

Let's look at the example below:

Contract: 3NT by South

Opening Lead: King of hearts

North

Kxx
10x
K109xx
Axx

West

109x
AKx
xxx
J9xx

East

Jxxx
Q8642
xx
Q10

South

AQx
J9x
AQJ
Kxxx

Against three notrump, West leads the king of hearts. East “jumps” for joy at his partner's lead. He should encourage by playing the 8, the highest card he can afford to play. If East had played the 2, he would have indicated that he had no interest in the suit.

NOTE: West sees partner's eight and reads it as a come-on signal. Which card should he play next? THE ACE OF HEARTS!!!!!! He must clear his high cards so that he does not BLOCK the suit (see importance of unblocking from the February 15th class notes). Then he leads his small card to partner's queen, who now cashes her two small hearts and sets the contract.

The Equal Honor Signal

If you have supported partner's suit, then your encouraging signal must be that of the equal honor signal.

West	East
AK753	Q82

When your partner leads the ace, you should play the eight to show that you hold an equal honor, i.e., the queen.

NOTE: A blatant equal-honor signal is that of playing the queen when holding the QJ of the suit.

West	East
AK104	QJ3

One of the most important attitude signals is playing the queen from the Q-J combination when your partner has led from the A-K. By doing so, you tell your partner that he can safely underlead his other high card to “get” to your hand with the jack. The size of the card (suit preference signal—we will look at in a subsequent lesson) which you lead to your partner's jack will be an indication of the suit you want your partner to return. Let's look at the example below:

	<u>North</u>		
	102		
	KQ63		
	742		
	A1076		
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>	
AK84		QJ765	
J10987		542	
_____		98653	
8543		_____	
	<u>South</u>		
	93		
	A		
	AKQJ10		
	KQJ92		

Bidding:	W	N	E	S
				1D
	P	1H	P	3C
	P	4C	P	4D
	P	5C	All Pass	

Partner leads the ace of spades. Holding the Q-J, play the queen. Partner knows that it is safe to underlead his other high honor. Which spade should West lead to his partner's jack? (The four of spades—a suit preference signal asking for a diamond return by East.) By looking at the five diamonds in his hand, the three in the dummy, and from the bidding, East knows his partner is VOID in diamonds. At trick three, East leads the three of diamonds for the “killing” ruff. Isn't this great fun; but, so very painful for poor declarer!

But, you must be careful not to signal if you hold the queen-doubleton in the suit led by your partner. Let's look at the example below:

NORTH	
D. xxx	
WEST	EAST
D. AK10xx	D. Qx
SOUTH	
D. Jxx	

South is in a four spade contract. When West leads the king of diamonds, East must NOT play the queen of diamonds. Of course, he is anxious to ruff the third round of diamonds; but, his partner may think he has the jack of diamonds and underlead his ace of diamonds—resulting in a disaster!

Discard Signals

Signals may be given when not following the suit being led. The standard discard system is as follows:

- *The discard of a low card in a suit implies weakness in that suit; and, a discard of a high card implies strength in the suit and asks partner to lead that suit should he be on lead.
- *When discarding, you play first a high card and then a low card to draw your partner's attention to that suit. You are asking that it be led at your partner's first opportunity to lead it. For example, if your first discard in a suit is the six and then the four, you are telling your partner that you want it led at his next opportunity. But, if you play the four and then the six, you are saying that you have nothing in that suit. Partner, pick another suit to lead.
- *If you signal by discarding in your suit, you will be shortening it considerably. If you do not wish this, as for example at a notrump contract where you want to retain as many cards as possible in your strong suit, then you can signal by **inference**.

Let's look at the following example: S. none H. AK1086 D. 9643 C. 8752

The contract is 3NT. Suppose that spades are being run by the declarer to which you cannot follow. Obviously, you want a heart lead by your partner. You tell him this by first discarding a low club (I don't like clubs!) and then a low diamond (I don't like diamonds!). By this time, your partner should be able to figure out that you prefer that he lead a heart at his first opportunity.

You would like to signal for a heart lead; but, you don't want to “waste” a heart by playing your eight or ten of hearts. By playing a low club and a low diamond, you are signaling by inference that you want a heart led if partner gets on lead.

NOTE: If it is imperative that you want partner to lead hearts, don't signal by inference. Rather shout this information to partner by discarding the ten of hearts!

Signaling with Honor Cards

NOTE: Never signal with an honor card that might later take a trick. However, when your honor card can not possibly win a trick and must fall, there is no objection to signaling with it. Note: This situation is different from the equal honor signal where you have supported your partner. (See Page 2.)

For example: Dummy
 S. Q74

West		East
S. AK??		S. J2

Here, hearts are trumps and West leads the ace of spades. What card should East play? He is anxious to ruff the third card in the suit. He should play his jack at trick one. The jack cannot possibly win a trick. Partner will continue with the king of spades on which East plays the two. Now East can ruff the third round of spades. If East does not play the jack at trick one, West will probably discontinue the suit for fear of setting up the queen in the dummy for a discard. More importantly, the spade ruff is lost to the defense. NOTE: West has to be careful not to underlead his king of spades in this situation. He can “see” the queen in the dummy.

But let's look at another example:

	Dummy	
	S. 1043	
West		East
S. KQ765		S. J2
	Declarer	
	S. A98	

Here, when West leads the king of spades (hearts are trumps), East must not play the jack because that card might win a trick. Partner's lead may be from the KQ; in which case the jack cannot be spared.



Asking for a Shift

When partner leads an honor card and you have an equal honor—yet you don't want him to continue the suit—play the lowest card you have. You want him to switch to another suit. Perhaps you have a void or you hold the AQ sitting over dummy's king.

	North		
	843		
	765		
	KJ9		
	AQJ4		
West		East	Bidding: W N E S
1072		J9	
KQ9		AJ832	1H 1S
862		AQ104	2H 2S P P
K763		52	P
	South		
	AKQ65		
	104		
	753		
	1098		

West leads the king of hearts. How do you tell him you want a switch? By playing the two of hearts. Hopefully, by looking at the dummy, he will “find” the diamond shift.

Let's look at one further example of signaling with an honor. When you signal with a high honor such as the ace, king or queen, you **promise** the honor just below it; and you **deny** the honor just above it.

DUMMY	
xx	
753	
AJxx	
Jxxx	
	EAST
	VOID
	KQJx
	10xxx
	Qxxx

The contract is four spades. The opening lead is the king of clubs which is ruffed by South. When spades are led, which card should East discard? The king of hearts. West will know that his partner holds a sequence below the king of hearts; but, that he does not hold the ace in the suit.

Recommend reading: Eddie Kantar's Modern Bridge Defense
 Eddie Kantar's Advanced Bridge Defense

Card Combinations

In the following three hands, you are missing the queen. How do you play each to maximize the number of tricks you can win?

Hand 1. AJ54

Hand 2. AKJ105

Hand 3. AKJ105

K32

432

32

In Hand 1, cash the king and finesse the jack. In Hand 2, cash either the ace or the king, come to your hand in another suit and finesse the jack. In Hand 3, finesse the jack or ten right away. The queen fourth on your left is more likely than a stiff queen. NOTE: If you are in a three notrump contract and have no outside entries to the dummy, you may want to consider doing what is called a safety play. Finesse the jack the first time you play the suit. If the suit breaks badly, you will give yourself a better chance to make at least four tricks in the suit.

See if you can spot which card you need to play in the following hand.

	Dummy	
	QJ10	
	K742	
	AQ	
	KQJ9	
West		East
AKxx		83
?		QJ10
		KJ875
		852
	South	
	?	

Against four hearts, partner leads the spade king. Which card do you play? Be careful!

Answer:

Play the three of spades. You do not wish your partner to continue spades and give you a ruff. Remember the lesson on NOT trumping with a natural trump trick (refer to January 25th lesson),

You want your partner to switch to a diamond so that you can get your king, a trump trick and partner's two spade winners. It is imperative for your partner to make the switch at trick 2. If declarer gets his clubs set up for the discarding of losing diamonds, you may not get the king of diamonds. Hopefully, your partner will realize that you want the diamond switch.

Next Week's class will focus on the **count signal**.