

Which should I play for , the finesse or ...?

You are in 4Sp and the lead is the Q Hrts.

| (declarer) | (dummy) |
|------------|---------|
| AKJxx | xxxx |
| xxx | Axx |
| KQJ | xxx |
| AK | xxx |

To make 10 tricks you will have to play spades such that you don't lose a trick. The choice comes down to "playing for the drop" {hoping the opponents spades break 2-2 } or taking a finesse for the missing Queen of spades.

Most players know that the drop is the better play when there are 9 cards in a suit between the two hands and the Queen is missing; and that conversely , with 8 cards *only*, the finesse is the best play when missing the Queen .

| (declarer) | (dummy) |
|------------|---------|
| AKJx | xxxx |
| xxx | Axx |
| KQJ | xxx |
| AKQ | xxx |

If you ever hear anyone say "*eight ever , nine never* " the finesse or play for the drop for a missing Queen is what is being referred to.

Sometimes the choice is between playing for a 3-3 "break" and a finesse.

Look at these hands: 3NT on a club lead.

| (declarer) | (dummy) |
|------------|---------|
| AQx | xxxx |
| AKQ | xxx |
| AKQx | xxx |
| xxx | Axx |

well you can hold up in clubs if you like { wait when weak } but before long you will have to decide where your 9 th trick is coming from.

The two main options are :

a) a spade finesse or b) a 3-3 diamond break

Which is best { and do be aware that you are unlikely to get two chances to make the contract }; you have to decide from the outset , finesse or break.

The chances are not the same; one is much better than the other.

In fact it is the finesse which should be taken.

A finesse will work 50% of the time.

A 3-3 break will only occur 36% of the time.

