

Eight Ever, Nine Never

Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/EightEverNineNever.pdf>

This alliterative rule is used when one is missing one honour, the queen, in an eight or nine-card fit.

The original English poetry was alliterative meaning that instead of rhyme, alliteration or repetition of the first letter, was used. It was the French (Normans under William the Conqueror in 1066) that introduced the last syllable rhyme as poetry. Sounds reasonable since a lot of French words end in er, ez, et, é, et cetera.

Here is the rule:

Eight Ever, Nine Never

Always (Ever) finesse for the queen with an eight-card fit.

Never finesse with a nine-card fit. Play the ace and king expecting the queen to fall.

As with everything in bridge, there are exceptions and judgment comes once again into play.

Except

- Finesse with nine cards when:
 - The points and the bidding tell you where the queen is
 - You can see one singleton. There is a better than 68% there is another one.
 - Somebody has preempted, play him to have a stiff trump, unless he has shown up with a singleton elsewhere. A person who has led a singleton likely is long in trump and if the player is good, a ruff won't cost a natural trump trick.
 - There is a danger hand then finesse to the other hand
 - danger hand is:
 - a hand that can give partner a ruff
 - a hand that can lead through an unsupported honour of yours
 - a hand that has tricks to cash at notrump

- Do not Finesse with eight cards when:
 - There is a preempt in front of AKJ.
 - Most of the outstanding points are behind AKJ.
 - Missing the 10 and the Jack is not with either the ace or king
 - This would be a losing finesse so do not run the jack through.
 - When you have a four-four fit and want two ruffs in both hands. One must set up the cross ruff before giving the defender with the last trump a chance to draw two trump.
 - Opponents could be ruffing and you want to quickly remove trump
 - An end play is possible and the third round of trump is the throw-in card.
 - The danger hand is behind the AKJx. You cannot let the danger hand win with Qx doubleton. Cash the Ace and King.

- One delays the finesse for the Queen when one:
 - An adverse ruff is unlikely and one has a two way guess for the Queen.
 - Perhaps you can bluff the opponents into leading trump
 - One needs short hand ruffs or short-hand ruff protection.

Other Common Situations

Missing the King

The above alliterative rule does not apply when missing the king

When missing the king, one finesses with ten or fewer cards and one plays for the drop with 11 cards.

Example:

♥A9543

♥QJ10872

Come to the South hand and play the Queen with 100% intention of playing the Ace. Give West a chance to cover if he has Kx of the suit (trump). You will be amazed how often people cover when they should not.

Except when:

- one needs the quick removal of trump
- an end play is possible
- the points are behind the ace or
- a preempt is in front of the ace

Missing the King and Jack

In an eight card fit or smaller fit.

♦ A1032

♦ Q987

Run the 9 through then the Queen. If West shows out, rise with the Ace and run the 10 through. You need the missing spot cards.

In a nine-card fit or longer, Cash the Ace and then play the ten to the Queen.

♥ A1032

♥ Q9876