

The basic rules for playing touching honors at all times:

- * On defense, play the card that clarifies your holding best for your partner
 - * When declaring, play the card that will give the defenders the most trouble or doubt about your hand
 - Most of the time, the **highest** card is best as declarer
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* Touching honors on defense – when to play **highest**

- On opening lead, play the **highest** of touching honors
- In second chair splitting honors, play the **highest**
- When discarding, play the **highest**

* Touching honors on defense – when to play **lowest**

- When winning a trick, play the **lowest** of touching honors
- When playing third to the trick, play the **lowest**

Opening Lead

- **In general, leading the top card with touching honors should be your first choice on opening lead if available**
 - Three in a row (AKQ, KQJ, QJT, JT9) especially attractive
- Holding a 3 card honor sequence, lead the bolded card against *suits* (**AKQ**, **AKJ**, **KQJ**, **KQT**, **KJT**, **QJT**, **QJ9**, **JT9**, **KT9**, **QT9**, **T98**)
- Holding AQJ, AJT or AT9, lead some other suit. Do not underlead aces against suit contracts!
- All of these honor leads can come from suits of any length
 - **KQJ**, **KQJ4**, **KQJ54**, **KQJ854**, **KQJ9854**, etc.

- Switch to the club king after a diamond lead against 4 spades. Partner will continue clubs when in with a heart to beat the contract. If you play back a diamond, declarer can toss a club loser and make the contract.

	♠Q74	
	♥Q87	
	♦Q932	
	♣964	
♠A53		♠92
♥952		♥AKJ
♦KT54		♦A876
♣753		♣QT82
♠KJT86		
♥T643		
♦J		
♣AKJ		

With East as dealer (no one vulnerable):

E	S	W	N
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♠
3♦	3♠	p	p
P			

Partner leads a diamond (4, 2, A, J)

What card can you play at trick 2 that best signals partner to play a heart back when she gets in with the spade ace?

What about when you are the declarer?

- In general, play the highest of equals when declaring

	♠954	
♠A63		♠72
♠KQJT8		

A lot of times declarers will “get cute” and start a trump suit like this by playing the 8 of spades and then playing small from dummy. While it is amusing when the 8 holds the trick, it tells West that declarer has the king, queen, jack and ten when East can’t win the trick. Start by playing the king of spades and keep the defenders a little more in the dark.

♠K94

♠AQT653

- You are playing a spade contract and have won an outside trick in hand as South. What is the proper way to draw trumps?
1. Play the ace of spades
 2. Play the queen of spades
 3. Play a low spade to the king
 4. Something else