

# Common Sense Card Play and Bidding

Keeping You Head in  
the Game

# Guidelines for Card Play

- When you play card combinations, you have learned certain guidelines to help you.
- I will give you some advice that goes beyond the generic advice to help you improve your declarer play.

# Card Combination 1

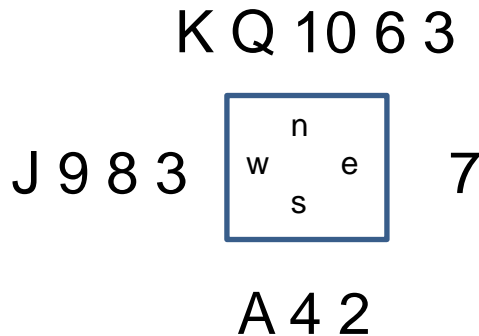
K Q 10 6 3



A 4 2

- The generic way to play this combination is to play the ace first.
- “play high cards from the short side first.”
- Then play to the king and queen.
- When the suit splits 3-2 (the normal split) there is no problem.
- But what if the distribution is...

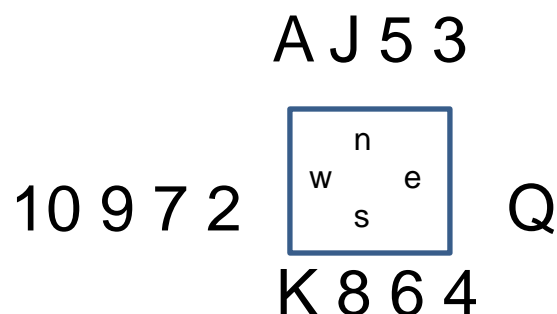
# Card Combination 1



Good declarer play: Ignore those things you cannot do anything about. Prepare to handle those things you can do something about.

- The correct way to play this combination is to play the king first.
- Then play The 3 to the ace. You will learn that west has 4 cards to the jack.
- You can take the proven finesse.
- Of course if east has 4 cards to the jack, there is nothing you can do about it.

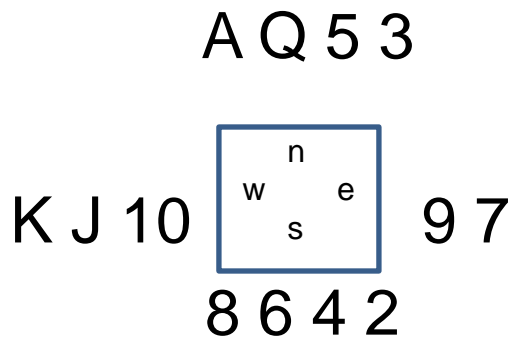
# Card Combination 2



The correct way to play this suit combination is to play the king first..

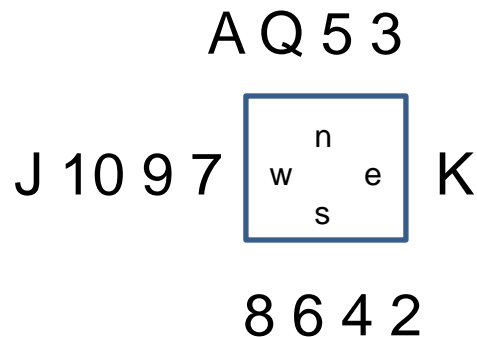
- Here you are going to play low from south and finesse north's jack.
- If west has Q x x, the jack will win and you will take all four tricks in the suit.
- But what if this is the layout?

# Card Combination 3



- With this layout, even if the cards are favorable like this:
- You must lose one trick

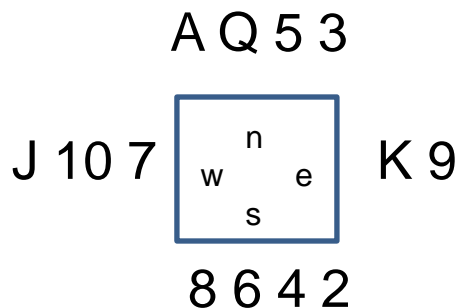
# Card Combination 3



- If this is the layout, you will lose two tricks by taking the finesse first.

The correct way to play this combination is to play the ace first, then come to the hand and lead toward the queen. Whenever the king is with west you will lose only one trick.

# Card Combination 3

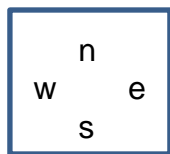


- Let's take this combination one more time.
- Suppose you know, from the bidding, (or are almost certain) the king is with east,
- In that case playing small to the queen would be foolish.
- Best to play the ace then small from north, hoping to find this holding.



# Card Combination 4

A J 10 5 3

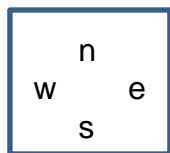


K 9 4 2

- We all know the “*eight ever... none never*” generic advice.
- The odds say play for the drop.
- The choice is so close, 52% to 48%, that any bit of information might help you choose.
- Think about it before you play

# Card Combination 5

A J 10



K 9 4

- Here's another two-way finesse.
- You can try to guess, which opponent has the queen.
- If you guess correctly you get three tricks.
- If your guess is wrong, you get only two.
- There's another option, if you cards allow.
- You can try to end play and force one of your opponents to lead the suit.

# Card Combination 6

A Q J 10



4

- If this is a side suit in a suit contract, you have two ways to play the suit.
- You can play toward the north hand and finesse.
- Or you can play the ace and then lead the queen.
- If east covers ruff and you have promoted the jack and 10.
- If east does not cover discard a loser.
- This is called a ruffing finesse.
- Usually best.

# Card Combination 7

A K J 10



4 3

- You have three ways of playing this combination in a suit contract,
- You can play from south and finesse the 10. If that holds return to the south and do it again.
- You can play the ace and king, hoping the queen will drop, if that does not work, ruff the 10, again hoping the queen drops.
- You can play the ace and king, then treat the jack 10 as a ruffing finesse.
- Which one is best?
- You figure it out from the bidding and play.

# Common Sense Bidding

- We have some generic advice that is often a good idea to follow.
- But you are allowed to use common sense, to ignore that advice when it seems right to do so.
- Let me offer a few illustrations.
- Some of these observations come from bridge writer Robert Todd.

# Consider this Holding

South

♠ 10 7 4 2

♥ A K

♦ K J 10 5

♣ Q 10 8

north east south west

1nt pass ??

- The generic bid of course would be to bid 2♣, Stayman.
- Think about it for a few seconds.
- You have 28-20 points.
- If you find a fit and are going to ruff anything it will be hearts.
- You have two solid tricks there.
- No trump is almost sure to play better than a suit.

# But Change the Holding to....

South

♠ A K 4 2

♥ 5 3

♦ K J 10 5

♣ Q 10 8

north east south west

1nt pass 2♣

- The generic bid of course would be to bid 2♣, Stayman.
- With this hand Stayman might be the right bid.
- You are still going to get to game, but...
- If you find a spade fit, you have some ruffing power.

# One More Practical Bidding Situation

North

♠ A K J 4 2

♥ 5

♦ A Q 10 5 3

♣ 10 8

north	east	south	west
1♠	pass	2♠	pass
??			

- You might see this as an opportunity for a help-suit-game-try.
- Bidding 3♦.
- There are a lot of hands partner might have that would let you make 4 spades.
- Why give information to your opponents.
- Just bid the game and see what you get.



# With This Holding...

North

♠ A K J 4 2

♥ 5

♦ A Q 5 3

♣ 10 8 4

north east south west

1♠ pass 2♠ pass

??

- With this hand, your distribution is not so good, best use the Help-suit-game-try.

# Here's a Judgment Call

north east south west  
pass 2♠ pass ??

West

♠ 4  
♥ K J 8 5  
♦ A Q 9 3  
♣ K 10 9 7

East's hand

♠ K Q J 9 7 3  
♥ 3  
♦ J 6 2  
♣ 8 6 4

- You don't have enough to make a game try.
- If the opponent's bid, you can surely defeat any 3 level contract they make.
- Pass in tempo.
- You'll double any bid they make.
- Don't give away your values.
- Partner's hand might be.