

CONTINUATIONS AGAINST SUIT CONTRACTS

Continuations of the Suit You Led

-- Having led an honor:

After an opening lead of second highest from a sequence, play the bottom of the sequence next if you won't mind if partner unblocks. Continuing with the bottom of a sequence suggests that partner play his highest card, usually for unblocking purposes, while continuing with the highest card warns him not to make any unblocking or overtaking play.

After leading queen from KQx, play the king next (and partner had better not overtake with the ace when lacking the jack!). After leading queen from KQJ9, play the jack next, and partner can overtake if he wants to (and must play the 10, if he has it). It is therefore the convention that one should play the king on second round from KQJ when it is desirable to hold the lead. Similarly, leading the jack and continuing with the queen tends to show an original holding of QJx, not QJ10, so the leader from QJ10 can continue with the queen when desirous of holding the lead. Continuing with the 10 suggests that partner can overtake if he wishes.

After leading from a sequence, leading a low card that is not part of the sequence should give "present count." After leading queen from KQ32, lead the 2 next (bottom from an odd number). With KQ543, you lead 5 next, high from an even number.

When holding the opening lead, then leading low in response to partner's encouraging signal, do not lead the (standard) original fourth best. Instead, lead a higher card with four or six remaining, and the lowest card from three or five remaining. E.g., After leading the queen from KQ863, holding the trick, lead the 8 to show four remaining. The standard lead of the 6 would leave partner wondering who has the 3.

-- Having led fourth best

After leading 3 from J9632 play the 2 next. With a six card suit, after leading fourth best, make your first discard (or play to another's winner) the highest card you can afford. Otherwise partner may figure you for an original five-card suit. Playing up requires partner to distinguish between an original four-or-six card holding, easier than a four-or-five situation. Note that this is not a "present count" situation.

-- Having led top of nothing from a three-card holding

Play the middle card on the second round (present count). Playing the bottom card might look like an original fourth-best lead from a five-card holding.

-- Having led the middle from three small (e.g., 8 from 98x)

Play the lowest card next. This is not present count, but playing low-up implies an original doubleton or three to an honor.

Returning Partner's Lead

Having started a count signal on the opening lead, by all means complete the signal when returning the second round of the suit.

When there is no signal to complete and the situation logically calls for a return that shows count, show present count by leading high from a doubleton and low from three or more (the original fourth-best card)

What situations logically call for count? These:

- 1) The location of meaningful high cards is known before the lead, so attitude is not necessary.
- 2) The location of meaningful high cards will be known after the current trick, on which no decision must be made by leader's partner.
- 3) The defenders are in a cash-out situation, when count is often more important than attitude.