

As a defender, when should you cover an honour with an honour ? This is a situation where many less experienced defenders are prone to go wrong. Look at this layout :

QJ102 (dummy)

K643 (you)

Dummy leads the Queen. Should you cover with the King ?

The purpose of covering an honour with an honour is to try to promote a card for your side that might be able to win a later trick. Here, if you cover with the King, all you are doing is promoting dummy's Jack and ten ... so you should not cover. The full layout of the suit might be this :

987

A5                      QJ102 (dummy)

K643

By covering with the King, you allow declarer to win three tricks in the suit. If you don't cover, declarer will win a trick with the Queen, and a second trick with the Ace, but there's no third trick.

Normally, the time to cover dummy's honour card when it is led from a sequence is when it is the *last card* of the sequence. On the layout above, you don't cover the Queen, nor do you cover the Jack. Keep your King until the ten is led – the last card of dummy's sequence.

Another example :

J73 (dummy)

A1082                      Q95

K64

The Jack is led from dummy – should you cover ?

Yes. There is no sequence of honour cards in dummy so you *should* cover the Jack with your Queen. If you don't, declarer might run the Jack round to partner's Ace, establishing his King as a later trick. If you cover with the Queen, declarer won't win a trick in the suit.

Here is board 14 from Shoreham (28th May) :

	A87	
	QJ1093	
	Q9	
	Q54	
K643		95
A		8762
AKJ83		10754
1062		K83
	QJ102	
	K54	
	62	
	AJ97	

West opened One Diamond third in hand. North overcalled One Heart, East Passed and South bid Two Diamonds, a conventional bid showing a good raise in hearts. West decided to mention his second suit and bid Two Spades. North Passed and East gave preference to West's first suit with Three Diamonds. With neither side vulnerable, South decided to compete with Three Hearts and that ended the bidding.

East led the nine of spades, declarer called for dummy's Queen and West ? Well, West should have played low. Covering with the King stood to gain nothing. Declarer was sure to have the Ace because East would not lead the 9 if he held A9 or A9x. By covering with the King, all West succeeded in doing was to promote dummy's Jack and ten.

Declarer won the first trick with the Ace and knocked out the Ace of hearts. West could cash two diamond tricks but there were no more tricks for the defence. Declarer drew trumps, took a winning club finesse and discarded his third club on dummy's established spade winner to finish with ten tricks.

Enjoy you bridge