead low and finesse the Ten or Jack. If it wins, return to the South hand in another suit and repeat the process. You make four tricks if West has the Queen. Playing the ACE or KING first would be an error.

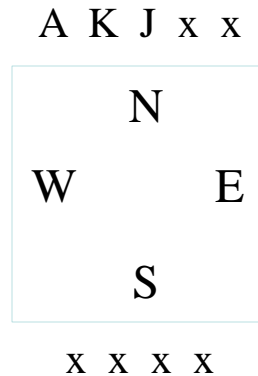
63. Plays to the Hand.



x

Play the ACE or KING. Later lead from the South hand and finesse the JACK. You will make five tricks if West began with Q x x or Q x. This guards against the chance that East has a singleton Queen, slightly improving your chance of making four tricks. In such positions, you generally play a top honor as can just as well finesse later.

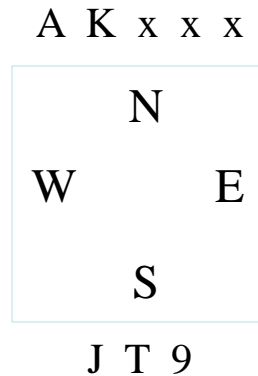
64. Plays this hand.



x

Play the ACE. If both opponents play low, follow the with King. However, playing the Ace and later finessing the Jack is almost as good and would be right if: West seems likely to have length or, you are willing to lose to East but not West.

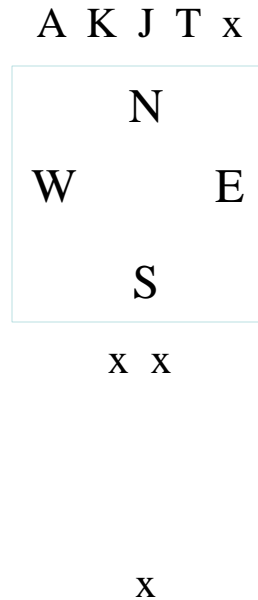
65. Plays this hand.



x

Lead from the South hand and finesse, playing West for the Queen. Playing the Ace or King would be an error. It would guard against a singleton Queen with East, but would cost a trick in the far more likely event that East has a small singleton.

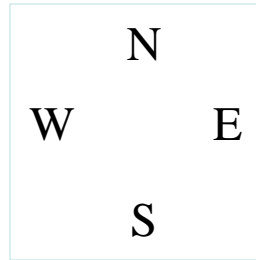
66. Plays this hand.



Lead from the South hand and finesse the Ten or Jack. If this wins, repeat the process. Playing the Ace or King first would be a mistake.

67. Plays this hand.

A K J T x x

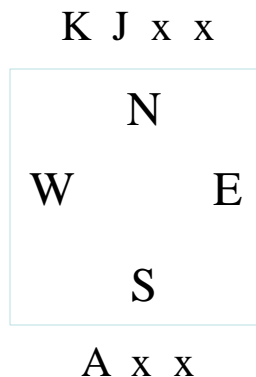


x x

x

Lead from the South hand and finesse the Ten or Jack. If this wins, repeat the process. Playing the Ace or King first would be a mistake.

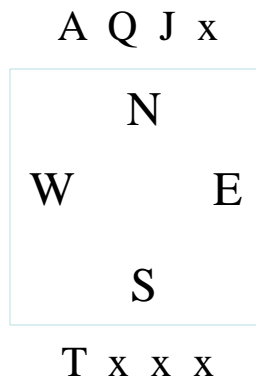
68. Plays this hand.



This depends on how many tricks you need. For four tricks, cash the Ace and finesse the Jack, hoping for Q x x on the left.

If three tricks are enough, play King, Ace and small from South. This guards against Q x with East, and also makes whenever West has the Queen or the suit splits 3-3.

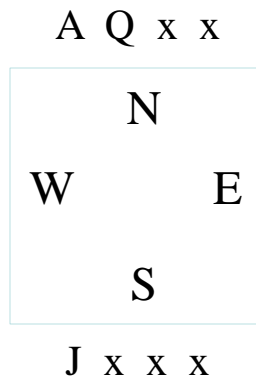
69. Plays this hand.



x

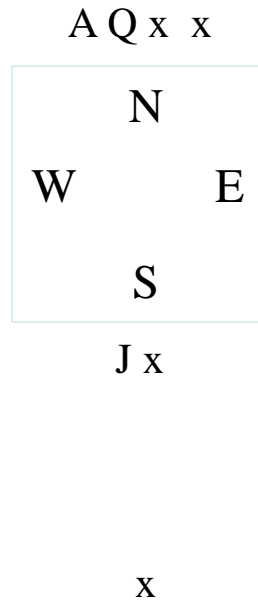
Lead low from South and finesse the Jack or Queen. Leading the Ten originally would cost a trick if West held a singleton King.

70. Plays this hand.



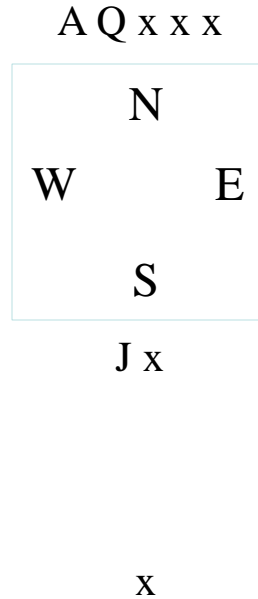
Lead low from South and finesses the Queen. If it wins, play the Ace. You will make four tricks if West began with a doubleton King. (But if you only need three tricks, play the Ace first.)

71. Plays this hand.



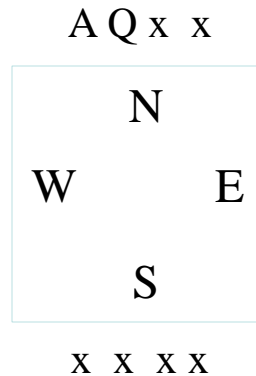
Lead low from North towards the Jack. This will make three tricks if East had three cards or fewer including the King, or if he errs by playing the King with other holdings. (But if you want two tricks in a hurry, without losing the lead, lead the Jack for a finesse.)

72. Plays this hand.



Lead low from North. This give an extra chance of four tricks if East has a doubleton King, or makes a mistake with K x x x. All normal plays make four tricks if the suit divides 3-3.

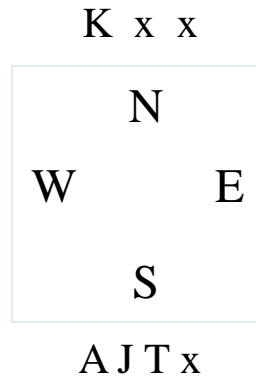
73. Plays this hand.



x

The main chance of making three tricks is that West had the King and the suit divides 3-2. Cashing the ACE, and later leading toward the Queen, or leading from South and ducking, are sensible plays. But the expert play is to lead low from the North hand, planning to finesse the Queen later. East will be tempted to play King from K x or even K x x or K x x x. An immediate finesse of the Queen is wrong, losing to a singleton KING unnecessarily.

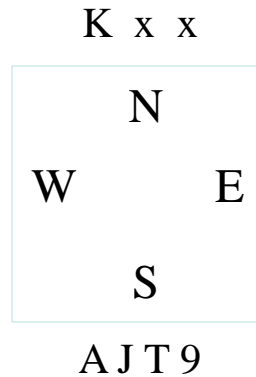
74. Plays this hand.



x

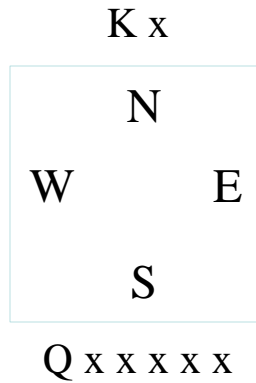
Lead to the KING and then finesse the Jack or Ten. If it wins, repeat the process. This wins whenever East has the Queen, with the slight extra chance that West has a singleton Queen. Leading the Jack or Ten for a finesse is a mistake.

75. Plays this hand.



Lead the Jack, and see if there is any reaction from West. If he covers with the Queen, win with the King. If he hesitates, even very slightly, finesse and then finesse again. If he plays low promptly, win with the King and finesse the Ten, repeating if necessary. If he hesitates and does not have Queen, he is cheating. If you hesitate without the Queen, you must immediately say: “I do not have a problem.”

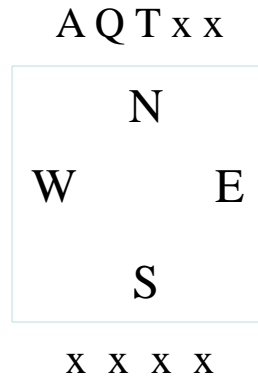
76. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from South to the KING. If this wins, play low from both hands. The only hope of five tricks is that West has the doubleton ACE.

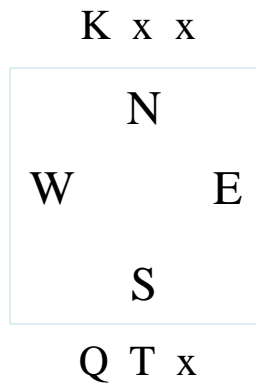
76. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from South and finesse the Queen. If East plays the Jack, return to the South hand finesse again. You make five tricks if West has a doubleton King or K x x. But if you only need four tricks, play the ACE first, guarding against a singleton King with East, and later lead towards the Queen.

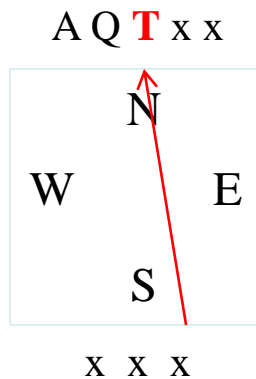
78. Plays this hand.



x

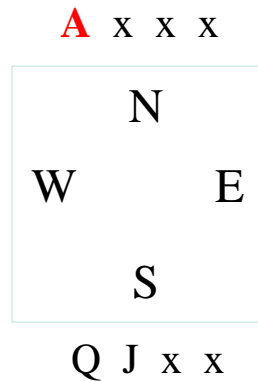
Lead low from the South hand and if West plays low play the King. Whatever happens, lead from the North hand later and finesse the Ten. (But if the lead is in the North hand and you are short of entries, finesse the Ten immediately.)

79. Plays this hand.



Lead from the South hand and finesse the Ten, with a chance of making five tricks if West has K J x. But if four tricks are enough, finesse the Queen, and finesse the Ten later. This guards against a singleton Jack with East.

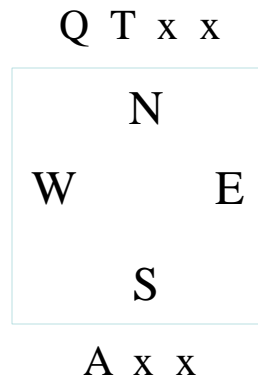
80. Plays this hand.



A

Play the ACE and lead towards the Queen-Jack. You make three tricks unless West the King in a four-(or five-) card holding. Leading the Queen or Jack is a wasteful error: You will need to make tricks with both those cards if East has four or five cards in the suit.

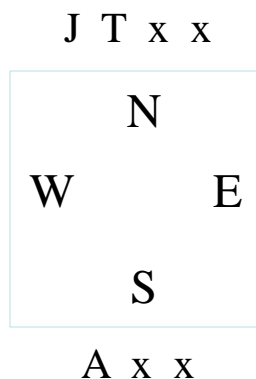
81. Plays this hand.



A

Cash the ACE, and then finesse the Ten. You make three tricks whenever West has both missing honors, J x x or J x x x x.

82. Plays this hand.

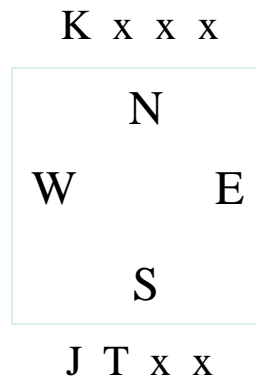


A

Cash the ACE and lead low from South. This gives a slight chance of making three tricks. You hope someone had K Q doubleton, or East had a singleton honor. If he plays an honor, you will have to guess next time what to play from dummy.

If West is a weak player, leading low from South might persuade him to play an honor from K x x or Q x x. That would allow you to lead an honor from dummy later and finesse to make three tricks.

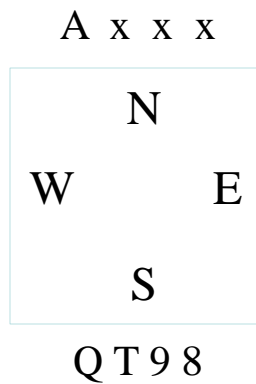
83. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from South. The only faint hope of making three tricks is that West has A Q doubleton. Holding the Nine in ether hand would improve your chances vastly.

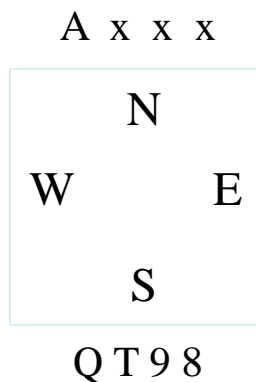
84. Plays this hand.



(to make 4 tricks)

Lead the Queen, in the faint hope that East has a singleton Jack. But if West is likely to be short in the suit, lead the 10, 9 or 8 and hope he has a singleton KING.

85. Plays this hand.



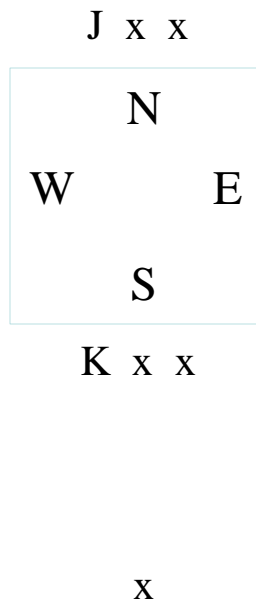
(to make 3 tricks)

There are three good plays and one bad play.

- (a) Lead the Queen and finesse;
- (b) Lead the 10, 9 or 8 and finesse;
- (c) Lead low from dummy and finesse he 10.

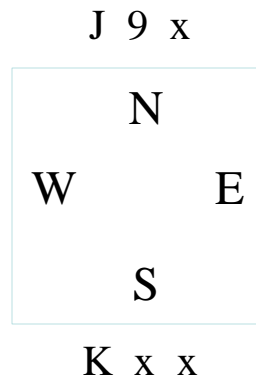
In all cases you plan to finesse against West later. Play (c) gives up the faint chance of four tricks, but may gain if East is not an expert: He may play the King or help you by thinking. The bad play is to start with ACE.

86. Plays this hand.



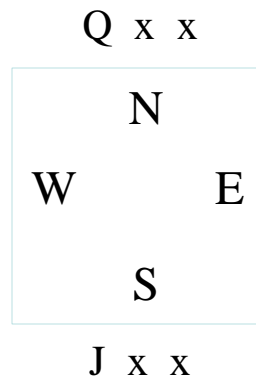
Lead low from North, toward the King. You hope East has the ACE or West the Queen. But leading low from South is almost as good.

87. Plays this hand.



Lead low from North, toward the King, with a slight chance of two tricks. If the King loses to the ACE, lead from South and guess if West plays low. But leading from South and playing either the Nine or the Jack is almost as good.

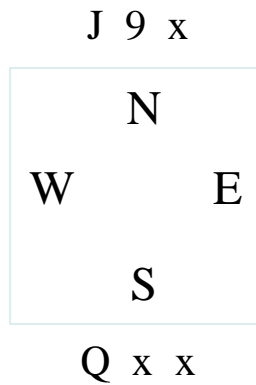
88. Plays this hand.



x

A guess. Judge which opponent is likely to be short and make him play second. You will make a trick if the defender playing second had both ACE and King, or a doubleton or singleton top honor. With no clue, lead from North: West will hardly ever have ACE and King.

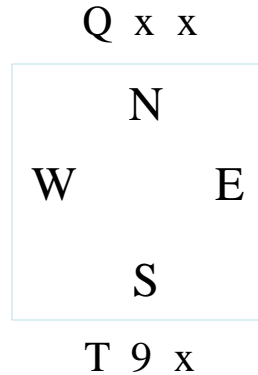
89. Plays this hand.



x

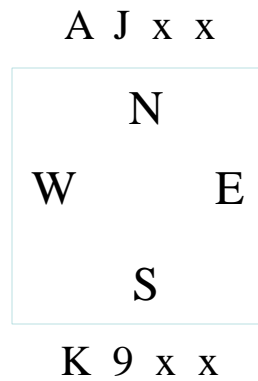
Lead low from North to the Queen. If it loses, lead from South and finesse the Nine.

90. Plays this hand.



Lead the Nine and finesse, hoping West will fail to cover with the Ace-Jack or King-Jack combination. The eight in either hand would help greatly, improving a very poor chance to fifty-fifty.

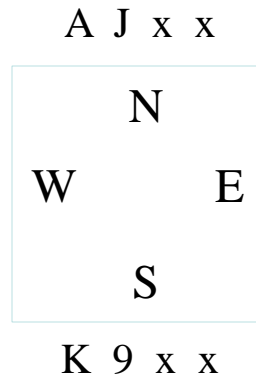
91. Plays this hand.



(to make four tricks)

Lead low from South and finesse the Jack. Starting with the King is an error.

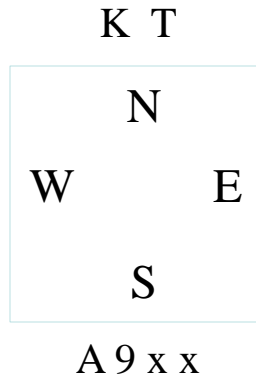
92. Plays this hand.



(to make three tricks)

Cash the ACE, then lead to the Nine. This guarantees three tricks against any distribution.

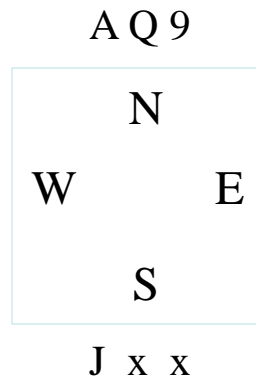
93. Plays this hand.



x

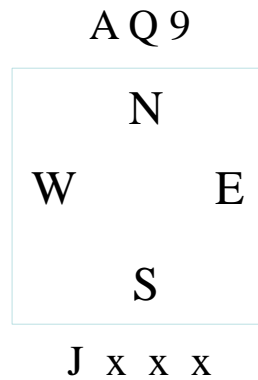
Lead low from South and finesse the Ten, expecting it to lose. You hope that the other honor will fall eventually under the ACE. If West starts with an honor, win with the King and run the Ten.

94. Plays this hand.



Lead the Jack. If it is covered with the King (as it will be if West had that card), return to South hand and finesse the Nine.

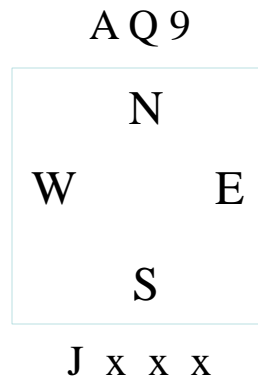
95. Plays this hand.



(to make four tricks)

Finesse the Nine. You hope for K T x or K T doubleton with West.

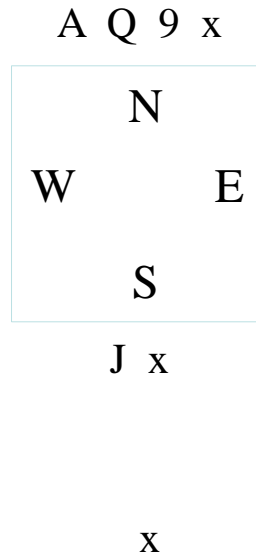
96. Plays this hand.



(to make three tricks)

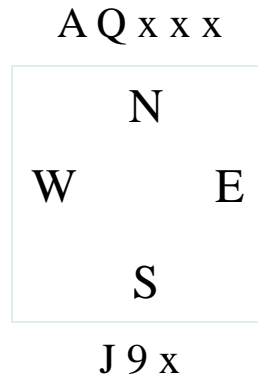
Finesse the Queen. If it wins, return to the South hand and finesse the Nine. If it loses, play the ACE.

97. Plays this hand.



Lead low from North to the Jack. Whatever happens, finesse the Nine next. You hope for three tricks: There is no chance of four.

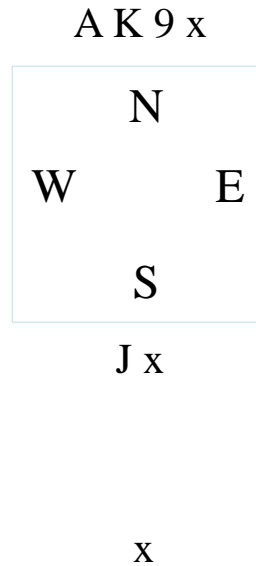
98. Plays this hand.



x

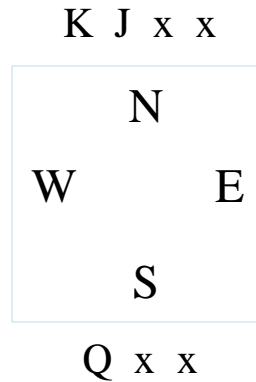
Lead low from South and finesse the Queen. If it wins, you have a guess: Play the ACE, hoping to drop the King, or lead Jack from South, hoping East began with a doubleton Ten. If you only need four tricks, start with the ACE.

99. Plays this hand.



Lead low from North to the Jack. If it loses, finesse the Nine. There is no chance of four tricks.

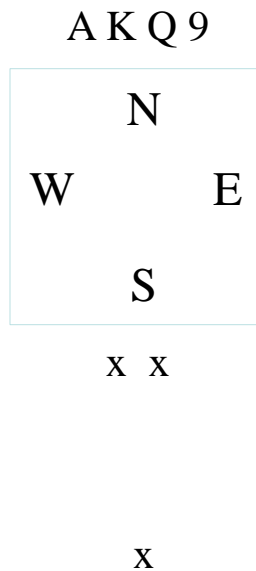
100. Plays this hand.



x

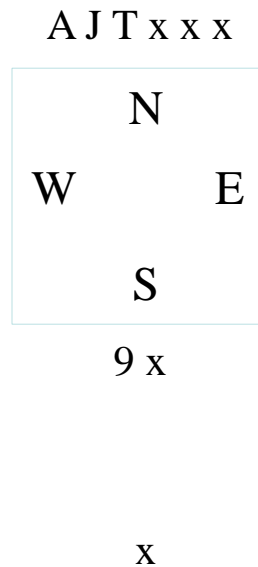
Lead low from the South hand and play an honor from dummy. If this wins, return to the South hand in another suit and lead low again. This gains when West has a doubleton ACE. In such positions, lead low toward the hand that has two honors.

101. Plays this hand.



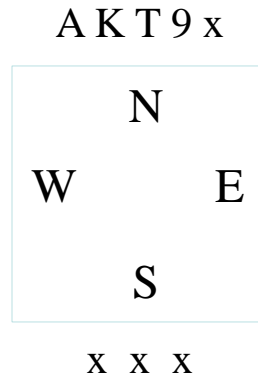
Lead from South and finesse the Nine, hoping West has the Jack and Ten. If West plays an honor, win and finesse the Nine later.

102. Plays this hand.



Lead low from South and finesse the Jack or Ten. Do not lead Nine, which will be a useful card if West has a singleton honor.

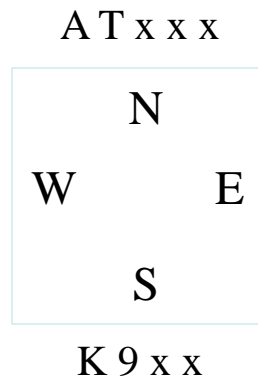
103. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from South and finesse the Nine or Ten. You will make five tricks if West had the Queen and Jack (but not all five cards). If East wins the first trick, play a top honor next and if necessary, finesse against the other honor later.

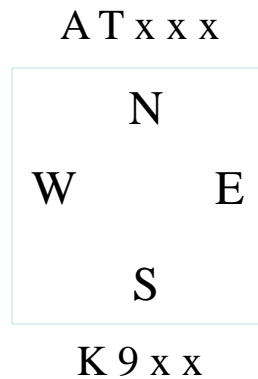
104. Plays this hand.



(to make five tricks)

If you think East will be short, play the King. If he plays an honor, finesse the Ten.
Vice versa if you think West is short: Start with the ACE.

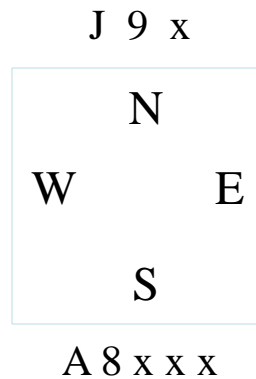
105. Plays this hand.



(to make four tricks)

Lead low from either hand finesse the Nine or Ten, if the second player plays low. This guarantees four tricks against any distribution. Starting with a top honor may lose to a 4-0 split.

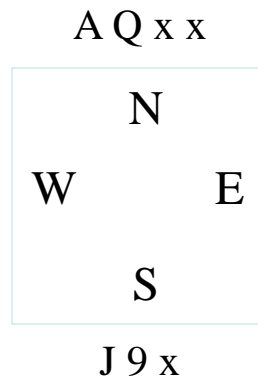
106. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from South and finesse the Nine. If it loses to the King or Queen, lead the Jack from the North hand later, hoping that West began with a doubleton Ten. Make the same Jack lead if West wins the first trick with the King or Queen.

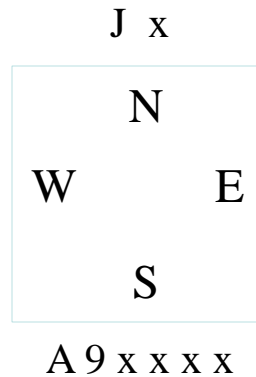
107. Plays this hand.



A

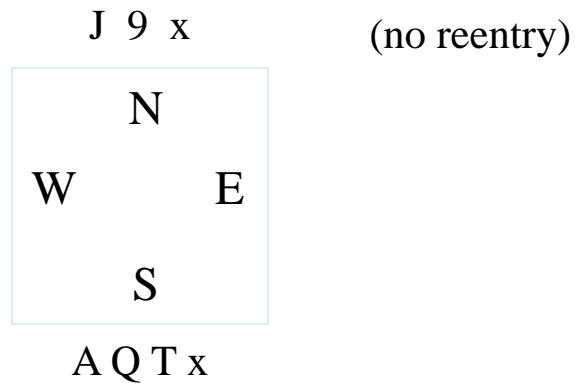
Play the ACE. This offers a faint chance of four tricks: West would have to have a singleton King. It is the best chance for three tricks. Lead to the Jack next.

108. Plays this hand.



Lead low from South. The only faint chance of making five tricks is the West had K 10 or Q 10 doubleton. If West wins, lead the Jack later from the North hand.

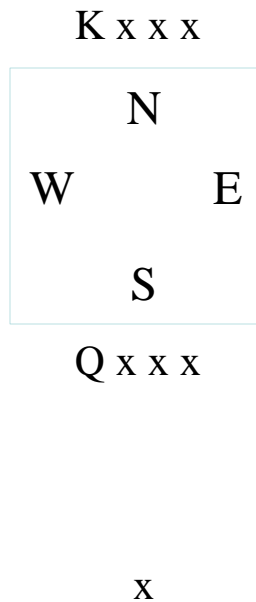
109. Plays this hand.



x

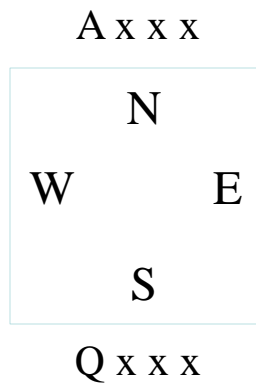
Lead the Nine from the North hand finesse. If it wins, lead the Jack for a second finesse.

110. Plays this hand.



Lead low from one hand to the honor opposite. If it wins, duck on the next round. You must guess which opponent, if any, has a doubleton ACE. Make him play second, and your King and Queen will both score.

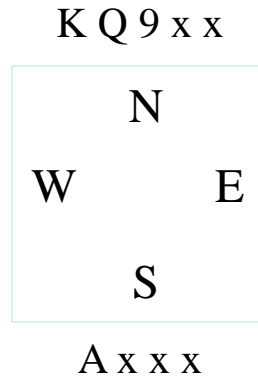
111. Plays this hand.



x

Play the ACE and then lead to the Queen. But if you are sure that West has the King, play low on the second round hoping for a doubleton King.

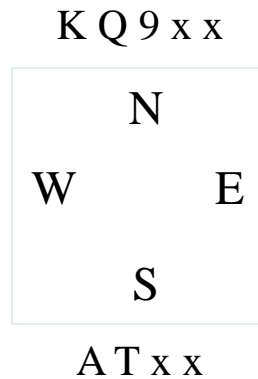
112. Plays this hand.



x

Play the ACE, guarding against the chance that West has all four missing cards. In that case, you will be able to finesse. If East has all four, you have no chance.

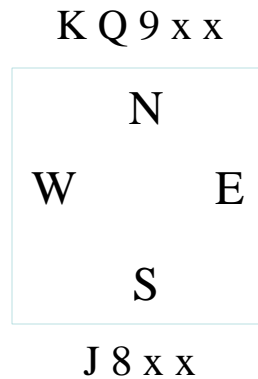
113. Plays this hand.



x

Play the King or Queen, guarding against any 4-0 split. If there is one, you can finesse for the Jack either way.

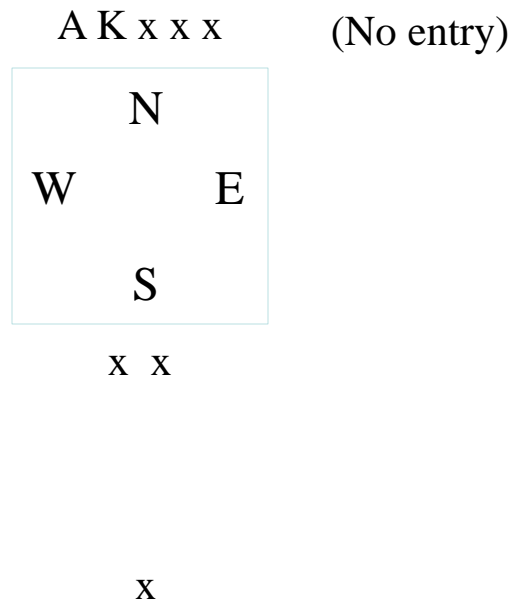
114. Plays this hand.



x

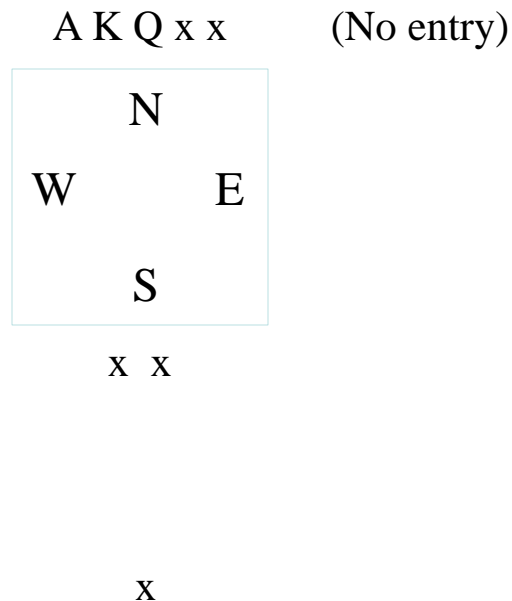
Lead or play the King or Queen, guarding against any 4-0 split. If there is one, the Ten can be dealt with by a finesse.

115. Plays this hand.



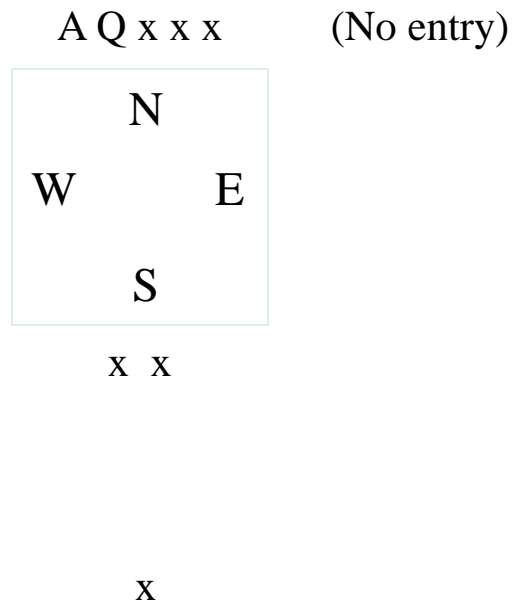
Play low from both hands, and later play the ACE and King. With a 3-3 split, a 36% chance, you will make for tricks.

116. Plays this hand.



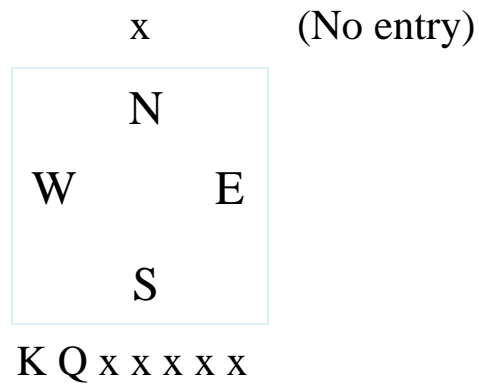
If you need five tricks, play the ACE-King-Queen. If you are content to make four tricks, play low from both hands and play the honors later.

117. Plays this hand.



Play low from both hands. Later finesse the Queen, making four tricks if West began with K x x. However, this risk making no tricks if East has the King.

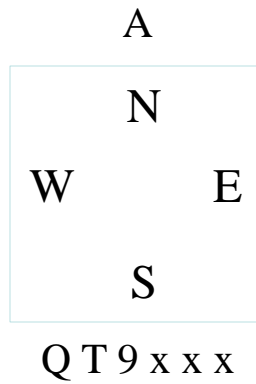
118. Plays this hand.



x

Lead low from the South hand, guarding against the chance that somebody has a singleton ACE.

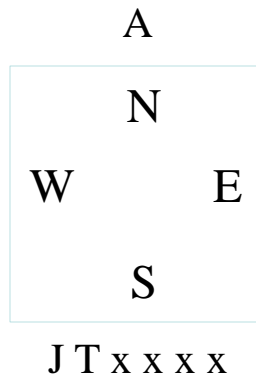
119. Plays this hand.



x

Cash the ACE and later lead the Queen, hoping that this collects the Jack.

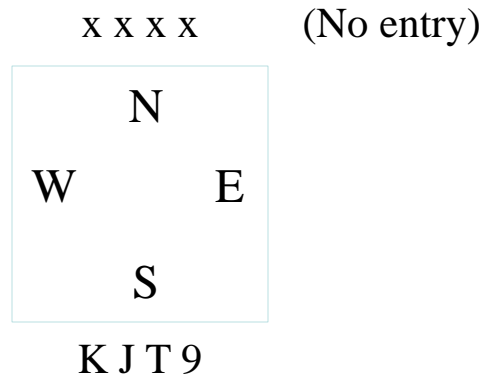
120. Plays this hand.



x

Play the ACE, and later lead low from South. This guards against a doubleton honor in either hand, as well as a 3-3 split.

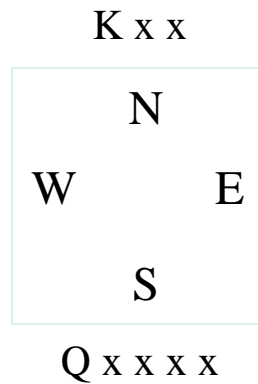
121. Plays this hand.



x

Lead the Spade King, with a faint hope that the Queen is singleton.

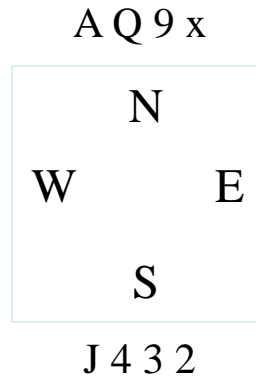
122. Plays this hand.



x

A guess. If an opponent has a doubleton ACE, you must make him play second. Then you can prevent him from capturing an honor with his ACE. So if West is likely to have the ACE, or to be short, lead from the South hand to the King. And vice versa.

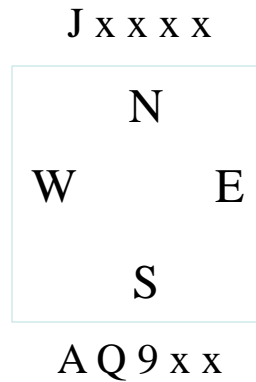
123. Plays this hand.



2

Lead the two and finesse the Nine, hoping that West has K 10 or K 10 x. That would produce four tricks. But if you only need three tricks, finesse the Queen. If it loses, catch the ACE next. If it wins, return to the closed hand and finesse the Nine.

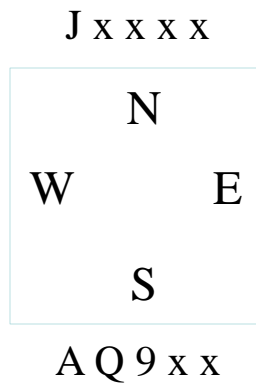
124. Plays this hand.



J

Lead the Jack from the North hand and finesse. This gains when East has K 10 x. If he cover, West will show out and a later finesse of the Nine will be obvious.

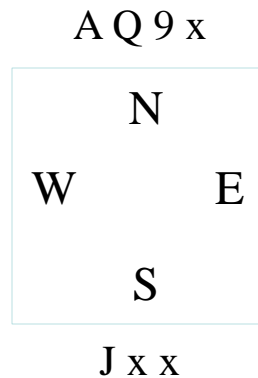
124. Plays this hand.



x

Lead the Jack from the North hand and finesse. This gains when East has K 10 x. If he covers, West will show out and a later finesse of the Nine will be obvious.

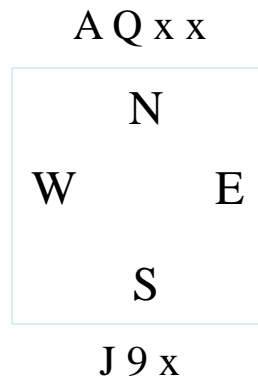
125. Plays this hand.



(to make three tricks)

Lead low from South and finesse the Queen. If it loses, cash the ACE. If it wins, cross back to the South hand and finesse the Nine. (But for four tricks, finesse the Nine at start).

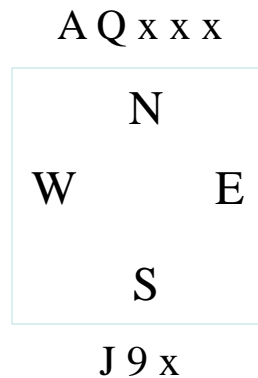
126. Plays this hand.



x

Play the ACE, and lead to the Jack. This gives the best chance of three tricks, with a faint chance of four: East might have a singleton King.

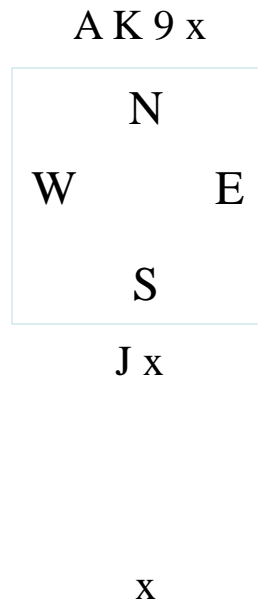
127. Plays this hand.



x

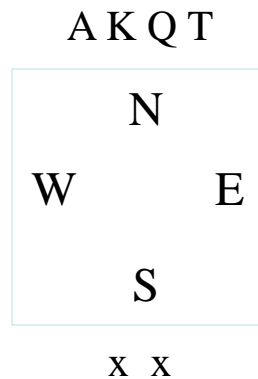
Lead low from South and finesse the Queen. If it wins cash the ACE, hoping West began with a doubleton King. But if you think East is short, return to the South hand lead the Jack. (For four tricks, start with the ACE and lead to the Jack.)

128. Plays this hand.



Lead low from North and play the Jack. If it loses to the Queen, finesse the Nine next.

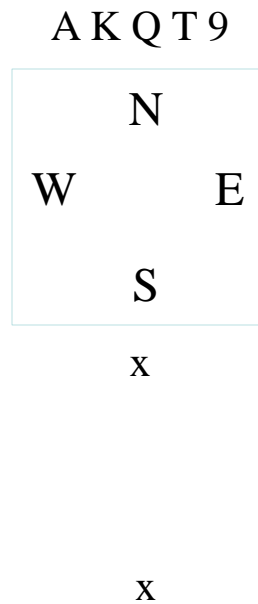
129. Plays this hand.



x

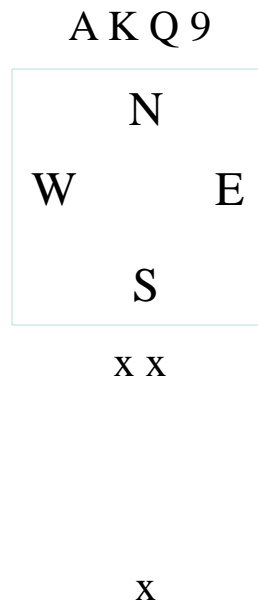
Play the ACE, guarding against the faint possibility the East has a singleton Jack, and later finesse the Ten. If West has most of the missing cards, he is more likely than East to have the Jack. In practice, it is often more convenient to finesse immediately.

130. Plays this hand.



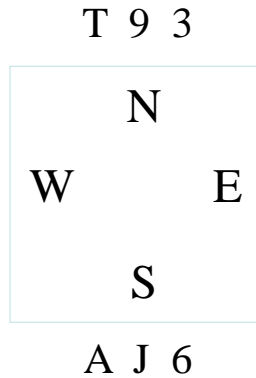
Play the top honors, hoping the Jack falls. But is the Nine is missing, finesse the Ten.

131. Plays this hand.



Finesse the Nine. If West plays an honor, cross back to South and finesse the Nine.

1. Plays this hand.

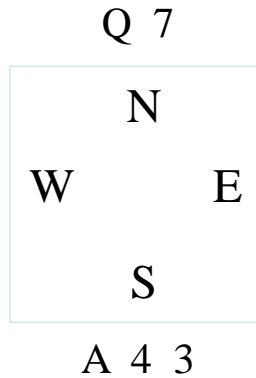


T

Play Ten to 6 and hope KQ split or KQ on East side. If KQ on West side, you only can get one trick.

NOTE: if west play 'x', then South still play T

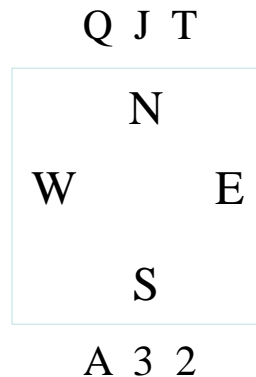
#1. Plays this hand.



x

Lead a low card from South toward the QUEEN. If West has the KING, the Queen will win a trick, a 50-50 chance.

#2. Plays this hand.

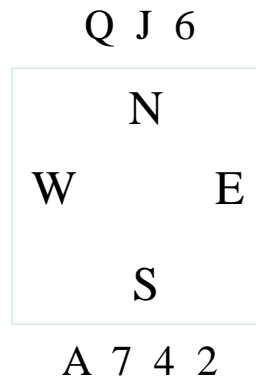


Q

Lead the QUEEN, JACK, or TEN intending to finesse through East for the KING. If East has the KING, you will win three tricks whether or not he covers your honor-card lead.

NOTE: if West play “x”, then South should count 3 tricks possible, South don’t play it wait for West play again.

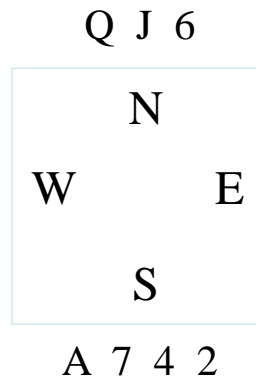
#3. Plays this hand.



X

Your goal is to win three tricks. The correct play is to lead low from SOUTH toward the QUEEN and JACK; if you allowed to win the first trick with the QUEEN, return to SOUTH with a different suit and lead another low card toward the JACK. If West had the KING, SOUTH will win three tricks no matter how the suit divides; if East captures your QUEEN with the KING, you will need a 3-3 split. (50-50 chance)

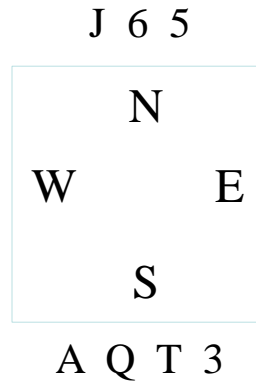
Continued.



X

This is far better play than leading the QUEEN or JACK. East can cover if he has the KING, or the finesse will lose if West has the KING, so your only chance for three tricks is that the suit divides 3 – 3. When you are contemplating leading an honor card to take a finesse, ask yourself: What will I have left if the honor is covered? If you don't like the answer, don't lead the honor card.

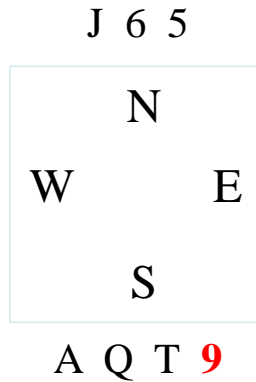
#4. Plays this hand.



X

The best chance to win four tricks is to lead a low card from dummy and, assuming East plays low, finesse the TEN or QUEEN. If the finesse succeeds, return to dummy and lead a second low card intending to finesse the QUEEN. It is wrong to lead the JACK as it will cost you a trick if East has a singleton or doubleton KING; he will cover your JACK and limit you to three tricks. Leading low cards from dummy may gain a trick and cannot cost an extra no matter how the suit divides.

#4(b). Plays this hand.

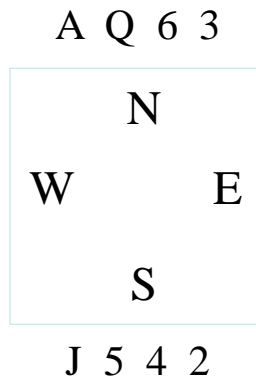


x

It would be safe to lead JACK.

The correct way to play a suit combination depends on how many tricks you need.

#5. Plays this hand.

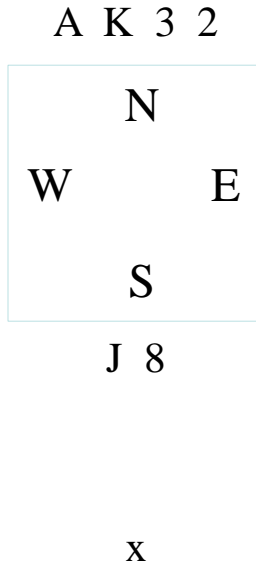


X

The only chance to win four tricks is to find West with a doubleton KING. So lead low from your hand and finesse the QUEEN. If the QUEEN wins, cash the ACE and hope for the KING to drop. NOTE that leading the JACK is a hopeless play; West would cover the KING and there would be no chance for four tricks.

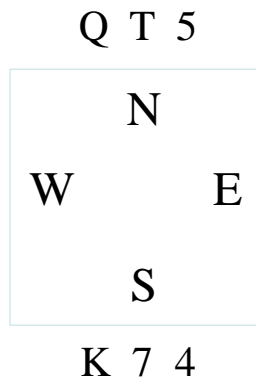
If your goal is to win three tricks, your first play should be the ACE, in case East has a singleton KING. You will always win three tricks if the suit divides 3-2, but cannot win more than two tricks if either defender has four to the KING.

#6. Plays this hand.



If your goal is to win three tricks, lead low from dummy toward the JACK. You will win a trick with the JACK if East has the QUEEN.

#7. Plays this hand.



5

If West has the JACK, you can win two tricks by finessing the TEN. However, your first play should be a low card from dummy as East may contribute the ACE or JACK and solve your problem. If East plays low when you lead from dummy, put up the KING; whether your KING wins this trick or West wins with the ACE, you will be able to finesse the TEN next time the suit is led.

#8. Plays this hand.

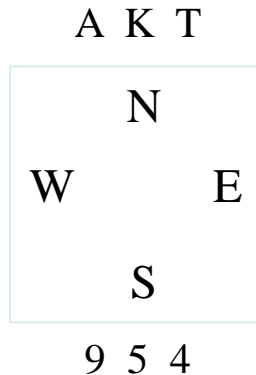
K J 2		
N		
W		E
S		
7 6 5		

WEST	EAST
AQ	---
A	Q
Q	A
---	AQ

X

Your first play should be to lead low from hand to the JACK. If East captures the JACK with the QUEEN, your next play should be to lead low from your hand to the KING. This is the first illustration of a “double finesse.” Note that you will win at least one trick in three cases out of four; the odds are 3-to-1 in your favor.

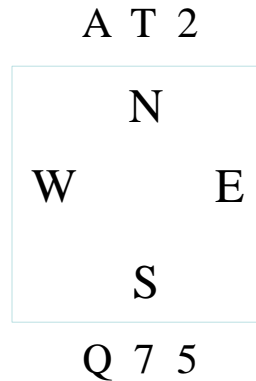
#9. Plays this hand.



X

If West has both the QUEEN and JACK, you can win three tricks by leading low from your hand and finessing the TEN – a double finesse. Since you must find two cards onside, you have only one chance in four; the odds are 3-to-1 against you.

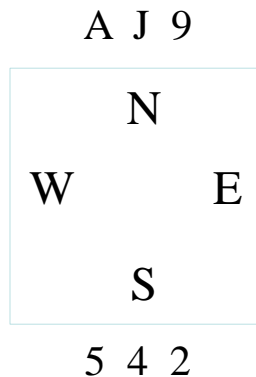
#10. Plays this hand.



x

Your goal is to win two tricks. The best chance is to lead low from dummy to your QUEEN. If West captures the QUEEN with the KING, you should eventually lead low from your hand and finesse the TEN. Unless West has the KING and East the JACK, you will win two tricks.

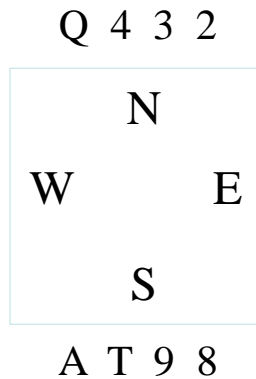
#11. Plays this hand.



x

The best play to win two tricks is to lead low from your hand and finesse the NINE – a “triple finesse.” If East wins with the KING or QUEEN, you will next lead low from your hand and finesse the JACK. If West has the KING – TEN, QUEEN – TEN, or KING – QUEEN – TEN, you will win two tricks. The odds are against you; but the chances are much better than a first-round finesse of the JACK; which would succeed only if West had the KING and QUEEN.

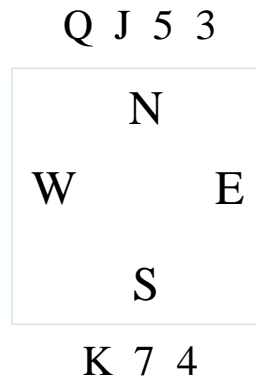
#12. Plays this hand.



X

The best play to win three tricks is to take repeated finesses through East. Lead dummy's TWO to your TEN. Assuming West the JACK, you should eventually lead the QUEEN to finesse through East again. You will succeed if East has either the KING or JACK (or both), 3-to-1 odds in your favor.

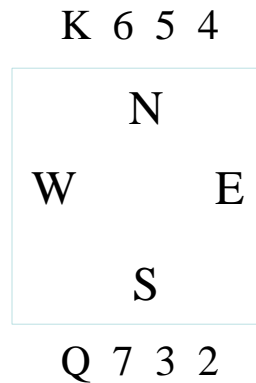
#13. Plays this hand. Lead toward honor cards



X

If the opponents capture the KING, QUEEN, or JACK with the ACE, your only chance to win three tricks if the suit divides 3-3. If you can force out the ACE without using one of your honor cards, you can win three tricks regardless of how the suit divides. The best play is to lead a low card from your hand toward the QUEEN-JACK and, if you are allowed to win this trick with the QUEEN (or JACK). If West has a singleton or doubleton ACE, he will have to play it and you will win three tricks even though the suit does not divide 3-3. NOTE that leading toward your KING is not as good because can do it only once.

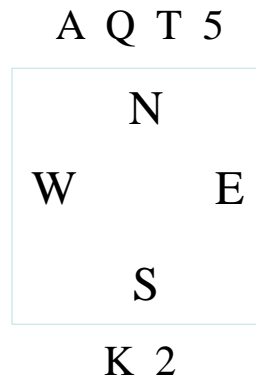
#14. Plays this hand.



X

The only chance to win three tricks with this combination is to find either opponent with a doubleton ACE, but you must guess which way to play. If you decide West had the doubleton ACE, lead low from your hand and, if West plays low, put up the KING. If the KING winds the trick, lead low from dummy and duck in your hand on the way back; do not play the QUEEN. If West started with a doubleton, he will have to play his ACE and you will have your three tricks, if you decide East has the doubleton ACE, you should reverse this procedure; begin by leading a low card from dummy.

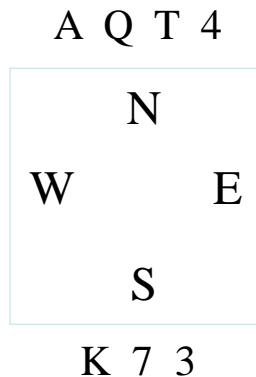
#15. Plays this hand. (Finesse, or to play for the Drop)



X

Your goal here is to win four tricks and, after cashing the king, the question is whether to finesse the TEN or play the ACE-QUEEN and hope the JACK drops. The percentage play is to finesse the TEN. Since the opponents began with seven cards in the suit, the 50-50 chance that the finesse will work is better than the hope that the defender with fewer than four cards has the JACK.

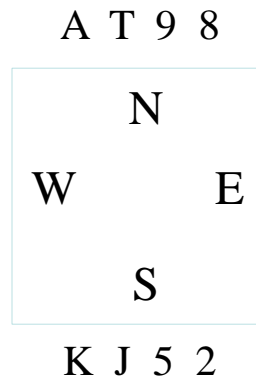
#16. Plays this hand.



X

You cash the ACE and KING and the JACK does not fall. Then you lead toward dummy's QUEEN-TEN and West follows with a low card. Since the opponents began with only six cards, the odds are slightly in favor that East has the JACK; so playing the QUEEN offers a better chance than the finesse.

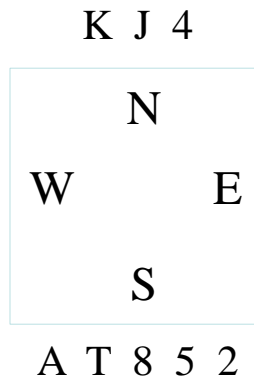
#17. Plays this hand.



X

You have two ways to finesse for the QUEEN and must guess which defender has it, but your first play should be to cash the ACE or KING, in case the QUEEN is singleton. Assuming the QUEEN does not drop, lead toward the remaining honor (KING or ACE) with the intention of finessing is second hand follows suit the a low card. When there are five cards remaining, the odds are strongly in favor of finessing, rather than cashing the ACE-KING and hoping the QUEEN drops.

#18. Plays this hand.

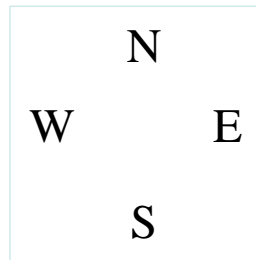


X

This may appear to be another two-way finesse, but the odds favor playing East for the QUEEN because you can run the suit without losing a trick even if he has four to the QUEEN. First cash the KING and then lead the JACK, intending to finesse. If East covers the JACK with the QUEEN, win with shows out, you will return to dummy in a different suit and finesse the EIGHT.

#19. Plays this hand.

A K J T 7 5



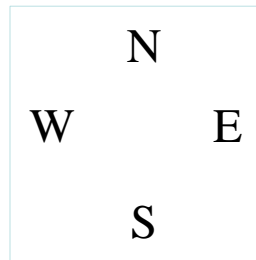
4 2

x

You are missing five cards including the QUEEN and should finesse, but this time **you should not cash the ACE or KING before you finesse**, or else you will be able to finesse only once. If West has Q x x x you will have to finesse twice to pick up the suit, and this holding is much more likely than finding East with a singleton QUEEN.

#20. Plays this hand.

A K J T 7 5



6 3 2

X

Your first play is to cash the ACE (or KING) in case the QUEEN drops or East shows out. If both players follow with low cards, cash the KING and hope that the QUEEN will drop. Holding NINE cards, the odds slightly favor playing to drop and outstanding QUEEN.

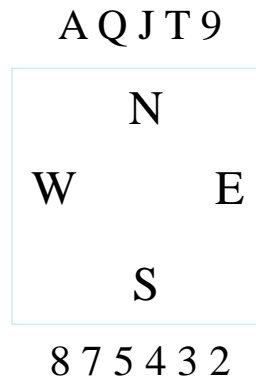
#21. Plays this hand.

A Q J T 9				
N				
W				E
S				
8 6 5 4 2				

2

Suppose you lead a low card from your hand and West follows with a low card. You can avoid losing a trick by going up the ACE if East has a singleton KING, or by finessing if East has a singleton spot card or a void suit. With TEN cards, in the combined hands, there are more combinations where the finesse will succeed; so the odds are substantially in favor of finessing.

#22. Plays this hand.



X

Once again you lead low from your hand, and WEST follows with the missing low card. You can avoid losing a trick by playing the ACE if East has the KING, or by finessing if he is void in the suit. It is almost toss-up, but with eleven cards in the suit the odds slightly favor going up with the ACE; two cards divide 1 – 1 52 percent of the time and 2 – 0 48 percent of the time.

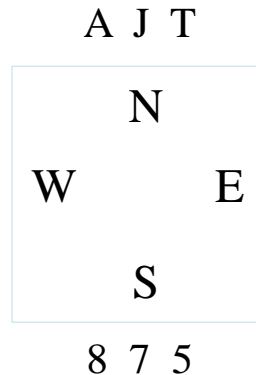
#23. Plays this hand.

A J 9 5 4				
N				
W				E
S				
Q 7 6 3 2				

X

You are missing three cards including the KING, and the percentage ply is to finesse. However, your first play should be to lead the QUEEN to guard against West having KING 10 8. If your first play were low to the JACK, West would have a sure trick if his remaining cards were the KING-TEN.

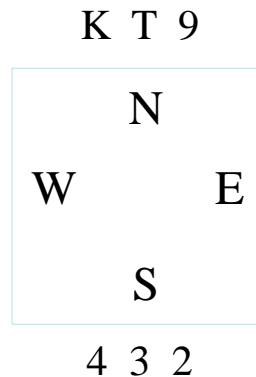
#24. Plays this hand. (Restricted Choice)



X

These odds are based on the **Principle of Restricted Choice**, which states: If you lead a suit in which you are missing two equivalent cards (as the KING QUEEN), the defender who first plays one of them is less likely to hold the other. To illustrate: If in 100 deals East holds the king and queen, he has a choice of plays; he might win the king about 50 times and with the queen about 50 times. If in 100 deals East holds just the king, his choice is restricted; if he wants to win the trick, he must always play the king. Therefore, the fact that he won with king makes it more likely that he did so from a holding without the queen. This reasoning may not convince you, but it is mathematically sound and has proven to be accurate in practice.

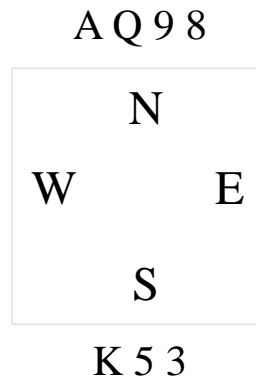
#25. Plays this hand.



X

Your goal is to win one trick and the best play is to finesse through West for the queen and jack. Lead low from your hand and finesse the nine. Suppose East wins the queen or jack, and later you lead low toward the king-ten. Should you finesse the ten or put up the king? It may seem like a tossup, but eh ten is the percentage play. The queen and jack are equivalent cards, so when East plays one of them, West is a favorite to have the other.

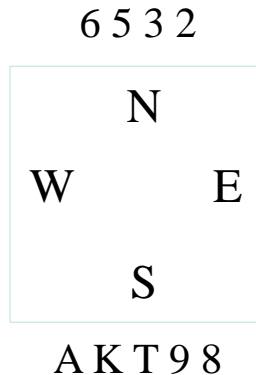
#26. Plays this hand.



x

Your first tow plays should be to cash the ACE and KING. If East does not drop the JACK or TEN, you have no choice but to cash the QUEEN and hope for a 3-3 split. Now suppose East does play the TEN on the second lead, and West follows suit with a low card when you lead toward the QUEEN-NINE. East started with J 10 x or 10 x, and you must decide whether to go up with QUEEN or finesse the NINE.

#27. Plays this hand.



X

Let's assume you cash the ace and west follows with the QUEEN or JACK. Your next play in the suit should be to lead from dummy and finesse East for the missing honor. Since the QUEEN and JACK are equals, the odds are roughly 2-to-1 that East holds the missing honor.

#28. Plays this hand. (Safety Plays)

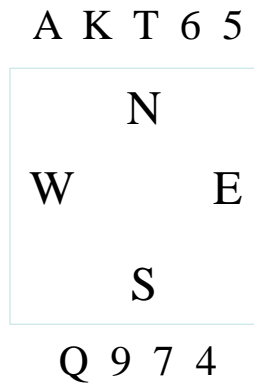
A J 7 6 4																			
<table border="1"><tr><td colspan="5">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="5">S</td></tr></table>					N					W				E	S				
N																			
W				E															
S																			
K 9 8 5 2																			

X

When you play a suit in a manner that guards a bad division of the enemy cards, it is called a “safety play.”

Your first play should be the KING to guard against West have Q 10 3. Only if east has Q 10 3 will you lost a trick, in which case here is nothing you can do about it.

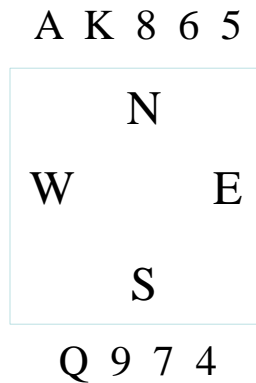
#29. Plays this hand.



X

You can avoid losing a trick no matter how the suit divides if your first is to cash ACE or KING. If either defender shows out, you will be able to finesse the other out of his JACK. NOTE that if you begin leading the QUEEN, you will lose a trick if East holds J 8 3 2.

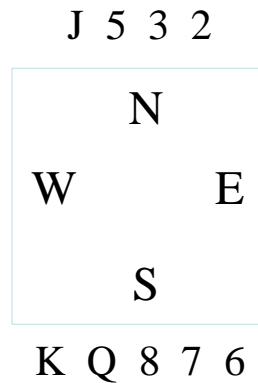
#30. Plays this hand.



X

This looks like the previous example, except now you are missing the TEN and JACK. If your first play is the QUEEN, you can avoid losing a trick if West has J 10 3 2. There is no way to avoid to losing a trick if East has that four cards.

#31. Plays this hand.



x

If West has A T 9 4, here is no way to avoid losing two tricks. If East has A 10 9 4, you can hold your losers to one trick if your first play is the JACK.

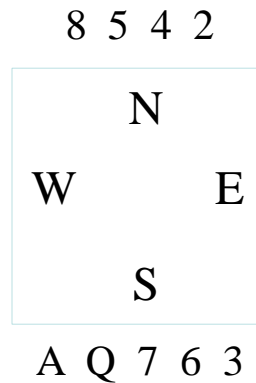
#32. Plays this hand.

Q 8 7 6 5																			
<table border="1"><tr><td colspan="5">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="5">S</td></tr></table>					N					W				E	S				
N																			
W				E															
S																			
A T 4 3 2																			

X

Target is 4 tricks. Lead low to dummy: if East plays the nine, finesse the TEN to guard against his holding K J 9. If East play KING or JACK, win with the ACE. If East show out (West has K J 9), go up with ACE and lead toward dummy's QUEEN.

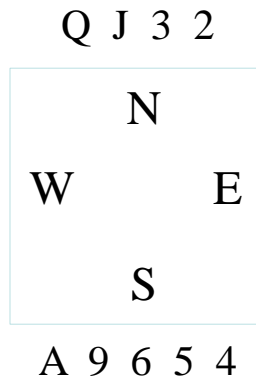
#33. Plays this hand.



X

If you need four tricks to make your contract, there is no sure way – but there is a safety play to improve your chances. Cash the ace – in case West has a singleton king – and, if the king does not fall, cross over to dummy in a different suit and lead toward the queen. Unless West has three card including King, or the suit divide 4-0, you will win four tricks.

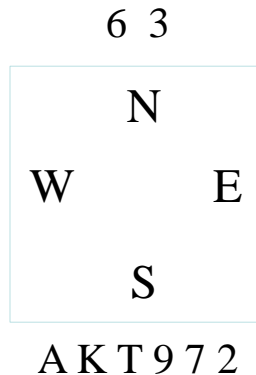
#34. Plays this hand.



X

Target is four tricks. The safety play to insure four tricks no matter how the suit divides is to lead low card from your hand toward the QUEEN-JACK. If you need five tricks in the suit must have doubleton both and East has KING or K 8 7.

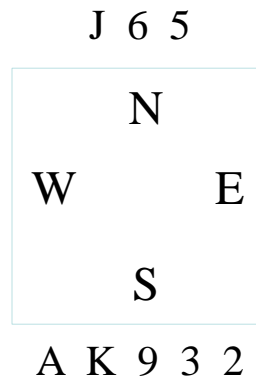
#35. Plays this hand.



X

If your goal is to win five tricks, there is a safety play to guard against any 4-1 break except if West has the QJxx behind you. Start by cashing the ACE or KING. Assuming the Queen or Jack does not show up, cross to dummy in a different suit and lead a low card toward your hand. If East plays low, finesse the ten. If East plays the Queen or Jack, win with the King.

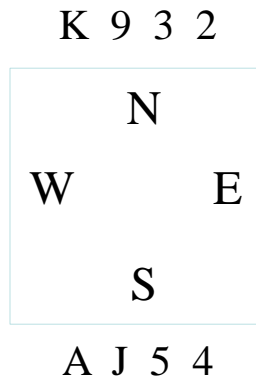
#36. Plays this hand.



?

If you require four tricks, there is a safety play to guard against either defender having Q T x x. Cash the ACE and, if both defenders follow with low cards, lead a low card from your hand toward the JACK. If West shows out on the second lead, you will play the JACK in dummy. East can win this trick with his QUEEN, but you will eventually finesse him out of his TEN.

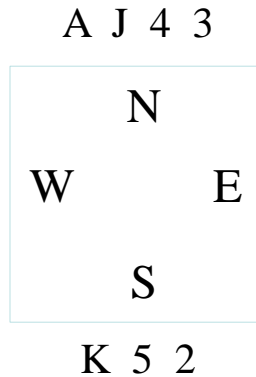
#37. Plays this hand.



A

The target is three tricks. There is a safety play to insure three tricks if either defender has Q T x x. Cash the ACE and lead a low card toward dummy. If West follows with a low card, finesse the nine. If West follows with the TEN or QUEEN, win with the KING. If West shows out, go up with KING and lead toward you JACK.

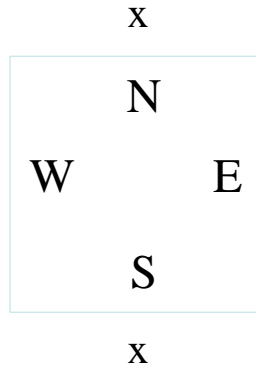
#38. Plays this hand.



A

The target is three tricks. The safety play to give you the best chance to win three tricks is to cash the ACE and KING and then to lead toward the JACK. This play gains when there is a doubleton queen behind the jack.

#1. Plays this hand.



?

Goal:

Play: