

False Carding by Declarer

As declarer you can play any card that you wish. You have no reason to communicate what your holding is to your partner, as you would as a defender. Deceit is the name of the game. This is the one area in bridge where you want to purposely lie and try to confuse the opponents. As declarer a false card is any card that you play that is not the lowest in the suit if you are not going to win the trick or if you are going to win the trick, the lowest card that will do so.

As declarer, you may want to false card in order to do the following:

- a) confuse the defenders about the distribution of a suit
- b) confuse the defenders about the location of high cards in a suit
- c) make it difficult for the opponents to read their signals

Confuse the opponents about the suit distribution -

You are playing in a suit contract and LHO leads the ace. You have the J43 in the dummy and the Q8 in your hand. Assuming that your objective is only to avoid two losers in this suit, you should play the queen. If LHO thinks it is a singleton and he has the king, he may not lead the suit again because it will set up the jack.

You are playing in a suit contract and LHO leads the ace. You have the Q43 in the dummy and the J87 in your hand. You play low on the first trick. LHO then plays another card in the suit, you play low from the dummy, and RHO plays the king. You

should play the jack. If this lead was from a doubleton ace, you do not want your RHO to continue the suit.

Confuse the opponents about the location of the honors- You are playing in a suit contract and LHO leads the 3 of a suit. The dummy has the KJ852 and you have the QT9. You can tell that this lead is a singleton. How can you make it hard for RHO to win the ace and return the suit. Play low from dummy. Playing an honor guarantees that he will take the ace and return the suit. Which card do you play from your hand? **Smart** declarers would play the lowest card, the nine. RHO can see all the cards in the suit except the QT. Either his partner or declarer has both. Why? If they were split, partner started with two cards in the suit and would not have led the low card. If declarer had the singleton nine he would have played the jack from the dummy for a finesse at trick one. Thus, declarer started with 3 cards and the opening leader one card. **Smarter** declares play low from dummy and play the queen under the ace. This may look much more like a singleton than the nine to your RHO. But, again, an alert defender would notice that if the queen were actually a singleton, partner had T93. In that case he would have led the ten and not the 3. **Smartest** declarers would play low from dummy and play the ten. Look what this does to RHO. The missing cards are the Q9. If partner had Q93, he would have led the 3. And since declarer has the ten he would play low from dummy to take a finesse at trick one. RHO must guess who has three and who has one.

Make it difficult for the opponents to read their signals-
You are playing in a suit contract and LHO leads the ace of a side suit. The dummy has 985 and declarer has Q62. You play low from the dummy and RHO plays the 3. You know this is his lowest card. He does not want this suit continued because he does not have the king. If you play the 2, your LHO will also know all of this. But, if instead, you play the 6 then LHO will notice that the 2 is missing. If his partner has that card, he may well have been encouraging a continuation of this suit with the Q32. With that holding the 3 would be as high a card as he could afford. A smart opponent may not fall for such a devious ploy, but let's give him a fair opportunity.

RULE: As declarer, when following suit with spot cards that are not going to win the trick, if you want to "encourage" the opponents to continue the suit, play a higher card. If you want them to not continue the suit play a lower card.