

# Third-Hand Play



In general, third hand (on defense) plays high. When playing from equals, play the LOWEST affordable.

<b>A</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	65 <u>3</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		K107

Play the King  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Hand High)

<b>B</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	7 <u>3</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>Q</u>		A82

Play the Ace  
(Declarer could have a singleton king)

<b>C</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	98 <u>7</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		QJ106

<b>D</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	98 <u>7</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		KQ106

IN C-D-E-F, play the cheapest card that will get the job done.

<b>E</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	A10 <u>7</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>5</u>		QJ2

<b>F</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	Q8 <u>7</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>6</u>		AK105

<b>G</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	Q6 <u>4</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		KJ8

Play the Jack

<b>H</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	J9 <u>7</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		K108

Play the 10

<b>I</b>	<u>Dummy</u>	
	AJ <u>4</u>	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>2</u>		Q975

Play the 9

## **G-H-I**

If dummy has the king, queen or jack, and you have a higher honor (one or two steps higher), try to save your honor until dummy's honor is played.

It helps if you have something like a 10 or 9 to insert. If you have no intermediate cards, likely nothing you do will matter.

### Third-Hand Play (continued)



In all the previous examples, you had a chance to win the trick (or contribute a card to drive out a high card).

If partner (or dummy) is winning the trick (you have nothing higher to contribute), then you should give a signal. Standard would be an “attitude signal.” A low card (ideally a 2, 3 or 4) means you “don’t like it.” A high card (ideally, an 8, 9 or 10) means you do “like it.” Medium cards (approximately 5, 6 or 7) can be hard to read, but are still intended as signals.

When partner leads Ace from Ace-King (against a suit contract), you will like it if you have the queen, or a doubleton (playing high-low in either case).

<b>J</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 654	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>A</u>		Q93

<b>K</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 654	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>A</u>		93

In J & K, Play the 9

<b>L</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 654	
<u>Partner</u>		<u>You</u>
<u>A</u>		J93

In L, signal discouragement with the 3.

If third hand plays properly, the person who led to the trick can better read the position.

<b>M</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 107 <u>3</u>	
<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>
K54 <u>2</u>		<u>J</u>

Partner plays the jack and declarer wins the ace. What does partner have in the suit?

<b>N</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 107 <u>5</u>	
<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>
Q64 <u>3</u> 2		<u>9</u>

Declarer wins the Ace. What are the holdings?

<b>O</b>	<u>Dummy</u> 107 <u>5</u>	
<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>
Q64 <u>3</u> 2		<u>8</u>

Declarer wins the Ace. What are the holdings?