



# Sneaking Tricks with Finesse

<b>Basics</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Types of Finesses</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Defense vs Finesse</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>23</b>

# *Basics*

<i>Count</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Timing</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>CashCatering</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>DropTest</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>EntryManagement</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>intermediates</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Theory of Vacant Places</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>CombineChances</i>	<i>5</i>

# Count

*HCP, Distribution, Where's Waldo/Avoidance*

<http://bbi.bridgebase.com/game/game.html>

# Timing

*Delay* As Long as Possible to get a more accurate count

often there is some other **Suit** to work on before trying a *Finesse*

*Sequence* your plays so you will be able to *Finesse* if an opponent *ShowsOut*

*Start* by playing on the **Suit** in which you must *Lose* a trick  
even if the **Suit** behaves as you need it to

# CashCatering

*Cash* one **High Honor** if it does not restrict the ability to *Finesse*

the order in which you *Cash High Honors* is often important

# DropTest

Like "8ever 9never"

*Finesse* or *Drop*

assuming you have no other clues

Divide outstanding cards evenly

Assume the missing **Honor** is in the Long hand

*Finesse* if it will not *Drop*

<p>partner</p> <p><b>Q73</b></p> <p>you</p> <p><b>AKT5</b></p>	<i>Drop</i>	<p>partner</p> <p><b>AQ9862</b></p> <p>you</p> <p><b>T7543</b></p>	<i>Drop</i>	<p>partner</p> <p><b>8543</b></p> <p>you</p> <p><b>AKJ62</b></p>	<i>Drop</i>	<p>partner</p> <p><b>AJ76</b></p> <p>you</p> <p><b>K543</b></p>	<i>Finesse</i>
--	-------------	--	-------------	--	-------------	---	----------------

# EntryManagement

*Transportation*

A lack of entries may force you to lead a high card for a *BackwardFinesse*

when you must retain the lead in the hand opposite the tenace

in order to repeat the *Finesse*

# intermediates

**do not Lead**⇒*toward* an unsupported **Honor** unless you will benefit if the next player **Covers**

**do not Lead**⇒a **High Honor** to **Finesse** when you **do not** have all of the intermediate cards  
Prefer to **Lead**⇒ towards your *tenace*, if the entry position will allow this.

---

## Theory of Vacant Places

aka Theory/Law of Vacant/Empty Places/Spaces

A missing **Honor** is more likely to be with the opponent who holds the greater number of unknown cards

A missing **Honor**

is more likely to be with the opponent who holds the greater number of the missing cards

When an opp shows a LongSuit

opening a Major

opening a weak 2

preempting

carding

finesse their partner in a different suit

When an opp shows a ShortSuit

splintering

showing out

carding

finesse them

When the distribution of one or more **Suits** is completely known,  
the probability that an opponent holds a particular card in any other **Suit**  
is proportional to the number of vacant spaces remaining in his hand.

note: this calculation pertains to the vacant spaces @ the beginning of the hand.

**Do Not** count cards played during the hand that **Do Not** show a specific distribution

---

# Combine Chances

You can often combine chances in more than one **Suit**.  
Sometimes this will mean testing a **Suit** for an even break,  
falling back on a finesse elsewhere if the first **Suit** does not lie favorably.

## odds when you only need one chance to work

$$P_{A \cup B} = P_A + (1 - P_A) \cdot P_B$$

$\cup$  = **Union (or)**

eg.

$$P_A \text{ (finesse)} = 50\%$$

$$P_B \text{ (}\textcircled{3}\textcircled{3}\text{)} = 36\%$$

$$P_{A \cup B} = P_A + (1 - P_A) \cdot P_B$$

$$P_{A \cup B} = .50 + ((1 - .50) \cdot .36)$$

$$P_{A \cup B} = .50 + (.50 \cdot .36) = 68\%$$

$$P_{A \cup B} = .50 + .18 = 68\%$$

Tricks with Finesses p43

## odds when you need both chances to work

$$P_{A \cap B} = P_A \cdot P_B$$

$\cap$  = **Intersection (and)**

eg.

$$P_A \text{ (finesse)} = 50\%$$

$$P_B \text{ (}\textcircled{3}\textcircled{3}\text{)} = 36\%$$

$$P_{A \cap B} = P_A \cdot P_B$$

$$P_{A \cap B} = .50 \cdot .36 = 18\%$$

Tricks with Finesses p44

**Start** by playing on the **Suit** in which you must **Lose** a trick  
even if the **Suit** behaves as you need it to

# *Types of Finesses*

<i>Practice</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Hook</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Lob</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Choice</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Deep</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Obligitory</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>RestrictedChoice</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Intra</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Forcing</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Ruffing</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Backward</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>RoundTrip</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Chinese</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Marked</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>EliminationThrowIn</i>	<i>15</i>

# Practice

taking a risky *Finesse* when you do not need the trick to make your contract

---

## Hook

*Lead* ⇒ a tenace 2 High cards in one hand with an outstanding high card between them

Leading toward your high cards with an outstanding high card  
the most familiar *Finesse*



*Lead* x ⇒ Q 50% chance for 2 tricks

if LHO *Left Hand Opponent* has the K you get 2 tricks

when LHO *Ducks* plays low

you *Play* Q trick 1

then your A is good for trick 2

when LHO *Plays* K

you *Capture* K with the A trick 1

then your Q is good for trick 2

if RHO *Right Hand Opponent* has the K you get 1 trick

when LHO *Ducks* plays low

you *Play* Q

then RHO *Captures* your Q with the K

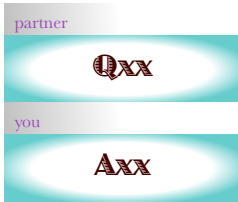
but your A is still good for 1 trick

---

# Lob

**Lead** ⇒ Honor 2 High cards in separate hands with one outstanding high card between them

when the two high cards are in different hands  
you have exactly the same 50% chance for 2 tricks



**Lob** x ⇒ Q 50% chance for 2 tricks

if LHO has the **K** you get 2 tricks

when LHO **Ducks**

you **Play Q** trick 1

then your **A** is good for trick 2

when LHO **Plays K**

you **Duck**

then your **A&Q** are good for 2 tricks

if RHO has the **K** you get 1 trick

when LHO **Ducks**

you **Play Q**

then RHO **Captures** your **Q** with the **K**

but your **A** is still good for 1 trick

if you **Lead** the **Q** you can never get 2 tricks

if RHO has the **K** you get 1 trick

you **Lead Q**

RHO **Covers** with the **K**

you **Cover** with the **A** trick 1

you have no more tricks

if LHO has the **K** you get 1 trick

you **Lead Q**

RHO **Ducks**

you **Duck**

then LHO **Captures** your **Q** with the **K**

your **A** is still good for 1 trick



partner  
**Kx**

you  
**x**

?



partner  
**Jx**

you  
**AKxx**

?



partner  
**Jxx**

you  
**AKxx**

?



partner  
**Jxxx**

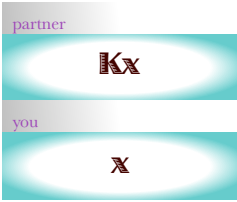
you  
**AKxx**

?



partner  
**QJxx**

you  
**Kxx**



Lob x ⇒ K 50% chance for 1 trick



Lob x ⇒ J 50% chance for 3 tricks



Cash A might Drop ①Q CashCatering

Lob x ⇒ J 50% chance for 3 tricks



Cash A might Drop ①Q CashCatering

Cash K might Drop ②Q CashCatering

Lob x ⇒ J 50% chance for 3 tricks



Lob x ⇒ K 50% chance for 3 tricks

if you Lead the K, Q or J you can only get 3 tricks

with a ③③ split 35%

# Choice

aka *WhichWay* aka *2Way*

You are in a position where you can *Finesse* either opp

*Where's Waldo* from the bidding or previous play

if an opp has shown 5↑ of another Suit, *Finesse* their Partner *Theory of Vacant Places*

if an opp has shown 1↓ of another Suit, *Finesse* them *Theory of Vacant Places*



Cash **A** might Drop 1Q *CashCatering*

*Finesse* J

OR

Cash **K** might Drop 1Q *CashCatering*

*Finesse* T

# Deep

*Lead* ⇒ a tenace 2 High cards in one hand with TWO outstanding high card between them



*Finesse* J

# Obligatory

you have ♣4 with a top Honor & partner has ♣4 with a top Honor

**Cash** a top Honor  
then **Duck** similar to *intra*



**Cash** A  
then **Duck**

**OR**

**Cash** K  
then **Duck**

# Restricted Choice

**Deep Lob** ⇒ a *tenace*

if opp plays an Honor, assume no choice

play of a particular card decreases the probability its player holds any equivalent card.  
consecutive ranks in the same suit, such as ♥QJ or ♦KQ



**Lead** the ♣4

if LHO **Ducks**

**finesse** the ♠

if RHO **Wins** K or Q

**finesse** the T nearly twice as likely to succeed.

The increase or decrease in probability is an example of **Bayesian updating** as evidence accumulates and particular applications of restricted choice are similar to the **Monty Hall problem**.

if you pick door 1

you have a 33% probability

the other two doors have 66% probability

if door 2 is exposed by someone who knows where the prize is

door 3 has 66% probability

# Intra

*Deep Lob* ⇒ a tenace

then *Cash* a top Honor *CashCatering*

# Forcing

aka *Trapping* aka *Running*

*Lead* **H** High cards in one hand with an outstanding high card between them

Must have a sufficient number of High Cards & or Intermediates

# Ruffing

*Lead* **H** High cards in one hand with an outstanding high card

having a possible *Ruff* if LHO *Covers*

# Backward

aka *boL*

*Lead* **H** 2 High cards in one hand with an outstanding high card between them

having an insufficient number of Entries



*Lead* ⇒ AJ9 Twice



*Lead* **J**

if LHO *Covers*

*Win* **K**

*finesse* the **9**

# Round Trip

*Finesse* one opp  
then *Finesse* the other opp on the way back



*finesse* the T  
if it *Wins*  
*finesse* the S

# Chinese

*Lead* H having an insufficient number of High Cards deceiving opps (desperate)



Declarer

*Run* 9

if LHO if LHO *Ducks*

*Duck*

RHO *Wins* K

*Lead* S *cover*

*Lead* 5 *cover* Declarer gets 2Tricks

[http://www.bridgebum.com/chinese\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/chinese_finesse.php)

# Marked

*Lob* ⇒ a tenace after *Winning* a *finesse* or an opp *shows out*

# Secondary

*Lob* ⇒ a tenace after *Losing* a *finesse*

# Elimination Throw In

## End Play

make opp *finesse* himself

**Pull Trump** leaving at least one **T** Trump both in your hand and in the dummy

*eliminate* the **Suits** where the defenders can *exit* safely

*throw them in*

Opp will have to *finesse* himself or concede a *Ruff & Sluff*

**when to use Elimination Throw In**

*frozen suit* one that no one can afford to lead without helping the other side



Declarer

**Cash A**

**Finesse 9**

Declarer gets 2 Tricks

Opp

**Lead x**

**Duck then Win**

Declarer gets 3 Tricks



Declarer

**Finesse J** Opps **Capture J & T**

Declarer gets 1 Trick

**or**

**Lob 6** ⇒ **T** Opps **Capture T & J**

Declarer gets 1 Trick

**or**

**Run T** Opps **Capture T & J**

Declarer gets 1 Trick

LHO

**Lead 7**

**Duck**

**Win or Duck**

Declarer gets 2 Tricks

RHO

**Lead 2**

**Duck**

**Win or Duck**

Declarer gets 2 Tricks

Types

*Frozen*



Declarer

*Lob 6* ⇒ Q Opps *Capture* Q & *Hook* J

Declarer gets 0Tricks

or *Lob 2* ⇒ J Opps *Capture* J & *Hook* Q

Declarer gets 0Tricks

LHO

*Lob 3* ⇒ 9

Declarer *Wins* 1Trick

*Run T*

Declarer *Wins* 1Trick

RHO

*Lob 4* ⇒ T

Declarer *Wins* 1Trick

*Run 9*

Declarer *Wins* 1Trick

*choice*



*avoid a guess*

If you think West has Q

*Cash* K

*Finesse* J

If you think East has Q

*Cash* A

*Finesse* T

Sometimes you will be right, and sometimes wrong.

If East or West leads this suit, you no longer care which one of them has the Q

If RHO *Leads* X

*Duck*

*Win* 3Tricks

*Finesse* T

If LHO *Leads* X

*Duck*

*Cover* or *Finesse* T

*Finesse* J



# Defense vs Finesse

Encouraging declarer to repeat a losing finesse

Rule of 7  
HoldUp 7-#outstanding Cards  
pay careful attention to partner's count signal



Defending a NT contract with no side entry *EntryManagement*

Declarer

**Finesse** ♠

RHO **Wins**

Declarer 4Tricks

Declarer

**Finesse** ♠

RHO **HoldUp** *DuckSmoothly*

Declarer will probably return to **Finesse** ♠ 1Trick





Defending a NT contract

Lead ♠4

Dummy Wins ♠A

Lead ♦s

when do you Win A♦

Declarer may need 4♦ Tricks

Declarer may need ♥ & or ♣ Finesse

Partner Plays 7♦ then 4♦ Declarer has ③♦ *HoldUp Twice to Cut Communications*

Partner Plays 2♦ then 6♦ Declarer has ②♦ *HoldUp once to Cut Communications*

Partner Plays 5♦ then 2♥ Declarer has ④♦ *Does not matter*

## *To cover or not to cover*

you should *cover* if there is a chance that you or your partner has some Lower Card that can be *promoted*

you should *cover* if you can win the trick & you need the *Lead*

you should *not cover* when you think it will cause *Crashing Honors*

often when declarer has Long trumps in both hands

you should *not cover* the 1st of *Touching Honors*

2<sup>nd</sup>Hand should usually *not cover* the **Q** from Closed Hand with **Kx(x)** *cover 2<sup>nd</sup>Lead*

2<sup>nd</sup>Hand should usually *not cover* the **QJxx** from Dummy with **Kx(x)** *cover 2<sup>nd</sup>Lead*

---

	<b>KT62</b>	
<b>Q7</b>		<b>A93</b>
	<b>J854</b>	

Declarer

*Lead* ♠

LHO *Cover or Duck*

Declarer is most unlikely to *Lead* ♠ in this position

He would surely *Lead* 4 ⇒ ♠

	<b>KT62</b>	
<b>Q7</b>		<b>853</b>
	<b>AJ94</b>	

Declarer

*Lead* ♠

LHO *Ducks*

*Win* K

*Finesse* ♠

LHO *Win* Q

---

Declarer	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass



Dummy Trump Suit

*Lead* ♠

East *Ducks*

Declarer *picks up* the Suit

*Lead* ♠

East *Covers*

Declarer *Loses* the ♣



Declarer	Partner	RHO	You
1Major	Pass	1NT	Pass
2Major	Pass	Pass	Pass



Dummy

*Lead* ♠

East *Ducks do not cover*

Declarer *Loses* the ♠

Declarer	Partner	RHO	You
<b>1NT</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>2♣</b>	<b>Pass</b>
<b>2♠</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>2NT</b>	<b>Pass</b>
<b>Pass</b>	<b>Pass</b>		



Dummy

**Lead ♠**

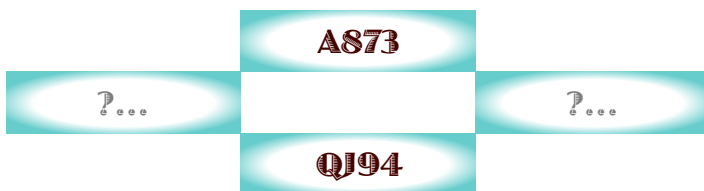
East *cover*

Declarer **AQT9** was always getting **4Tricks**

Declarer **anything Less** *promote* a **Trick** for partner

**do not cover** the first of **Touching Honors**

*cover* only when the last of these **Honors** is **Lead**



Declarer

**Lead Q**

West **Kx** *cover*

Dummy **Win A**

**Run 7**

Declarer gets **4Tricks**

Declarer

**Lead Q**

West **KT(x)** *cover*

Dummy **Win A**

**Run 7**

Declarer gets **3Tricks**

*Putting declarer to a guess*

*give declarer a chance to make a mistake*

*UnBlock*

*avoid an endplay*

# Appendix

## More

Tricks With Finesses (The Bridge Technique Series Q): David Bird & Marc Smith  
Bridge Odds for Practical Players (Master Bridge Series): Hugh Kelsey & Michael Glauert  
<http://www.bridgehands.com/F/Finesse.htm>  
[http://www.bridgebum.com/intra\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/intra_finesse.php)  
[http://www.bridgebum.com/ruffing\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/ruffing_finesse.php)  
[http://www.bridgebum.com/simple\\_finesse.php](http://www.bridgebum.com/simple_finesse.php)  
[http://www.bridgehands.com/B/Backward\\_Finesse.htm](http://www.bridgehands.com/B/Backward_Finesse.htm)  
<http://boardgames.stackexchange.com/questions/8327/different-kinds-of-two-direction-finesses-in-bridge>  
<http://www.bridgesights.com/hondobridge/hondoviewer/hondoviewer.php?sf=watson2-3>  
Andrew Robson Bridge Bulletin March 2012 p45 “count your tricks”

## Legend

↓ = OrFewer, below

↑ = OrMore, above

Σ = combined

**HCP** = High Card Points

**SP** = Support Points

**DP** = Declarer Points

④=③=③=③ = specific distribution ④♠ ③♥ ③♦ ③♣

④③③③ = generic distribution

④♠ **Green** = Good

②③minors **Red** = Bad

3♠ = ... **Red** = Alert

4♠ = ... **Orange** = PostAlert

2♦ = ... **Blue** = Announce

**No guess**

**Best guess**

**ReEvaluation**

**Almost sure**



# count & communicate

give in to your desire for development - Let yourself enjoy the journey  
comfort is a narcotic - always play the hardest game you can find  
teaching teaches the teacher (qui docet discit) - be a mentor

Smile if you notice a mistake - you are on the path

**C**oncentrate & Visualize - taking notes inhibits Visualization

Test yourself - retrieval reinforces Learning

<http://www.bridgeclues.com>  
<http://www.baronbarclay.com>

Make your own FlashCards

**P**actice**R**eview **P**actice**R**eview

pace yourself - review works better after some time

Interleave your study with different topics

Masting does not stick



# ANTs Will Bite You

Automatic Negative Thoughts



# RAID

Recognize ANT's Initiate Development

## Apply Compassionate Curiosity

3Rs

Reflect

Reanalyze

Recover

# I CAN'T'S



# AA

ANT's Anonomous

## 12 steps

Reflect

Reanalyze

Recover

Reflect

Reanalyze

Recover

Reflect

Reanalyze

Recover

Reflect

Reanalyze

Recover