

Signaling Attitude On Defense



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Attitude Signals

- Attitude signals are the most common signals in bridge.
- Whenever partner leads an honor card, you are expected to give an attitude signal.
 - A low spot card is discouraging.
 - A high spot card is encouraging.
- But, partner must play the cards she was dealt and those cards may not always make a clear signal.

Partner Leads an Honor Card

- You don't like it but your holding is 9 8 7. you play the 7. What is partner to think?
- You like partner's lead, but the cards you were dealt are Q 3 2. You play the 3 (the highest card you can afford to play). What is partner to think?
- We come to the conclusion that:
 - We cannot always tell partner's attitude by looking at the card he plays.
 - We must look below the card and try to work out partner's attitude.

You Lead the ♠ K Against a Heart Contract

	Dummy	
	♠ 4 3 2	
You		Partner
♠ K Q 9 6		♠ 7
	Declarer	
	♠ 5	
	Declarer	Partner
	♠ A J 5	♠ 10 8 7

Is partner's 7 encouraging or discouraging?

You Lead the ♠ 4 Against a Heart Contract

	Dummy	
	♠ A 8	
You		Partner
♠ K 10 7 4		♠ 3
	Declarer	
	♠ 5	
	Declarer	Partner
	♠ J 9 6 5	♠ Q 3 2

Is partner's 3 encouraging or discouraging.

Guidelines

- Attitude signals are suggestions, not demands.
- If you can see all the cards below partner's spot card played to your lead, partner is obviously signaling discouragement.
- If there are two or more missing cards below partner's spot card, read partner's play as encouraging.
- If there is only one missing card below partner's spot card, it is ambiguous. Work it out.

The High-Low Echo

- The high-low echo is used in two situations.
 - To show a doubleton and an ability to ruff the third round of the suit.
 - To show an honor equal to the one led.

The Echo Showing a Doubleton

You	Dummy	Partner
♠ A K 8 6 4	♠ Q 9 5	♠ 3
	Declarer	Partner
	♠ J 10 7	♠ 3 2

Is partner's 3 encouraging?

The Echo Showing a Doubleton

You	Dummy	Partner
♠ A K 8 6 4	♠ 9 5	♠ 3
	Declarer	Partner
	♠ J 10 7	♠ Q 3 2

Is partner's 3 encouraging

The Lead of an Ace

- The lead of an ace in a suit not bid by partner almost always shows the king of the suit.
- The exception is you have a singleton or doubleton and hope to get partner in to give you a ruff.

The Echo Can Show Encouragement without a Doubleton

You	Dummy	Partner
♠ A 4	♠ Q J 10 9	♠ 8
	Declarer	Partner
	♠ 7 6 2	♠ K 8 5 3

In third seat, you see partner's ace and know it must be from a short suit. You start an echo to encourage partner.

When Not to Echo With a Doubleton

You	Dummy	Partner
♠ J 10 8 6	♠ A Q 5	♠ 7 3
	Declarer	
	♠ K 9 5 2	
declarer		
♠ 2		

If you play the ♠ 7, partner will think you have the king and be misled. Declarer clearly has the king.

Giving a False Signal

- Sometimes you might want partner to shift, even though you have an equal honor.
- Note that you cannot tell partner what suit to shift to. You can only suggest a shift.
- Partner must work out the suit, from her hand, what's in dummy and the bidding.

Example 1: Giving a False Signal

South	West	North	East
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	all pass

♠ A

♠ 8

♠ Q J 10 3

♥ 9 5 3

♦ A Q J 10

♣ A Q

♠ 8 6

♥ Q J 10 8 7 6 4

♦ K 8

♣ K 10

♠ 9 7 2

♥ A K

♦ 9 4 3

♣ 9 6 5 4 3

Example 2: Giving a False Signal

East South West North
1 ♥ 1 ♠ 2 ♥ 2 ♠ (all pass)

		♠ 8 4 3	
		♥ 7 6 5	
		♦ K J 9	
		♣ A Q J 4	♠ J 9
♥ K			♥ A J 8 3 2
			♦ A Q 10 4
			♣ 5 2
	♥ 10	♠ A k Q 6 5	
		♥ 10 4	
		♦ 7 5 3	
		♣ 10 9 8	

A Very Important Attitude Signal

- If partner leads an ace, the play of the queen (always) shows the jack or a singleton queen.
- This is a hard, firm rule, which under certain circumstances can be violated.
- I will illustrate how the rule might be violated in a moment.
- First, let's look at how the rule might be valuable in a defense.

Example 1: Queen Shows the Jack

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	pass	2 ♥	pass
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

		♠ A Q J 10 9	
		♥ A J 7 6	
		♦ J 8	
		♣ 10 3	♠ 8 7 6
♣ A			♥ 6
			♦ 10 7 4 3 2
			♣ Q J 9 3
	♣ 4	♠ K 2	
		♥ K Q 10 9 4	
		♦ K 9	
		♣ 7 6 5 4	

Example 2: Queen Shows the Jack

South	West	North	East
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	pass
3 ♣	pass	4 ♣	
5 ♣	(all pass)		

♠ 10 2
♥ K Q 6 3
♦ 7 4 2
♣ A 10 7 6






♠ Q J 7 6 5
♥ 5 4 2
♦ 9 8 6 5 3
♣





♠ A





♠ 9

♠ 9 3
♥ A
♦ A K Q J 10
♣ K Q J 9 2

Example 2: Queen Shows the Jack





South	West	North	East
1 	pass	1 	pass
3 	pass	4 	
5 	(all pass)		

 10 2
 K Q 6 3
 7 4 2
 A 10 7 6

 Q J 7 6 5
 5 4 2
 9 8 6 5 3


 A

 9

 9 3
 A
 A K Q J 10
 K Q J 9 2

Be Careful to Avoid This Situation

♠ 10 6 4

♠ A K 9 7 3

♠ Q 5

♠ J 8 2

In This Situation, You Can Violate the Queen Shows the Jack Rule

♠ J 6 4

♠ A K 9 7 3

♠ Q 5

♠ 10 8 2