Signaling

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http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDefense/Signaling.pdf

Signal Meanings

Signaling conveys information on the following:

Attitude

Count

Suit Preference

Signaling can either be standard or Upside down (UDCA).

In standard signaling,

A high card shows :   positive attitude

even count (a doubleton, for example)

higher ranking suit

While a low card shows : negative attitude

odd count

lower ranking suit

Spot Card Signals

Signals are done with the spot cards, the two through the nine or ten
Where does the high cards start and low cards end?
Is the 7 high and six or less low?

No, it depends what cards partner has in the suit.
If he only has 1098, then the 8 is low.
If he only has 432, then the 4 is high.

The next card discarded will clarify the situation.
The 8 then the 9 shows the 8 was low
The 4 then the 3 shows the 4 was high

Honour Card Signals

AKQJ10 are the honour cards but sometimes the Jack and the Ten are treated like spot cards.

The discard of an honour has special meaning. It shows the possession of the touching honour(s) below it and denies any honour above.

Example: It Depends If Partner Should Lead the Suit

Against a 4♠ contract you have ♣QJ1093. Dummy has the ♣42. You have two trump. On the third trump, what ♣ do you discard?

The Queen. This denies the King or Ace and promises the touching honours below.

Therefore if partner has the ♣King, he will attack ♣'s right away. If he has the ♣Ace without the ♣King, he will keep the ♣Ace to kill declarer's ♣King.

Signal Type Examples

When is a signal attitude, count or suit preference? The rule of thumb is that you give the signal that you think partner needs at that particular moment. Here are common examples of each signal:

Attitude is given when:

When you first discard a suit or when partner first leads a suit and you want to tell partner whether to continue with the suit or not.

"Signals must not be given indiscriminately merely to show high cards. They must be given to suggest leads." Goren's Bridge Complete P 472

You want partner to continue the suit when:
- A switch would be dangerous:
  - The defense should try to break open for the declarer as few suits as possible.
  - It may finesse yourself out of an honour if he switches.
  - You have nothing in the side suits so it may finesse partner out of an honour if he switches.
- You have the honour above or two below the honour led.
  - Partner leads the King showing the Queen, so he wants to know if you have the Ace or the Jack.
  - This avoids the Bath Coup.
    - Declarer has AJ52 in a suit you lead the King. He will play the 5, hoping you continue the suit into his AJ.
    - Declarer uses the same signal system the defenders use. If the defenders use standard signals, declarer will hide the 2 and discard the 5 hoping the suit will be continued because the other defender will be assumed to have the 2.
- You can get a ruff. You have a doubleton in a trump contract.

- A continuation is the best defense. For example, you have length, dummy has three small, you know declarer will be ruffing and want him to shorten the long trump hand.

a. Partner leads the A♣ against a 4♠ contract. What do you play with standard signals?

You Have:	You Play:
♣82	8
♣872	2
♣Q72	7
♣J72	2
♣QJ72	Q

b. Partner leads the K♦ against a 4♥ contract:

You Have:	You Play:
♦82	8
♦872	2
♦A72	7
♦J72	7
♦1072	2
♦10972	2

Count is given when:

- Declarer first leads a suit.
- When partner leads an ace and wants to know if he can cash the king without declarer ruffing.
- When you can't beat the dummy the first time the suit is led.
- Declarer has a long suit in dummy with no side entries and partner wants to know your count so he can decide when to take his ace stranding declarer from dummy and not giving him an undeserved trick.
- You want to tell partner you can ruff
  - When you high-low with a doubleton, you are actually giving count and attitude.

a.   ♣KQJ1096   dummy has no more entries
           ♣A75   ♣82
                    ♣43

Declarer plays the king from dummy. Play the 8 so partner will cash the ace the second time.

b.   ♦J43
           ♦A̲K876   ♦Q1052
                    ♦9

Partner makes an opening lead of the A♦ against 4♠ and you give count with the 10 so partner will know declarer is ruffing the second trick in diamonds. Partner will know if he should look elsewhere for tricks or force declarer to ruff.

Suit Preference is shown when it cannot possibly be attitude or count;

These are suit preference situations.
- Partner leads a singleton honour (A or K or Q) and you have the honour directly below so you know it is not a sequence. Give suit preference so partner can get into your hand and get a ruff.
- The dummy has a holding that indicates a switch is imperative
  - It is dummy's long suit, so you do not want to help declarer set it up.
  - Dummy has honours in the suit that will be setup with a continuation.
  - Dummy has a singleton.
- When you give a card that either can be ruffed or expected to be ruffed or
- The declarer holds-up against the opening lead in a 3NT contract. When the suit it cleared, the defender with the long suit gives suit preference on how to get into his hand.
- Another suit preference signal partner chooses not to lead 4th best in a suit you know from the bidding that he has more than 4. Leading a 2 would ask for a club switch. (Goren's Bridge Complete Chapter 20)
- Sometimes trump and the partnership suit can be played in a way to give suit preference.

The "It is There When you Need It" Rule.
Any time you need a suit preference, look for it and partner should be giving it if he is any good. I tell partners I do not signal a lot, but when a critical signal is needed (attitude, count or suit preference), the right signal will be there.

a. Against 4♠, Partner leads the A♣ and dummy has Kx of clubs.

You have: ♠QJ2   ♥KQJ102   ♦76   ♣963

Play the 9♣ on partner's ace to ask for a heart switch.

The Common Sense Rule:

One never signals if at all possible it will lose a trick. Similar to the rule that no one leads trump on the opening lead if you know it will cost a trick.

Discard of the Queen

If partner leads the ♦Ace against a trump contract, say 4♥, and you have the ♦QJx. The discard of the ♦Queen either promises the ♦Jack or the ♦Queen is a singleton. It is a request for partner to underlead the King because you want the lead.

One will do an echo with xx, 10x or Jx but not Qx.

Trump Echo

Playing high low (an echo) in the trump suit promises a third trump and shows the ability to ruff something.

> With 3, 975, play middle,7, down,5, up,9, only if you are hoping for a ruff
> With 2, 75, or no chance of a ruff, play low, 5, first

UDCA
Upside Down Count and Attitude

It is just the opposite of standard signals because one often does not want to sacrifice a high spot in the suit they like.

	Card	UDCA	Standard
Count			
	low	Even	Odd
	high	Odd	Even
Attitude			
	low	like or don't switch	please switch
	high	please switch	like or don't switch

Example: **Discarding** with UDCA
> with Q972, discard the 2 then the 7,9 and then the Queen
> with 9752, discard the 9 then the 7,5 and then the 2.

Other Topics

- Smith Echo
  - Against No Trump, one uses the suit declarer first leads to signal whether one likes the suit led.
  - If UDCA is being used, may I suggest Reverse Smith echoes.

- Foster Echo
  - Against No Trump, in third seat, one will play the second highest card.

- Odd Even
  - I do not use Odd-Even because:
    - I often do not have the right card.
    - Declarer will use the information.
    - Players should only use signals to suggest a lead not the location of a high card.
    - I find that a partner will use partner's signal without thought about the bidding, the dummy and play of the hand so far.
    - I can figure out the defense most of the time especially in the latter half of the play (Trick 6 and on) without signals from partner as long as partner wins every trick he wins with the cheapest card he has.

- Lavinthal (not lavitory)
  - Just another system I recommend not using like Odd Even.

- Revolving (not revolting or not scrambled)
  - Just another system I recommend not using like Lavinthal and Odd Even.