

## F901 Play of the Hand: Lesson 2 Handout

### 1. The Finesse

Last week we discussed how to gain extra tricks by promoting high cards or running a long suit. This week we covered finessing, which simply means winning a trick with a high card when the opponent's have an even higher card, but on the wrong side.

### 2. Examples of a finesse [Each hand shows only dummy/declarer]

- K x / x x: Lead low toward the K
- A Q x / xx: Lead low toward Q
- A x x / Q x x: Cash A, lead low toward Q
- A x x / Q x : Lead low toward Q. Do not cash A first!
- A K x x / J x: If you need a 3d trick, lead low toward J. Do not cash A first!
- K Q x / x x x: Lead low toward Q. If it wins, use entry to lead low again (repeat finesse)
- A Q 10 x / x x x: Lead low, finesse the 10. Get back and finesse the Q.

Remember: Don't automatically finesse. Perhaps your right-hand opponent will break the suit. Maybe you can even throw him into the lead at a point where he has to lead that suit. Is there a higher probability play? Don't finesse to make an overtrick if losing it would cause you to go down.

### 3. More on the Opening Lead

If partner bid, it's usually best to lead his suit:

- Lead top of a doubleton or of longer suit without honors
- Lead top of touching honors
- Lead low with only one honor, except if it's A against a suit contract

Returning partner's opening lead: Usually the best practice, unless you see a clearly better play. For example, if partner's lead is not an honor, and you have no honors in that suit either, don't lead it back unless you think it could have been a singleton or doubleton and declarer hasn't pulled trumps yet. Bridge is a game of inferences. Both partner and declarer should analyze the opening lead: What can you infer from it, both positive and negative?

### 5. Entries

As part of your plan, you often need to get from one hand to the other using entries and you must be sure you have enough of them. Chapter 5 in your textbook discusses entries in detail, but we will not cover it in this course.

### 6. Defense – Second Hand Low

Don't use your high cards to capture declarer's low cards.

Exception: If it is a trump contract and this is a side suit, consider the possibility that declarer's lead is a singleton. Only your and dummy's hands and the bidding can give you a clue, and without a clue, follow the rule.

Exception; Cover an honor with an honor.

Exception: Splitting your honors.

### 7. Next Week: Ruffing and Discarding. Read pp. 113-135