

§66. McKenney Suit-preference Signals 1. Suit Contracts.

Notes on the basic principles to be taught in this section.

- This section is all about giving ruffs in a suit contract and then finding partner's entry.
- The signals used are called McKenney or Lavinthal (or even "standard" in the USA)
- When giving ruffs, a high card asks for the higher of the remaining suits, a low card for the lower.

Four hands need preparing (Overleaf). They are all full deals.

Hand 1. (Appears as Hand 1 in the student notes, rotated 90°). North plays in 3♥; East leads the ♠A.

This deal gives West a problem at trick four.

After ♠A K and another Spade, ruffed by West, what should West lead? (*Note that West signals high-low on the ♠A, so East knows he can give him a Spade ruff*).

The solution is which card East leads at trick three – the ♠9. This is the essence of a McKenney suit-preference signal, calling for the higher of the two remaining suits (Diamonds and Clubs in this instance).

Hand 2. (Appears as Hand 2 in the student notes, rotated 180°). East plays in 4♠; South leads the ♣3.

This deal gives South a problem at trick three.

How can North recognise the ♣3 lead as a singleton? (*Because North can see all the Club honours, and we don't lead the lowest card from a poor suit*). With the ♦A as entry, North must return the ♣2 at trick two as a suit-preference signal for a Diamond return.

Hand 3. (Appears as Hand 1 in the student notes, rotated 90°). South plays in 4♥; West leads the ♠3.

How can East recognise the ♠3 lead as a singleton? (*Because the lead of dummy's suit is generally a poor choice*). As East's entry card is the higher of the remaining suits (Clubs and Diamonds) he should return the ♠9 at trick two for West to ruff.

Hand 4 (appears as Hand 4 in the student notes) West plays in 4♥; North leads the ♠5.

This slightly jokey hand shows that you have to keep your eyes peeled and study the small cards.

After a Spade lead to the ♠A, South returns the ♠4 as his highest Spade for a Diamond return (the higher of the two remaining suits). If North lazily assumes that the ♠4 is a low Spade the defence will falter.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Hand 1</p> <p>North plays in 3♥; ♠A lead.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ 7 6 4 ♥ K 10 8 6 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ A K Q</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ A K 9 2 ♥ J 3 ♦ A Q 6 3 ♣ 6 4 3</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ 8 5 ♥ Q ♦ J 10 7 5 2 ♣ J 10 7 5 2</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ A 9 7 5 4 ♦ 9 8 ♣ 9 8</p> </div> </div>	N	W E	S	N	W E	S	<p style="text-align: center;">Hand 2</p> <p>East plays in 4♠; ♣3 lead.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A 5 3 2 ♣ A 10 7 6 2</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ A K Q J 10 9 ♥ A 10 ♦ 10 ♣ 9 8 5 4</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ 8 7 6 2 ♥ K Q J ♦ K Q J ♣ K Q J</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>♠ 4 3 ♥ 9 8 7 6 4 ♦ 9 8 7 6 4 ♣ 3</p> </div> </div>	N	W E	S	N	W E	S
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