

CARD COMBINATIONS: How to Play by Maritha Pottenger (rev2020)

Combination	# of Tricks Needed	Play
AKJ10 opp xxx	4	Ace, then low to 10.
AKJ10 opp xx	4	Low to 10.
AJ10xx opp xxxx	4	Low to 10; then low to Jack
AQ10x opp Jxx	4	Low to 10; then low to Queen
AJ10x opp Qxx	4	Low to 10; then low to Jack
A10xxx opp K9	4	Low to 9; then Ace, King
KJxxx opp A9	4	Low to 9; then Ace, King
K109xx opp Ax	4	Ace; then low to King
KJ10x opp Axxx	4	Ace; then low to 10
AQ109xx opp x	5	Low to Queen (hoping Jx behind AQ...)
AKJ10x opp xx	5	Low to 10.
AKJ10x opp xxx	5	Cash Ace; then low to 10
J10xxxx opp A	4	Ace; then LOW (need 3/3 or honor-x)
J108xxx opp A	4	Ace, then LOW
A10xx opp Jxxx	2	Ace, then low to Jack
A10xx opp Jxxx	3	Low to 10, then Ace
10xx opp KQxx	3	Lead low toward KQxx twice
10xx opp KQxx	2	Low to Queen; then low to 10.
Axx opp KJxx	3	King, Ace, low to Jack
Axx opp KJxx	4	Ace, low to Jack
AKQ10x opp xx	4	Ace, then low to 10
AKQ10x opp xx	5	Ace, King, Queen With no dummy entry, low to 10 first
A9x opp KJxxx	4	King & low to 9.
A9x opp KJxxx	5	Ace, & low to Jack
J10x opp AK8xx	4	Low to Jack (in case one hand has 5 cards)
J10x opp AK8xx	5	Play Jack toward AK. If it holds, play 10
x opp AJ10xxx	4	Ace, then low card
AJ10xxx opp x	5	Low to 10.
AKQ10xx opp x	5	Low to 10.
AKQ10xx opp x	6	Ace, King, Queen
Qxx opp J9x	1	Low to Queen, low to 9.
Kxx opp J9x	1	Low to King, then low to 9.
K10x opp xxx	1	Low to 10; then low to King.
K108 opp xxx	1	Low to 8; if Jack or Queen appears, low to 10. If 9 takes 8, low to King next time
K109 opp xxx	1	Low to 10; low to 9 (If bidding marks Ace In front of King, play King!) [Restricted Choice]
QJ9 opp xxx	1	Low to Jack, low to Queen. (If bidding says AK behind QJ9, low to 9 2 nd round)
Q108 opp xxx	1	Low to 10, then low to queen. (If bidding Says AK behind QJ8, low to 8 first round)
AJ9 opp xxx	2	Low to 9. If it loses to king/queen, low to Jack next. If LHO plays king or queen, take Ace and play low to 9 next [unless bidding tells otherwise]
Qxx opp A10x	2	Low to queen. If it loses, low to 10.

Jxx opp A10x	2	Low to 10, then Ace
Jxx opp A108	2	Run jack. If loses, low to 10. Covered, low to 8
Axxx opp Q10x	2	Low to 10. If loses, low to queen
Kxxx opp Q10x	2	Low to King; then low to 10
Qxx opp AJ9	3	Play Queen. If covered, return to hand and play Low to 9. If SURE doubleton King in front of AJ9, play low to jack first.
Q1098 opp Axxx	3	Run the 10. If it loses to Jack, Run the queen.
Q109x opp Axxx	3	Ace and low to 10.
K9x opp A10xx	3	Low to 9, then Ace and King
Ax opp J10xxx	3	Ace, then LOW (hoping for doubleton honor) If suit is 3-3, you always get 3 tricks.
Axx opp QJxx	3	Ace, then low to queen. If it wins, back to hand And low toward jack.
Jxx opp AKxx	3	Low to Jack
Jx opp AK9x	3	Low to Jack. If it loses, low to 9.
Jx opp AQ9x	3	Low to Jack. Whether it wins or loses, low to 9
KQ10 opp xxx	2	Low to queen. If it holds, low to 10 UNLESS you are SURE person behind KQ10 would NOT hold up with the Ace
Kxx opp Qxx	2	Try to figure out who has Ace and whether it can be doubleton. If it can be doubleton, play
Kxxx opp Qxxx	3	a low card so that person you think has Ace has to play (Ace or low) as 2 nd person. When your King (or Queen) holds, play a low card from BOTH hands on the 2 nd round of the suit
QJx opp Axxx	3	LOW toward queen; then LOW toward Jack
Jxx opp AQ10x	4	LOW toward AQ10x
Jxxx opp AQxx	4	Low to Queen (Must find King doubleton onside)
KJx opp xxx	1	Cash Ace first. Then low to queen OR low to jack
AK10 opp xxx	3	Low to Jack. Then low to King.
A10x opp Qxx	2	Low to 10 (Odds 3 to 1 against you.)
A1098 opp Qxxx	2	Low to queen. Then low to 10.
A1098 opp Qxxxx	3	Low to 10. Then run queen around.
A1098 opp Qxxxxx	4	ACE. Then low to queen.
QJxx opp Kxx	3	LOW to queen. Low to Jack
AQ10x opp Kx	4	King, then finesse 10.
AQ10x opp Kxx	4	Play for the drop (King/Ace/Queen)
A1098x opp KJxx	4	Play one high honor. Then finesse.
KJx opp A108xx	5	Cash King. Then play Jack (for finesse)
AQJ109 opp xxxxx	5	Finesse for King
AQJ109 opp xxxxxx	6	Play for drop
AJ9xx opp Qxxxxx	5	Lead Queen & finesse (guard against K10x)

When you are forcing out a higher honor in order to promote lower cards, play your cards in such an order that you **retain a finessing position** if one player should show out of the suit. For example, with AK10xx opposite Qxx, play the Ace first, then Queen (so you can finesse 10 if necessary). If you hold Kxx opposite QJ9x, play (low to) the queen first, then the King, so you can finesse the 9 if needed. If you hold J108x opposite Qxx, play

(low to) the Jack and then the Queen, so you can finesse the 8 if necessary. There are SAFETY PLAYS to make with most of these combinations (at IMPS or slam contracts) when you **only need to insure a smaller number of tricks**. That is why **THE SAME combination is played DIFFERENT WAYS**—depending on how many tricks you need. The larger number of tricks would be matchpoint situations. General principles hold: leading low TOWARD honors (to avoid having a lower honor covered by a singleton or doubleton honor of opponents); whether you cash one higher honor before finessing for Queen depends on how many small cards you have with which to finesse. With xx opposite AKJ10, finesse immediately. With xxx, cash one high honor first, etc.