

# The Exciting World of Bridge – Lesson 15

## Defensive Signals and More

### Introduction

Tonight we are going to recap last week's lesson and look a little more in-depth at the times that you should signal with suit preference rather than attitude.

### Suit Preference

There are two specific times that you should be able to realize that you can/should show suit preference. In practice these times should be fairly easy to recognize because they are times when it is obvious that you wouldn't be giving an attitude signal.

The first is when you are giving your partner a ruff. The card you lead at the time that you are giving them their ruff can be suit preference for what you would like to see your partner lead back to you. See the below example:

	♠AJT72	
	♥Q986	
	♦T7	
	♣AK	
♠Q5		♠84
♥4		♥AKT2
♦KJ942		♦A853
♣J9632		♣T84
	♠K963	
	♥J753	
	♦Q6	
	♣Q75	

North opened 1♠ which South raised to 2♠ which ended the auction. East leads the ♥A and next plays the ♥K. On the second trick West plays the ♦2 (I like diamonds). At trick three, East will play a third heart knowing that West will be able to ruff it. What heart should they play? East should play the ♥10 telling West that they think a diamond return is best. If East had instead wanted a club returned, they should play the ♥2.

The second example is what I call "the obvious switch". Let's switch just a few cards from the previous example:

♠Q5	♠AJT72	♠84
♥J753	♥Q98	♥AKT62
♦KJ9	♦T73	♦A85
♣J963	♣AK	♣T84
	♠K963	
	♥4	
	♦Q642	
	♣Q752	

This time North/South bid 4♠ instead of just 2♠. Again East starts with the ♥A but this time both defenders can see that Dummy has a singleton heart. Is there any point in West telling East their “attitude” about hearts? Obviously not and it’s also obvious that East should be switch suits for trick two. Since West isn’t going to give an attitude signal at trick one, they instead give a suit preference signal. West should play a high heart (the seven should do but even the jack isn’t a bad idea) on trick one. This tells East “From where I’m sitting, I think a switch to diamonds is best.” If East plays anything but a diamond at trick two, 4♠ will be made.

## Hand 1 – Defensive Holdup

	♠J62	
	♥AK75	
	♦Q4	
	♣AK63	
♠Q95		♠KT74
♥Q94		♥J832
♦K65		♦83
♣QT82		♣J75
	♠A83	
	♥T6	
	♦AJT972	
	♣94	

North is the dealer and opens 1NT. East and West will pass throughout. South knows their side should be in game so with no four card or longer major, they simply respond 3NT. East is on opening lead and decides to lead the ♠4, fourth best from their longest and strongest suit.

Assuming Declarer plays a low spade from Dummy, West should play the ♠Q on trick one (3<sup>rd</sup> hand high). West should return the ♠9 (top of their remaining doubleton). On the second or third trick, Declarer will win the ♠A.

Declarer can see that they need to establish diamond tricks. If the ♦K is onside, they could possibly win all six of Dummy's diamonds. Even if it's offside, Declarer can still see 5 diamond tricks coming to them.

The key play is that West must NOT win their ♦K on the first diamond trick. If they wait until the second time, Declarer can't get back over to Dummy's good diamonds.

## Hand 2 – Careful Discards

	♠J974	
	♥A5	
	♦T7	
	♣J9542	
♠865		♠AKQ3
♥KQJ		♥742
♦AQ83		♦K52
♣KQT		♣A76
	♠T2	
	♥T9863	
	♦J964	
	♣83	

East is our Dealer and opens 1NT. West decides that their partner has been playing well today so they simply decide to respond 6NT. South leads the ♥T.

South needs to guard diamonds, North needs to guard spades and at this point they probably think they need to guard clubs as well. How can North decide which cards to discard and which to keep? By carefully watching what cards their partner and Declarer play.

Let's look at how Declarer would PLAN this one. Declarer has three sure winners in spades, diamonds and clubs. They also have two heart winners once the ♥A has been driven out. Declarer can see that they could get a 12<sup>th</sup> winner in either spades or diamonds as long as one of those suits is divided 3-3.

North needs to pay very close attention when Declarer starts to play their winners in either black suit. If Declarer starts to play their club winners, North needs to note that South has two clubs. This means the Declarer only started with three clubs – no need to guard that suit!

### Hand 3 – Make Declarer Guess

	♠AJ862	
	♥KQ7	
	♦AQ	
	♣A85	
♠9		♠T3
♥J83		♥A654
♦JT963		♦8542
♣9642		♣JT3
	♠KQ754	
	♥T92	
	♦K7	
	♣KQ7	

South deals and opens 1♠. East and West will pass throughout. North was so pleased with his defense on the last hand that they decide to just jump to 6♠. South gulps, West leads the ♦J and North lays down the Dummy.

East, holding the ♥A needs to consider where their side might find a second trick. West might have a heart or a club trick. What should East do when Declarer plays a small heart to Dummy's ♥K? East should DUCK (unless they think Declarer has a singleton heart)! This deceptive play will lead Declarer into thinking that West has the ♥A. If instead East wins the ♥A, Declarer will have no other hope than to finesse West for the ♥J which is going to work. Give Declarer a chance to go wrong.

## Hand 4 – A Trump in Time

	♠743	
	♥QJ75	
	♦KQT6	
	♣K9	
♠KJ952		♠QT8
♥A8		♥K963
♦982		♦J5
♣A75		♣J642
	♠A6	
	♥T42	
	♦A743	
	♣QT83	

West deals and opens with 1♠. North passes and East responds with 2♠. This is followed by three passes thus ending the auction. The contract is 2♠ by West, North leading the ♦K.

On trick one, South plays the ♦3, an encouraging signal. Since South said they like the diamond lead, should North automatically continue diamonds at trick two? No, once North sees the doubleton diamond in Dummy they should realize that Declarer is probably going to try to ruff any losing diamonds. The best thing to do at trick two is to switch to a trump.

Now the spotlight goes over to South. South must now win their ♠A and continue with the ♠6 – thus drawing two of Dummy's three trumps. Are the defenders finished with needing to be careful? No, if at some point Declarer calls for a diamond from Dummy, South needs to make sure they DO NOT play their ace. North needs to win the second diamond trick so that they can finish pulling Dummy's trump. If South wins it, they have no more trumps to play.