



All About Signals

Defenders need to co-operate if they are to defeat declarer, but they can communicate with one another only by means of the cards that they play. This means that every card is a *signal*.

The Opening Lead

When we lead an **honour card** we tell partner that we also hold the card immediately below it:

AKx; **K**Qxx; **Q**Jxx; **K**J10xx

(Against a suit contract, where we need to make tricks quickly, we lead the higher of touching honours, but against no-trump we lead fourth highest unless we have three honours.)

When we lead a **low spot card** we tell partner that we have at least one honour card in the suit we have led. With four or more cards we lead fourth highest.

When we lead a **high spot card** we tell partner we have no honours in the suit we have led.

We led top of a doubleton: and second highest from three or more small cards.

Third Hand Play

When partner leads a low card and dummy plays low Third Hand plays high, either to win the trick, or to stop declarer winning the trick cheaply.

When Third Hand plays an **honour card** he *denies* the card immediately below it.

If he has a sequence of honours he plays the *lowest* card.

Eg from KQJ3 Third Hand plays the jack. Playing the king from eg K75 *denies* the queen.

Attitude Signals

We make attitude signals on partner's opening lead to tell him whether we like his lead or not.

When he leads a low card the requirement to play Third Hand High takes precedence.

We make Attitude Signals when partner leads an honour or when we cannot beat the card played by dummy.

A **low card** is *encouraging*, suggesting that partner continue the suit.

A **high card** is *discouraging*, suggesting that partner switch to another suit.

We also make *Attitude Discards*: a low card *encourages* partner to lead that suit, a high discard *discourages*.

Count Signals

We make Count Signals when declarer leads from his hand or from dummy.

A **high card** shows an *even* number of cards in the suit led.

A **low card** shows an *odd* number

Secondary Signals

The *second* card we play in a suit is a Count Signal. It tells partner how many cards we have left in that suit.

A **high card** shows an *even* number of cards remaining. Eg A93 when you won the ace first time

A **low card** shows an *odd* number of cards remaining. Eg A943 when you won the ace first time.

Count signals tell partner how that suit is distributed, and so allow him to form a picture of the hidden hands.

Suit Preference Signals

These are a way of telling partner where our entry is when he needs to put us on lead.

We use them when we are giving partner a ruff, or when we are clearing our suit at no-trump.

A **high card** suggests an entry in the *higher-ranking* of the two possible suits

A **low card** suggests an entry in the *lower-ranking* of the two possible suits

Suit Preference signals are infrequent.

Your first responsibility is to signal Attitude and Count.

Once the count is known you can give Suit Preference with your third card when you are known to have a choice of cards to play

Reading the Signals

A signal is only a form of communication when it is read and understood!

Successful defence requires accurate signalling and a partner who is observing and working out whether the card played is high or low.

Practice working out what partner has in a suit from his opening lead.

It gets easier with practice!