

Attitude Signals Against No Trump



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Three Kinds of Signals

- Just like with suit contracts, there are three types of signals, you can use against a no trump contract.
 - Attitude
 - Count
 - Suit preference.
- By far the most common of these is the attitude signal.

Attitude Signals

- In this lesson we will examine attitude signals.
- We will be looking at situations in which partner has led a high card. (an ace, king, queen or jack)
- Your job is to tell partner how you liked the lead.
 - If you like the lead (you have an honor), you will show your attitude by playing the highest spot card you can afford to play.
 - If you don't like the lead, show it by playing the lowest spot card you hold.

Partner Leads a King of a Suit You Have Not Bid.

- Partner has:
 - K Q J (x –x x)
 - K Q 10 (x-x x)
 - K Q x x (x)
- When partner leads a king, partner wants to know if you have an honor.
- If you do, play the highest spot card you can afford.
- If you have a doubleton honor overtake to unblock.

Partner Leads a King. What Do You Play?

West
♠ K

Dummy
♠ 5 4

You

| | |
|---------|-----|
| ♠ J 6 3 | ♠ 6 |
| ♠ 6 3 2 | ♠ 2 |
| ♠ 9 7 6 | ♠ 6 |
| ♠ J 3 2 | ♠ 3 |
| ♠ J 2 | ♠ J |
| ♠ A 9 | ♠ A |

Sometimes You Cannot Afford to Play Your Highest Spot Card

West
♠ K

Dummy
♠ J 9 8 4

You
♠ A 10 3 2

West
♠ K Q 8 6 4

Here's a Situation Known From the Days of Whist – Before Bridge

| | | |
|--------------|----------|---------|
| | Dummy | |
| | ♠ 3 2 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ K | | ♠ 9 7 5 |
| West | | |
| ♠ K Q 10 6 4 | Declarer | |
| | ♠ A J 8 | |

The situation is so well known, it has a name, the Bath Coup. You, west, lead the king. Declarer slyly plays the 8, hoping you will continue the suit.

Partner Leads the Queen

- The lead of the queen from an unbid suit usually shows:
 - Q J 10 (x-x x)
 - Q J 9 (x- x x)
- Occasionally, partner will lead from Q J x, hoping to hit you with some length in the suit.
- This is a rare situation, but you should be aware of the possibility.

Partner Leads the Queen

- As third hand, you will:
 - Overtake with Ax or Kx, to unblock.
 - Play the 10, with 10 x.
 - Give an encouraging signal with A x x (x), K x x (x), or 10 x x (x).
 - Lacking an honor, play your lowest card.

Partner Leads a Queen. What Do You Play?

West
♠ Q

Dummy
♠ 5 4

You
♠ 6 3 2 ♠ 2
♠ 8 3 ♠ 3
♠ K 9 3 ♠ 9
♠ 10 7 2 ♠ 7
♠ k 3 ♠ K
♠ A 3 ♠ A

Partner Leads a Jack

- Against no trump, most players agree that the lead of a jack promises the 10 and no higher card.
- You know where all the honor cards, you cannot see are – In declarer's hand.
- Signal encouragement with holding like:
 - Q x x
 - K X x
- With A x x or better, you must decide what to do.

Partner Leads a 10

- The 10 is lead from:
 - K J 10 x
 - A J 10 x
 - 10 9 8 X
 - 10 9 7 x
- You must try to determine which it is.
 - If you see the jack, you know it is top of a sequence.
 - If you see the 9, you know it is from an interior sequence.
 - If you cannot see either, play partner for one of the stronger holdings.

Partner Leads a Spot Card

- This is usually 4th best.
- You cannot always signal attitude.
 - If dummy plays a low card, you must play third-hand-high in order to help partner set up his suit.
 - If dummy wins the trick, you can signal attitude or count.
 - If dummy wins the trick with an ace or king, signal attitude.
 - If dummy wins the trick with a queen or lower, give partner count.

Partner Leads a Spot Card. What Do You Play?

Dummy

♠ A 2

West

♠ Q J 6 5 4

You

♠ K 8 3

- If declarer calls for the ace, you will play the ♠ 8 to show your honor.
- If declarer calls for the 2, you will play the king and return the ♠ 8.

Partner Leads a Spot Card. What Do You Play?

Dummy

♠ Q 10 8

West

♠ K J 6 5 4

You

♠ 9 3

- If declarer calls for the 10...
- You cannot beat the 10, so you play the ♠ 9, to start an echo. Partner will know you have a doubleton.
- Partner will realize that declarer has the guarded ace.

Attitude Signals Summary

- High spot cards encourage.
- Low spot cards discourage.
- When partner leads a spot card:
 - Play third-hand high, if dummy plays a low card.
 - If dummy wins the trick with an ace or king, signal attitude.
 - If dummy wins the trick with a queen or lower, show count.
- When partner leads an honor card.
 - With an honor doubleton, overtake or unblock.
 - With an equal honor, signal encouragement.
 - With no honor play your lowest card.