

Defensive Signals III: Suit Preference

As a defender, there are situations where you wish to communicate to your Partner a suit you want partner to lead when they get the opportunity.

Suit Preference Signals

A typical case occurs when you give Partner a ruff. Leading a high card indicates the higher rank of the two remaining suits; a low card indicates the lower rank of the two remaining suits.

For example, Hearts are trump and after cashing the ♠AK, your remaining cards in Spades are ♠T63, you hold the ♦A, and you expect Partner to trump the 3rd round of Spades. The two remaining suits are ♣ and ♦, therefore you lead the ♠T (high card) in order to encourage Partner to return the higher ranking suit, a Diamond, after ruffing the ♠. Alternatively, if you held the ♣A, you would lead the ♠3 to suggest a ♣ return from Partner.

Following Suit

Here is an example of using a suit-preference signal while following suit. After your side bids and raises hearts, South ends up declaring 4♠. Partner leads the ♥A (Ace from Ace-King):

North

♠AT852

♥T4

♦KJT

♣Q84

You

♠64

♥852

♦AQ2

♣J7652

West	North	You	South
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

You play the ♥8 (denying the ♥Q using UDCA) at trick one. However, at trick two partner continues with the ♥A. Which card do you follow suit with?

This is a situation in which an attitude signal doesn't make apply because dummy can ruff the 3rd round of Hearts. Neither is it a count situation, since you're already marked with at least three hearts on the auction. Thus it becomes a suit-preference situation; playing your higher card would ask for a switch to the higher side suit (Diamonds), whereas your lower card would ask for a switch to the lower side suit (Clubs).