Signals for Success

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Agenda

What are signals?

Attitude

Count

Suit Preference

First Discard

What Are Signals?

Signaling (or *Carding*) is the **legal** way for the defenders to exchange information about length and strength of the suits in their hands during the play.

There are four common signals. You can only give one signal with one card.

- Count
- Attitude
- Suit Preference
- First Discard (Normally a special case of suit preference signal)

This presentation focuses on signals when not trying to win the trick!

Standard Carding

Attitude

———

We give an attitude signal when partner first leads a suit

We play the highest card we can afford to say we like the suit partner has led.

We play our lowest card in the suit to say that we don't like the suit he has led.

We don't get 'fancy' -- from 876 play the 8 to encourage, not the 6! Don't give P a problem.

Count

———

We give count 1. When declarer breaks a suit; 2. On partner's second lead of the suit; 3. After our first discard.

We play high (the highest card we can afford), then our lowest to show an even number of cards in the suit.

We play our lowest to show an odd number of cards in the suit.

Attitude Signals

Why: Help P know what to do

Your partner leads the K (from KQ).

You hold J73. Which card do you play?

You hold 973. Which card do you play?

Why?

When?

When partner breaks a new suit and you need to tell partner whether you have a useful card, signal *attitude*, that is, tell partner if you want him to continue the suit he's played.

High = encouraging

Lowest = discouraging

(Don't try to get fancy by playing the 4 instead of the 2 to say "I kinda don't like this"!)

Attitude: Example

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            JT3
            Q93                    Against 1NT (1NT - P - P - P), West leads the ❤️4.
            K762
            987                    What is your play?
K87              654
J654             A82               If you win the A, which card do you return
98               543              and why?
AJ65             KQ32
            AQ92
            KT7
            AQJT
            T4
```

Count Signals

Why: Help P count the hand

Your partner leads the ♠5 against 3NT.

Dummy has ♠J87 and plays the 7.

You hold ♠62.

1. If you could beat the 7, what would you do?
2. What signal is most useful to P?
3. Which card do you play?

When?

When partner breaks a new suit and you cannot beat dummy's card,

OR, when declarer breaks a suit,

signal **count**, that is, tell partner if you have an odd or even number of cards in the led suit..

High = even (2, 4, 6, or 8 cards in this suit)

Lowest = odd (1, 3, 5, 7 cards in this suit)

We give *present count*, "how many I have now"

Count: Example -- Why does it matter?

Ex 1: ♠KQJT3

♠964   ♠A87

          ♠52

Ex 2: ♠KQJT3

♠64   ♠A87

          ♠952

In both of the above hands, South is in 3NT. There are no entries to dummy.
East must decide when to take her Ace. If East takes her ace the first round,
South gets four spade tricks; that's bad.
In example 1, East must win the Ace on the second round to hold S to 1 spade.
In example 2, East must win the Ace on the third round to hold S to 2 spades.

Suit Preference Signals

Why: Show P your values

In a heart contract, declarer has drawn two rounds of trump and played a couple diamonds. Your hand is now

AT3   When declarer leads a 3rd heart,

--   1. What card(s) encourage spades?

J7   2. What if you can't afford ♠T?

QT85   3. What card encourages a club?

               4. What other card might

                   Encourage a club?

When?

On your first discard, or,

  When dummy has a singleton, or,

    Leading a suit for P to ruff

High = higher suit

Lowest = lower suit

It tends to say, "I have values here", *not* "lead this suit right away!"

Suit Preference: Example

Ex 2:   Spades are trump
          Dummy
          ♦ Kx

Partner has bid diamonds.
He leads the !DA, and then
continues with the Queen.
What is partner telling you?

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Ex 2:

You and your partner have bid
hearts. You lead the ♥A against
3♠   and see a singleton heart in
dummy.

Why would P play the ♥J?

Why would P play the ♥3 or ♥2?

Special situations/carding

- Partner leads against a suit contract and there's a singleton or void on the board: Suit Preference time!
- Leading a card for partner to ruff: Suit Preference time!
- Partner leads from AK: your play of the Q guarantees the singleton Q, *or that you have the Jack*
- If you are leading a suit and have a sequence (QJT, etc.), you **lead** the top of the sequence. **If you are following suit, we reverse that and play our lowest card in the sequence.** *When following suit*, the J denies the T, Q denies the J, K denies the Q, A denies the K (usually! Sometimes this is "wake up, P!").

Special First Discards

- Odd/Even 1st discard
    - Discarding an odd card tends to encourage that suit
    - An even first discard tends to discourage the suit played and indicate suit preference
- Upside-down 1st discard
    - A high card discourages that suit
    - Your lowest card encourages the suit discarded
- Lavinthal 1st discard
    - Your first discard is never from a suit you want led
    - Your first discard is suit preference: high is higher suit, low is lower suit
- Standard discards
    - High: I like this suit
    - Low: I don't like this suit

Ethics

- This is a game; we play forthrightly and with honesty within the rules.
- Choose which card to play before you touch a card in your hand
- Don't allow facial expressions or gestures that might convey pleasure or displeasure (whether intentional or not!) at partner's play or bid
- Strive to play every card exactly the same way: none sharper or more casually, and all in the same tempo or pace
- Remember that the opponents are entitled to know both your explicit and implicit agreements (about both bidding and carding)
- When an irregularity happens, call the director. They are there to help.

Summary

- *Carding* (also called *signaling*) is a legal way to communicate when you and your partner are on defense.
- Signals are only the card you play, never the way you play the card.
- Common signals are Count, Attitude, and Suit Preference.
- Know which is which and how to use them accurately.
- Think ahead when possible to eliminate breaks in tempo!
- Make use of partner's count signal to help you count out the hand.

You defend half the time.

Good defenders win games!