Suit Preference Signals
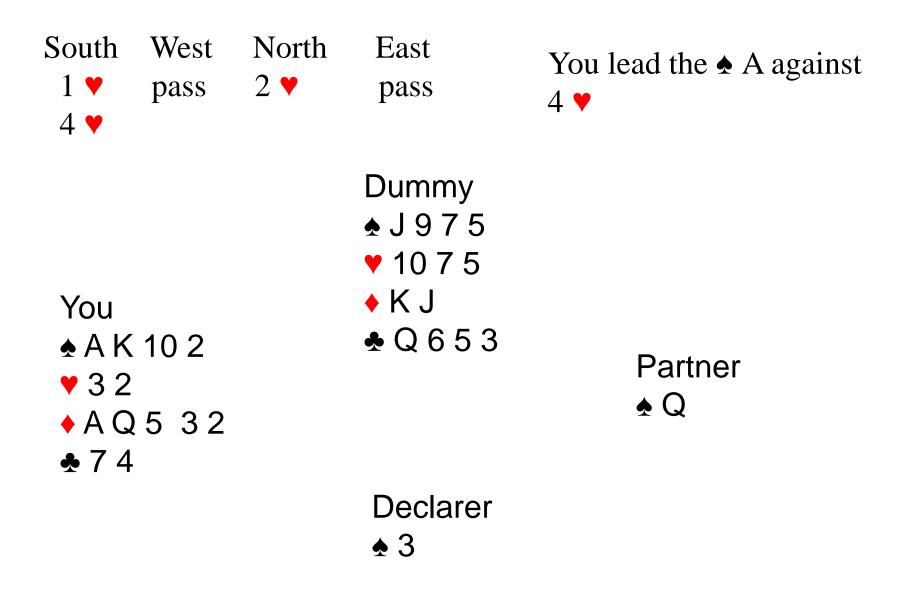
Suit Preference in Suit Contracts

- When partner leads an honor card, you play a low card to suggest that if partner wins the trick, she should shift to another suit.

- With an attitude signal, you suggest a shift, but you cannot tell partner what suit to play.

- Partner is supposed to figure out what suit to play, from the dummy and the bidding.

- With a suit-preference signal, you actually tell partner which suit you want her to lead.

Suit-Preference Situations

- There are three suit-preference situations you should be familiar with.
  - When you are giving partner a ruff (by far the most common)
  - When partner leads an obvious singleton.
  - When it is clear from dummy's cards that a switch is necessary.
    - Dummy has a singleton of the suit partner leads.
    - Partner leads the ace of a suit he has bid and you have supported and dummy has two or more good tricks in that suit.

Giving Partner A Ruff

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥	pass
4 ♥			

You lead the ♠ A against 4 ♥

Dummy
♠ J 9 7 5
♥ 10 7 5
♦ K J
♣ Q 6 5 3

You
♠ A K 10 2
♥ 3 2
♦ A Q 5 3 2
♣ 7 4

Partner
♠ Q

Declarer
♠ 3

North	East	South	West
1 ♦	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	

You lead the ♦ ace, thinking if you don't play it you might lose it. Partner's ♦ 3 looks like a singleton.

Dummy
♠ A K 10 9
♥ A 7 3
♦ K Q 7
♣ 7 5 3

You
♠ 7
♥ K J 8
♦ A 9 8 6 5 4 2
♣ A 6

Partner
♦ 3

Declarer
♦ 10

Partner Leads an Obvious Singleton

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	pass	2nt	pass
3 ♦	pass	4 ♠	

Partner's 3 is surely a singleton. You cannot win the trick, but you can show partner how to reach your hand, if he has an trump entry.

Dummy

♠ K J 6 2
♥ Q 10 9 7
♦ Q
♣ Q J 7 5

Partner

♥ 3

You

♠ 9 3
♥ 8 6 5 4
♦ A 10 7 4 2
♣ 9 6

Declarer

♥ K

South	West	North	East
1 nt	pass	4 ♦	pass
4 ♥	pass	pass	pass

Partner leads the ♠ A, then the 2. Surely that is a doubleton. Partner wants a ruff. You cannot win the trick, but you hope partner has a trump trick, You tell him how to reach your hand. You do this by playing your lowest spade, when partner plays the ♠2.

Dummy
♠ 10 4 3
♥ Q J 10 8 6 5
♦ Q 6
♣ 5

Partner
♠ A - 2

You
♠ 9 8 7 5
♥ 9
♦ K 8 5 3
♣ A 9 7 4

Declarer
♠ 6 - J

When it is Obvious that a Switch is Necessary

South	West	North	East
3 ♠	pass	6 ♠	pass

Clearly, there is no point in continuing hearts…. Play your jack to tell partner to shift to a diamond.

Dummy
♠ A Q 6
♥ 5
♦ A K 7 5 2
♣ A Q J 10 9

Partner
♥ A

You
♠ 8 7 5
♥ J 9 7 4 3
♦
♣ 8 7 5 4 3

Declarer
♥ 8

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1nt	2 ♥	4 ♠

Clearly, there is no point in continuing hearts…. Play your jack to tell partner to shift to a diamond.

Dummy
♠ K J 6 3
♥ K Q 5
♦ K 9 4
♣ K J 10

You
♠ 8 7
♥ J 9 7
♦ A Q J 3
♣ 8 7 5 4

Partner
♥ A

Declarer
♥ 2

Giving Suit Preference Signals When You Cannot Follow Suit

Types of Suit-Preference Signals, When You Cannot Follow Suit

- ***Suit-preference signals are given on the first discard*.**

- Standard signals: The discard of an unnecessarily high card says you have a preference for that suit.

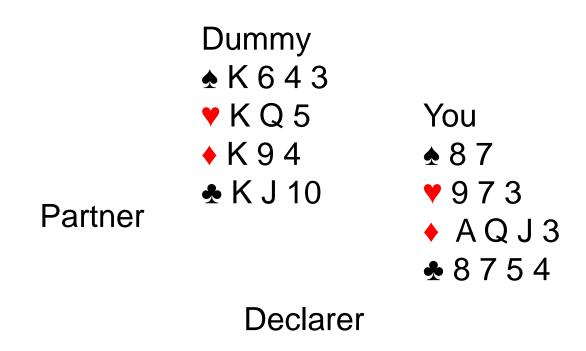- The disadvantage is you may have discarded a card that could take a trick.

Types of Suit-Preference Signals, When You Cannot Follow Suit

- <u>Odd-Even Discards</u>: The discard of an odd card (3 5 7 9) tells partner that you like that suit and want partner to lead that suit.

- The discard of an even card (2 4 6 8) tells partner that you don't like that suit and the size of the card suggests which of the two remaining suits you do like.

- Disadvantage is that you may not have an odd card in the suit you like.

- You cannot not signal.

Types of Suit-Preference Signals, When You Cannot Follow Suit

- <u>Lavinthal Discards</u>: You discard a suit you don't like.

- The size of the card discarded suggests which of the other two suits you do like.

- The discard of a 5, 6, or 7 suggests no preference.

- Disadvantage: you can always be dealt a hand which has no cards that can provide a clear signal.

South is playing a spade contract. Declarer wins the opening lead and plays the spade ace and a spade to dummy's jack, then the king of spades. You will play the ♣ 4, to tell partner that you don't like clubs or hearts but you want a diamond switch, if she is able to get in the lead.

Dummy
♠ K 6 4 3
♥ K Q 5
♦ K 9 4
♣ K J 10

You
♠ 8 7
♥ 9 7 3
♦ A Q J 3
♣ 8 7 5 4

Partner

Declarer

South is playing no trump. After winning the spade lead in hand, declarer begins running diamonds. On the 4ᵗʰ diamond you discard the ♣9, to tell partner to lead a heart if he regains the lead.

Dummy
♠ K 7 6 3
♥ K 5
♦ K Q 10 9 5
♣ K J

You
♠ 8 5 4
♥ A Q J 9
♦ 4 3
♣ 9 7 5 3

Partner

Declarer