



## FALSE-CARDING

Reg Busch

This term is used to describe a deceptive play of a card by a defender in order to deceive declarer. A defender, in following suit, would normally play his lowest card. Or, when winning a trick, would normally win with the lowest of equals. A different play with the intention of deceiving declarer is called 'false-carding'. A high/low pique is not a false card but a normal signal to partner. Other plays to give info to partner e.g. showing count are not false cards.

A classic example of a false card:

#1    AQJ7  
K93        105  
          8642

This is the spade trump suit. You are West. South wins the opening lead, and plays the ♠2 to your ♠3 and ♠Q, which holds. He comes back to hand, then repeats the finesse, then drops your ♠K under the ♠A. He makes all four tricks. But let's think again. You know your ♠K is doomed with standard play. But let's give declarer a little problem. On the first spade lead, play not the ♠3, but the ♠9. The ♠J wins. Now you have given declarer a choice. He can follow standard play and return to hand to repeat the finesse. If he does that, you are no worse off. But what if he has no quick return to hand, or he has to expose himself in a side suit to return? Your play suggests that you started with ♠K9 doubleton, in which case the Ace will now drop your King, and declarer does not need to return to hand to win four spade tricks. Declarer might opt to play thus and receive a nasty shock when the king doesn't fall. By your false card you have engineered a trick you would never make with normal play. Your aim is to give declarer a losing option.

This sort of false card might be described as 'obligatory'. It will rarely cost and may sometimes gain.

Notice that this play works most of the time only against more experienced players. The novice rarely notes what cards you play, let alone thinks about them. Here is a similar situation, not quite so clear. This time East has his chance.

#2    AJ83  
K2        1096  
          Q754

Declarer plays the 4 to the Jack and the six. Now his only chance to make four tricks in the suit is to play the Ace, hoping that the King is doubleton. But look what happens if, on the first trick, East plays the 9 instead of the 6. Declarer may see the distribution as:

          AJ83  
K62        109  
          Q754

In this case, in order to make all four tricks in the suit, he would need to come back to hand and lead the ♠Q (pinning the 10) to make all four tricks. If he chooses this option, your ten becomes a defensive trick. Again you have given declarer a losing option with your false card.

**Play the card you are known to hold.** Take this situation:

          AJ5  
Q103      862  
          K974

You are West. Declarer South leads the 4 and finesses the Jack. Then he plays the Ace. You must play the Queen. Declarer knows you have the Queen but he doesn't know that you have the 10. If you idly follow with the 10, declarer knows

that you still hold the Queen and will play the King for trick 3 and make all four tricks. If you had played the Queen at trick 2, declarer may try finessing with the 9 at trick 3.

So: in defence, *play the card you are known to hold provided it doesn't cost.*

Further examples:

<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>AQ75</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>KJ103</td> <td></td> <td>8642</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>9</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		AQ75		KJ103		8642		9		<p>South, in a spade contract and playing a cross-ruff, finesses the ♣Q, then plays the ♣A. Declarer knows that he can safely ruff low in hand until the ♣K appears on his left. Drop the King at trick 2.</p>
	AQ75									
KJ103		8642								
	9									

<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>AKJ6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q54</td> <td></td> <td>10832</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>97</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		AKJ6		Q54		10832		97		<p>In a spade contract, this is the heart suit. Declarer South finesses the ♥J, then plays the Ace. You should drop the Queen. Otherwise declarer knows that he can ruff low with impunity.</p>
	AKJ6									
Q54		10832								
	97									

An important rule: in false-carding, don't think too long. Be prepared, and play smoothly. Taking time to think will make declarer suspicious.

### False signals

You are defending a game or higher level contract with a useless hand. Your only hope is that partner may have defensive tricks. Dummy contains a side suit such as ♥AQ42, but you have useless cards left.. As your first discard, signal for a heart lead from partner. You know that, if declarer needs the heart finesse, it is working. Dissuade him from taking this finesse, and perhaps trying a different unsuccessful finesse into partner's hand .

For declarer, there is no 'true' way of carding, for he has no partner to consider and can play cards as he likes. But there are situations where declarer can attempt to deceive opponents, but this is more accurately described as 'deceptive play'. For example:

<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>75</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>KQ98</td> <td></td> <td>1043</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>AJ62</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		75		KQ98		1043		AJ62		<p>You are declarer in NT and the opening lead is the ♥K (promising the ♥Q).</p> <p>You want West to continue with hearts to give you two tricks. So smoothly duck, playing the ♥6 from hand. EW are playing high encourage.. West sees East's ♥3, which doesn't look encouraging, but where is the ♥2? Perhaps East holds the ♥J32 and the ♥3 is the highest he can afford without sacrificing the ♥J. Your deceptive card may well persuade West to continue the suit.</p>
	75									
KQ98		1043								
	AJ62									

A good rule of thumb if you want defender to continue his suit is to *play an encouraging card as if you were his partner.* This doesn't always work, depending on their signalling system.

*See p15 for a canny example of Reg in action.*