



LESSON 9 – STUDENT NOTES

CARD PLAY

This lesson is divided into two parts

- 1 The first deals with 3 card play guidelines mainly for the Defence but also of use by Declarer.
- 2 The second part deals with
 - A Reminder about trying to interpret the opening lead – the Rule of 11.
 - B Simple signalling for defenders

PART 1

“SECOND HAND PLAYS LOW” IF A SMALL CARD IS LED.

The “second hand” is the hand which contributes the second card of the trick. The second defender must remember that his partner has still to play so the usual card to put on is a small one.

Example 1 - you are sitting West, South leads the ♥4

♥ A 9 2		
North (dummy)		
♥ Q 6 3	?	
West (you)	East	West is the "second hand"
♥ 4 (led)		
South		

West (second hand) should play a small card. There is no need to think “I need to play the queen to force out the Ace”. Your partner has still to play. Declarer is reasonably sure to play the Ace anyway.

This might be the layout of the suit.

♥ A 9 2		
North (dummy)		
♥ Q 6 3		♥ K T 8 7
West		East
♥ J 5 4		
South		

If you play the Queen, then declarer wins both the Ace and the Jack. If you play low, he only makes the Ace.

As the second player to play to the trick, remember that your partner has still to play.

Example 2 – Once again you are West and South leads, this time the ♥ 5

♥ Q 9 6 4		
North (dummy)		
♥ A T 3		?
West(you)		East
♥ 5 (led)		
South		

West (second hand) should play low

This might be the lay out-

♥ Q 9 6 4		
North (dummy)		
♥ A T 3		♥ J 2
West		East
♥ K 8 7 5		
South		

If West, as the second hand to play, puts the Ace on that first trick, then declarer will win both the King and the Queen. Provided that West plays low on that first trick, on the second round of the suit, partner's (East's) Jack will force out Declarer's King. This will be taken by the Ace and West's ♥ T will be promoted.

Example 3 - Once again you are West and South leads, this time the ♥4

	♥ J 7 2	
	North (dummy)	
♥ Q 6 3		?
West (you)		East
	♥ 4 (led)	
	South	

This is not nearly so easy. It is very tempting for West to think, “I can win this trick” and put on the Queen. The guideline still applies “**Second hand plays low**”. **Be disciplined.** Unless you have a pressing positive reason to go against the guideline, still play low. The lay out might be -

	♥ J 7 2	
	North (dummy)	
♥ Q 6 3		♥ K 9 8 5
West		East
	♥ A T 4	
	South	

If West plays the Queen on the first round, then declarer makes 2 tricks by finessing East for the King on the second round. If West plays low, then Declarer makes only 1 trick.

This sounds very difficult. It sounds as though you need to be clairvoyant and know where all the cards are. It is really very simple. Just obey the guideline **unless** you can see a pressing reason to disobey it. If you are not sure just stick to the rule.

If a low card is led, “Second Hand Plays Low”

“COVER AN HONOUR WITH AN HONOUR”

This sounds like a contradiction of the previous rule. The difference is the size of the card led. The difference is that an **honour** card has been led. For the previous guideline the lead was a small card - “Second Hand Plays Low” *if the lead is a small card*.

Example 1 – Here things are the other way around. You are now East and lead is from dummy (North). The Queen is led from dummy.

	♥ Q 2 (Queen has been led)	
	North (dummy)	
?		♥ K T 9
West		East (you)
	?	
	South	

The ♥ Q is led from dummy. The Queen is an honour. “**Cover and Honour with an Honour**”.

Assume that South will have the Ace and will take your King but look at your ♥ T and ♥ 9. You can **see** that you will now make one of these if you cover the Queen. They have been “**promoted**”. This might be the layout.

	♥ Q 2	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 8 5 4 3		♥ K T 9
West		East (you)
	♥ A J 7 6	
	South	

Example 2 - You are still East and North leads the ♥ Q

	♥ Q 2	
	North (dummy)	
♥ ?		♥ K 6 4
West		East (you)
	♥ ?	
	South	

Now East cannot **see** an advantage to covering that Queen but should do so anyway. You are **hoping** for something like the layout below. The ♥T in partner's (West's) hand has been "**promoted**".

♥ Q 2	
North (dummy)	
♥ T 8 5	♥ K 6 4
West	East (you)
♥ A J 9 7 3	
South	

If partner (West) does not hold the ♥T you have not lost anything.

Example 3 - You are still East and north leads the ♥Q

♥ Q J 9	
North (dummy)	
♥ T 8 3 2	♥ K 6 4
West	East (you)
♥ A 7 5	
South	

Do **not** cover the first honour led, the Queen. You can see a sequence of honours in the North hand – the Q and J. Wait until the **last** honour in a sequence is led. If East covers the first led honour, declarer can lead from South and finesse the ♥T on the next trick. Cover the last played honour in a sequence of honours.

Example 4 - You are still East and North leads the Queen

♥ Q J T 9	
North (dummy)	
?	♥ K 6 4 2
West	East (you)
?	
South	

Now, don't cover at all. There is **no chance** that one of your side's cards could be promoted by covering an honour played from North. Anyway, the layout might be as below! South (declarer) cannot capture your King.

	♥ Q J T 9	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 8 7 5		♥ K 6 4 2
West		East (you)
	♥ A 3	
	South	

“THIRD HAND PLAYS HIGH” BUT ONLY AS HIGH AS YOU NEED TO

Example 1 – The ♥5 is led by West (your partner)

	♥ J 6 4	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 5 (led)		♥ Q 7 2
West		East (you)
	♥ ?	
	South	

You (East) are the third player to contribute a card to the trick. Play the ♥Q.
“Third Man Does What He Can” - “Third Hand Plays High”

Example 2 – Again, the lead is ♥5 from West (your partner)

	♥ J 6 4	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 5 (led)		♥ Q T 2
West		East (you)
	?	
	South	

If Dummy plays low - you (East) should play the ♥T. **Third hand plays high but only as high as you need to.** The ♥T will do the job. There is no need to play the Queen, save it to cover the Jack.

Example 3 – Again, the lead is ♥5 from West (your partner)

♥ J 6 4	
North (dummy)	
♥ 5 (led)	♥ Q T 9 8
West	East (you)
?	
South	

Dummy plays a low card. This is an extreme example, but you see that the ♥8 is high enough. **Play the lowest card that will do the job.** West should be able to work out that his partner (East) might have Q T 9. If East plays say the T, this says "I do not hold the 9".

Further examples

♥ 9 6 4	
North (dummy)	
♥ 5 (led)	♥ ?
West	East (you)

In the situation above which card should East play from the following?

♥ A K 3	play the K – “I might also have the Ace but not the Queen”
♥ A Q 3	play the A – “I do not have the King”.
♥ Q J 7	play the J – “I might also have the Queen but not the Ten”
♥ Q J T	play the T – “I might also have Jack and Queen but not the 8 (9 is in dummy)”.
♥ K J T	play the K – “I do not have the Queen”.

Examples where there is an honour in dummy – Try to retain a card to "cover" the honour in dummy

♥ Q 6 4

North (dummy)

♥ 5	♥ ?
West	East

The ♥4 has been played from dummy.
In the situation above which card should East play from the following?

East

♥ K J 3
♥ K J T
♥ A J 3
♥ K T 3
♥ A 9 3

play the J – no need to play the K
play the T – lowest which will do the job
play the J – partner probably holds the K
play the T – keep the K to "cover" the Q
play the A

If third hand wins the trick and knows his partner wants the suit returned which card should be played?

Returning partner's lead

Partner has indicated that he wants his lead returned – which card should you lead?

If partner has a long suit, try to avoid "blocking" the suit

Return	
Top of 2 remaining cards -	from ♥ Q 7 return the ♥ Q
	from ♥ 9 6 return the ♥ 9
Play low from 3 remaining cards -	from ♥ Q 7 3 return the ♥ 3
Play 4th highest from 4+ remaining -	from ♥ Q 7 3 2 return the ♥ 3

But


From ♥ Q J T 2 - return a high card and **retain** the ♥ 2 to avoid "Blocking" the suit

PART 2

EXPLORING MORE ABOUT OPENING LEADS AND HOW OTHER PLAYERS SHOULD TRY TO INTERPRET THE LEAD.

We have had this before but here are the guidelines for choosing a lead.

Comparing leads against NT and suit contracts	
NT contracts	Suit contracts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top of a sequence of three honours in a long suit• Lead Low for Like• High for Hate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top of a sequence of two honours in any length suit• Side suit singleton• High for Hate• Lead Low for Like – this is seldom a good lead against a suit contract



LEAD LOW FOR LIKE.

A lead of a small card promises at least one honour in the led suit. This lead asks partner to return the lead when he gets the chance.

It is usual to lead the 4th highest from a long suit for example with ♥ **Q T 9 6 4** lead the ♥6. This is the 4th card down from the top of the suit you hold.

When you see your partner's opening lead try to work out what it means.

RULE OF 11.

This applies when the opening lead has been the 4th highest card of a suit. The rule of 11 explains why you should lead the 4th highest and not the ♥4 in the hand above.

Rule of 11 states that, if the lead has been the 4th highest lead, you subtract the face value of the card led from 11. This gives you the number of cards other than those in the hand that led the card which are higher than that card.

Example 1.

	♥ K T 9	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 5 (led)		♥ Q 8 2
West on lead		East (you)
	?	
	South (Declarer)	

West has led the ♥ 5. If this the 4th highest card, then...

$$11 - 5 = 6$$

East, you can see your own hand and dummy's. East can count 5 cards higher than the ♥ 5 so declarer holds only a single card higher than the ♥ 5.

Example 2.

	♥ K T 8	
	North (dummy)	
♥ 7		♥ Q 9 4
West on lead		East (you)
	?	
	South (Declarer)	

West has led the ♥ 7

$$11 - 7 = 4$$

You, East can see your own hand and dummy's. You can see 5 cards higher than the ♥ 7 so that lead was something other than a 4th highest lead.

Try to work out what the opening lead means.

ATTITUDE SIGNALS.

Partner (West) has led an initial opening lead of an honour. This promises that he has the card immediately below the one led and denies having the card immediately above the led card.

Example 1

♥ J T 6	
North (dummy)	
♥ A K Q 9	♥ 5 4 3
West (on lead)	East (you)
♥ ?	
South (declarer)	

In this situation, West will have no difficulty continuing with the King and then the Queen. He does not need any help from East.

Example 2 - In a **suit contract** say with Spades as trumps

♥ Q J T	
North (dummy)	
♥ A K 9 2	♥ 8 4
West (on lead)	East (you)
♥ ?	
South (declarer)	

West leads the ♥A which wins the trick. He needs to know whether to continue the suit. If he plays the ♥K on the second round he is setting up a high card in Dummy's hand. West needs guidance from you (East). With the East hand above, East wants partner to continue by cashing the ♥K and then play a 3rd round because East will be able to ruff.

The way to signal to your partner is to play a low card to say "partner carry on with the suit". East should play the ♥4.

Play "**Low for Like**" Encouraging – partner continue the suit.

Example 3 – again in a **suit contract** say with Spades as trumps

♥ Q J T	
North (dummy)	
♥ A K 9 2	♥ 8 4 3
West (on lead)	East (you)
♥ ?	
South (Declarer)	

West's initial lead is the ♥A. East should play the ♥8. **"High for Hate"** discouraging. Partner, "don't continue the suit".

Example 4 - Could be in a suit contract or in NT.

♥ 5 4 3	
North (dummy)	
♥ K Q 9	♥ T 8 2
West (on lead)	East (you)
♥ A J 7 6	
South (Declarer)	

West leads the ♥K so you (East) know that West also has the Queen. The ♥K wins the trick, but West does not know where the Ace and Jack are. He needs your guidance.

Play the ♥8 on this first trick to say "switch suits", I don't have the Ace or Jack. I have nothing to contribute in this suit. **"High for Hate"**. Note I have suggested playing the ♥8 retaining the ♥T which could be of value so don't waste it.

SUMMARY OF CARD PLAY SO FAR

- "Second Hand Plays Low" when a small card is led by declarer
- "Cover an Honour with an Honour" to promote your partnership cards.
- "Third Man Does What He Can" Third man plays high to try and win the trick, but look at dummy – play only as high as you need to.
- "Lead low for Like" promises an honour. Partner return the suit
- Use the Rule of 11 on leads to work out your card to play.
- Signal Attitude on partners honour leads "Low for Like: High for Hate"