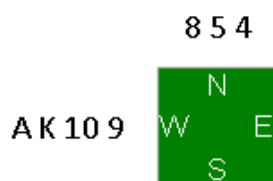


Defence – Signalling When Partner Leads an Honour against a Suit Contract

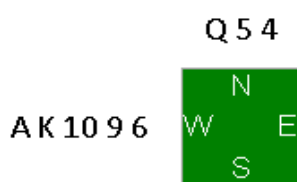
When partner leads an honour against a suit contract it is often not clear to them whether to continue the suit or switch. It is up to you to help them out by playing a card which either encourages or discourages a continuation of the suit that was led. Many partnerships use a low card to encourage partner to continue the suit and a high card to indicate that they don't want the suit continued.

Low – Like High - Hate

Let's look at some examples.



West leads the spade king against a contract of 4 hearts. They can safely continue spades if East has the queen or a doubleton, otherwise they should switch to another suit. East must help them out by playing a low card to encourage them to continue spades or a higher card to encourage them to switch.



West leads the spade king against a contract of 4 hearts. When dummy appears they know that East and declarer have five spades between them. Who has the shortage? Continuing with the king and then a small spade is not best if East has three and declarer has two but will work well if East has the doubleton. East must low with a doubleton to encourage partner to continue the suit; play high with three cards to encourage partner to look elsewhere.

By and large you encourage a continuation if you have

- An honour card that is touching the sequence that partner has shown. If partner leads the king (showing that they have the queen) you should encourage if you have the ace or the jack – you know that a continuation will not give declarer a cheap trick
- A shortage and you want partner to continue so that you can eventually trump. If partner leads the ace (showing that they have the king) you should encourage with a doubleton because you can trump the third round.