

# EGCC Bridge Lessons

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## Notes from Week 2.

### Recap of week 1

HCPs are: Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1

Types of tricks: Immediate tricks (Off the Top), Knocking out High Cards, Establish a Long Suit

Bridge (at bridge clubs) is a duplicate game. It's not how many tricks you take that counts, but how many you take compared to the other people playing the same cards as you.

### Planning your Play

Working out where your tricks are going to come from.

Both sides (Declarer and Defenders) have the same goal (to take as many tricks as possible) and use the same techniques (Immediate tricks, Knocking out High Cards, Establish a Long Suit).

Declarer must look for dangers. Where might the defense take their tricks and how can they be stopped?

### Finessing

A **finesse** is taking advantage of the position of the cards in the opponents' hands to win a trick cheaply (i.e. with a lower card than the opponents hold).

EXAMPLE: Dummy has **AQ** of a suit, and declarer has **xx** ("x" means a small card).

If you play the **A**, then the **Q**, you will lose the **Q** to the **K**, and only make 1 trick.

Let's assume the player on declarer's left holds the **K**.

Declarer leads a low card. If defender plays the **K**, then dummy plays the **A** and the **Q** will win the next trick. If defender plays a small card then dummy plays the **Q**, which wins the trick. Either way you win 2 tricks. If the **K** is on the right you will only make 1 trick, but have lost nothing by trying the finesse.

### Situations where you can finesse

**AQ** opposite **x**: you will win two tricks if the **K** is favourably placed.

**AQJ** opposite **xx**: you can finesse twice, and will win three tricks if the **K** is favourably placed

**AJT** opposite **xx**: you can finesse twice, and will win two tricks if either the **K** or the **Q** (or both) is favourably placed. You will always lose one trick.

**AQT** opposite **xx**: you can finesse twice. If both **K** and **J** are favourably placed, you will win three tricks. If either is, you will win two tricks. You must play the lowest card from Dummy that can win the trick.

**Ax** opposite **QJ**: lead the Queen and play the **A** only if the **K** appears. You will win two tricks if the **K** is favourably placed.

## Important things about finesses

- They don't always work (but you have lost nothing if they don't)
- If it fails you will lose the lead
- To be able to finesse you need to:
  - Be missing a key card
  - Have a card higher than missing card sitting over it (i.e. in the hand after it)

## Practice

Take a complete suit of cards out of a pack, and arrange them in the finesse positions listed above. Play the cards and look at the choice facing defenders (do I play my King or not)? This will help you to understand how (and why) finesses work.

## Leading towards High Cards

This is a special version of a finesse where you do not hold a card higher than the missing card.

EXAMPLE: Dummy has **KQx** of a suit, and declarer has **xxx**.

If you play the **K**, you will lose to the **A** but then win a trick with the **Q**. One trick won.

Let's assume the player on declarer's left holds the **A**.

Declarer leads a low card. If defender plays the **A**, then dummy plays the low and the **K** and **Q** will each win a trick. If defender plays a small card then dummy plays the **K** (or **Q**), which wins the trick. Declarer can then come back to hand (get the lead in declarer's hand) and lead again towards the **Q**. In either case, two tricks won.

## Numbers

Finessing gives us our first look at probabilities, which play a big part in bridge.

If you are missing one card, there is a 50% chance that it will be in the favourable hand.

If you are missing two cards, there is a 75% chance that at least one of them will be in the favourable hand.

## Which Finesse?

If you have a choice of finesses, but can only do one, choose the one that, if successful, gives you the most extra tricks before you lose the lead.

EXAMPLE: You have **AQJT9** opposite **xxx**.

If you play **A** then the **Q**, you only win one trick before you lose the lead.

If you successfully finesse, you will win 5 tricks before you lose the lead – an **extra 4** tricks.

Now look at **AQxxx** opposite **xxx**.

Again, if you play **A** then the **Q**, you only win one trick before you lose the lead

If you successfully finesse, you will win 2 tricks (A and Q) before you lose the lead – only an **extra** 1 trick.

SO: if you have a choice, and can only take one finesse, take the one that gains you the most extra tricks.

### **Finesses Online**

If you want to look online, [http://www.bridgebum.com/simple\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/simple_finesse.php) and [http://www.bridgebum.com/double\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/double_finesse.php) go into it in more detail.

### **Next Week**

Next week we will revisit finesses, looking at when the Queen is missing, and also look at Communications, including Holding Up and Unblocking

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