

Signals & Discards Summary

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDefense/Signals&Discards.pdf>

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I highly recommend Standard Signals and Fourth Best Leads.

Signals: A low spot card discourages or shows an odd count or lowest suit.
A high spot card encourages or shows an even count or highest suit.

If you have KQ432, the 4 then the 2 encourages. It is called an echo.

If you have 987, the 7 then the 8 discourages.

UDCA (Upside Down Count and Attitude) is so very much overrated. The problem with UDCA is that signals **must be** infrequent, and this system allows a person to signal for every high card in his hand, and they always seem to do it.

Coded 9's and 10's are inadequate. One-week-old trash smells better. You are giving away a Jack or a Ten without the touching card below and this could easily lose a trick.

Third and Fifth best leads also are poor because it is often hard to read third best as third best and not top (or second top if the top card is a nontouching ten) of nothing. MUD (middle up down) is fine.

Signals are infrequent and they are of the type (attitude, count and suit preference) which partner needs at the exact moment he needs the signal.

Example 1. 4♠ by South, and you are East. West leads the ♠Ten.

You hold ♠3 ♥KJ98 ♦6543 ♣6542. The dummy to your right has AQ10x of hearts. How do you get a heart lead when the declarer draws four rounds of trump (spades)?

Simple. You must match the heart length in dummy, so a heart cannot be discarded. You discard the ♣2, then the ♦3 then the ♦4. This screams for a heart lead.

The Cardinal Rules

Never make a discard that costs a trick.

Never discard a dead suit if the declarer could have a two-way guess in the suit.

Win or attempt to win a trick as cheaply as possible. When you try to fool the declarer, he may not even be watching, but your partner is watching and is placing cards to match the bidding and the play so far.

Honour Discards are Different than Spot-Card Discards

An honour discard shows the touching cards below but denies a higher honour.

Example 2. Holding ♣QJ109x

With ♣QJ1092, you lead the ♣Queen, but win with the ♣9. If you are discarding on spades, the ♣Queen denies a higher honour and shows the honours touching below. With ♣AQJ1092, discard the 9 (the highest spot card).

If partner discards the ♣Queen and dummy is to your left with small cards in clubs, your club holding dictates if clubs should be played by you.

If you have ♣K54, you must attack clubs right away with the ♣4. (small from three or more) If you have ♣A54, you must avoid clubs because the declarer has the ♣King under your ♣Ace. Partner or the declarer must lead clubs.

Leads

Leads that break open a suit are Boston.

Bottom of Something and Top of Nothing.

Lead of a small card shows interest (Opposite to a discard) and the lead of a high card demands a switch (Also opposite to a discard).

Leading partner's suit unsupported. If the top two cards are touching honours, the lead is always the top card. Otherwise, small is led from three cards or more. Is your partner such a bad bidder that top of nothing is more important than count? No!! Please!

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