

Signals and Discards

Defence is one of the most difficult aspects of bridge for a partnership to grasp. What can we do to make it easier?

1. Opening Leads and Leads during the Play

The **Opening Lead** must be clear and unambiguous.

- Lead top of a sequence KQJx, QJ9x, 1098x
- Low card promises an honour Q972, Q98, KJ43
- High card (non-honour) denies an honour 972, 8763, 97654

Leading During the Play of the Hand

- Do exactly the same as above – **no change at all**
- If partner leads a suit showing an honour(s), always return that suit unless you have a **very good** reason not to do so.

2. Signals during the Play of the Hand

When a lead is made, it would be helpful if partner indicates whether they like the lead or not.

Use the same concepts as above :

- Play a low card - to show an honour (or shortage if defending a suit contract)
- Play a high card - to show no help in that suit

3. Discards

During the play, how do you show partner where you have an honour? You will get an opportunity to do this when you **discard**.

To show partner where you have an honour or not, either:

- Discard a high card - shows **no** honour in that suit
- Discard a low card - shows at least one honour in that suit (A, K or Q)

For example, partner has led a spade against a 4♥ contract and when declarer draws trumps, you must discard. If you discard a high diamond then you have **no** honour in diamonds, but may have a club honour (you will have already indicated your spade holding on partner's lead).

Against a notrump contract, try not to discard from a long, good suit. A high card in another suit says you are not interested.

4. Summary

- Lead an honour - shows a sequence of at least two touching cards
- Lead/discard a low card - shows at least one honour in that suit
- Lead/discard a high card - shows **no** honour in that suit