

This week's teaching comes from Ron Klinger, probably the world's leading bridge author and teacher with more than 50 books to his credit. He is also an Australian Grand Master and a World Bridge Federation International Master. You can subscribe to his free e-mail at RonKlingerBridge.com. This tip is a review for all, and possibly new material for beginners. Ron Klinger tells us:

Signalling By The Defenders

You are permitted to signal to your partner by the cards you play (not the manner in which you play them) and by the order in which they are played. There are three basic types of signals.

1. Signalling on partner's lead: Attitude signals

When partner leads a suit and you are not playing third hand high (perhaps because either partner's card or dummy's card is higher than any of yours), you can signal to partner whether you like the suit led or whether you would like partner to change to some other suit.

On partner's lead:

High card = Please continue this suit.

Lowest card = Please switch, try some other suit.

High-then-low = Please play a third round of this suit.

2. Signalling on declarer's lead: Count signals

When declarer is leading a suit from hand or from dummy, it is most unlikely that your side will be very strong in this suit and will want to have it continued. The defenders therefore signal to show each other how many cards they have in the suit led by declarer.

On declarer's lead:

Lowest card = Odd number of cards in the suit.

High-then-low = Even number of cards in the suit.

Avoid giving a high-then-low count signal if it may tell declarer the location of a vital card. In such cases simply play your lowest card.

3. Telling partner where your entry is: Suit preference signals

There are many situations where it makes no sense to give an attitude signal or a count signal. This is especially so when partner's problem is how to put you on lead: where is your entry? In such cases, signal the suit you wish partner to play.

Suit preference signal:

Highest card = high suit

Lowest card = low suit

Suppose the contract is 4 ♠ and you have led from ♥: A-K-8-5-3. You cash the ace and partner shows out when you cash the king. You are about to give partner a ruff. Which card to lead? The ♥ 8, the highest card, asks partner to return a ♦, the high suit (trumps excluded), the ♥ 3, lowest, asks for a ♣ return.

Basic Standard Signals

Example hands come from Frank Stewart's column for this week; this is from Monday's column, found in The Washington Post or on-line at <http://www.baronbarclay.com/product/bridgecolumn07-21-14>

North Deals
E-W Vul

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--|--|--|
| ♠ 5 | ♠ Q 9 6 2 | | | |
| ♥ J 10 6 2 | ♥ A Q 7 | | | |
| ♦ A K 7 4 3 | ♦ 6 2 | | | |
| ♣ A 10 2 | ♣ K Q 7 5 | | | |

| |
|---------|
| N |
| W E |
| S |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
| | 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♠ |
| Dbl | 2 ♠ | 3 ♦ | 4 ♠ |
| All pass | | | |

To keep your partner happy, signal properly on defense and interpret his signals correctly.

4 ♠ by South

| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. W | <u>♦ K</u> | 2 | 8 | 5 |

When West led the ♦ K against four Spades, East played the ♦ 8. That card was high enough for West, who continued with the ♦ A.

Q1: What clues does West have? -- Where are the unseen HCP? How many tricks does the defense have? Where can they find more?

Q2: What is East's lowest ♦?

Q3: What is West's logical switch?

The full hand:

North Deals
E-W Vul

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--|--|--|
| ♠ 5 | ♠ Q 9 6 2 | | | |
| ♥ J 10 6 2 | ♥ A Q 7 | | | |
| ♦ A K 7 4 3 | ♦ 6 2 | | | |
| ♣ A 10 2 | ♣ K Q 7 5 | | | |

| |
|---------|
| N |
| W E |
| S |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| ♠ 8 4 | | | | |
| ♥ K 9 5 | | | | |
| ♦ Q J 10 9 8 | | | | |
| ♣ 9 8 6 | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| ♠ A K J 10 7 3 | | | | |
| ♥ 8 4 3 | | | | |
| ♦ 5 | | | | |
| ♣ J 4 3 | | | | |

To keep your partner happy, signal properly on defense and interpret his signals correctly.

4 ♠ by South

| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. W | <u>♦ K</u> | 2 | 8 | 5 |

Q4: How does Declarer make the contract after West leads ♦ A at trick 2?

Q5: How does Declarer make the contract after West makes the logical switch at trick 2?

South Deals
Both Vul

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠ 7 3 | ♥ K 8 6 3 | ♦ 6 5 3 | ♣ A K 8 3 | West | North | East | South |
| | | | | | | | 1 ♠ |
| | | | | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass | 4 ♠ |
| | | | | All pass | | | |

| |
|-------|
| N |
| W E |
| S |

♠ K 10 9 6
♥ J 5
♦ A Q J 8
♣ 10 6 5

A good defensive signal won't help if your partner is snoozing.

4 ♠ by South

| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. W | <u>♣ K</u> | 5 | Q | 2 |

West led the ♣ K against four Spades, and East played the ♣ Q. Thus encouraged, West continued with the ♣ A and a third ♣.

- Q1: Where are the unseen high cards?
- Q2: How can West see four or more tricks for the defense?
- Q3: How can West see ten or more tricks for Declarer?
- Q4: What does East's play of the ♣ Q at Trick 1 promise?
- Q5: What should West lead to Trick 2?

The full story:

South Deals
Both Vul

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠ 7 3 | ♥ K 8 6 3 | ♦ 6 5 3 | ♣ A K 8 3 | West | North | East | South |
| | | | | | | | 1 ♠ |
| | | | | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass | 4 ♠ |
| | | | | All pass | | | |

| |
|-------|
| N |
| W E |
| S |

♠ K 10 9 6
♥ J 5
♦ A Q J 8
♣ 10 6 5

♠ 5
♥ 10 9 7 4 2
♦ K 4 2
♣ Q J 9 4

♠ A Q J 8 4 2
♥ A Q
♦ 10 9 7
♣ 7 2

A good defensive signal won't help if your partner is snoozing.

4 ♠ by South

| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. W | <u>♣ K</u> | 5 | Q | 2 |

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 7 5
♥ A 10 8 6 4
♦ A 10
♣ K 10 6

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | N | |
| W | | E |
| | S | |

♠ Q 8 2
♥ K Q 5
♦ 9 7 5
♣ 7 5 3 2

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
| | | | 1 ♣ |
| Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 N |
| Pass | 3 N | All pass | |

3 NT by South

| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. W | ♦ 3 | 10 | 5 | <u>J</u> |
| 2. S | ♥ J | 2 | 4 | <u>Q</u> |
| 3. E | ♦ 7 | 6 | 2 | <u>A</u> |
| 4. N | ♣ 6 | 3 | <u>A</u> | 9 |
| 5. S | ♥ 9 | 3 | 6 | <u>K</u> |

- Q1: How many HCP does West have? What are West's high cards?
 Q2: Which ♦ cards are unseen? Where are they?
 Q3: What does West's ♦ 2 tell East about the ♦ suit (besides that West started with five of them)?
 Q4: What tricks can East see for the defense?
 Q5: What should East lead to Trick 6?

The full hand:

South Deals
Both Vul

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---------|
| | ♠ J 7 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ A 10 8 6 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ A 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ K 10 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ A K 10 | <table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ Q 8 2 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ 7 3 2 | | ♥ K Q 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ Q 8 4 3 2 | | ♦ 9 7 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 9 8 | | ♣ 7 5 3 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ 9 6 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ J 9 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ K J 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ A Q J 4 | | | | | | | | | | |

3 NT by South

- Q6: If West plays the ♦ Q instead of the ♦ 2 at Trick 3, what does that tell East?
 Q7: Now what does East lead to Trick 6? What is the result?

South Deals
Both Vul

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|----------|-------|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | ♠ 10 9 7 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ K 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ 10 5 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ A J 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ Q 2 ♥ A Q 10 7 5 4 2 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 9 6 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| West | North | East | South | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 2 ♠ | All pass | 1 ♠ | | | | | | | | |

Players often confuse the order in which defensive signals are properly used. On Partner's lead, signal "attitude" first, then "count."

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 2 ♠ by South | | | | |
| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
| 1. W | ♦ K | 3 | ? | |

- Q1: Why didn't East bid?
- Q2: How many HCP are unseen? How are they divided?
- Q3: How many ♥ are unseen? How are they divided?
- Q4: What's East's plan to defeat the contract?
- Q5: What does East want West to lead at Trick 2?
- Q6: What ♦ does East play on Trick 1?

The full hand:

South Deals
Both Vul

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | ♠ 10 9 7 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ K 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ 10 5 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ A J 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ J 6 ♥ J 9 ♦ A K J 7 ♣ 10 8 7 5 2 | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ Q 2 ♥ A Q 10 7 5 4 2 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 9 6 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ A K 8 5 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ 8 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ Q 8 6 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ K Q | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 2 ♠ by South | | | | |
| <i>Trick</i> | <i>Lead</i> | <i>2nd</i> | <i>3rd</i> | <i>4th</i> |
| 1. W | ♦ K | 3 | ? | |

- Q7: How does the play go if East plays the ♦ 9 at Trick 1? What is the result?
- Q8: How does the play go if East plays the ♦ 2 at Trick 1? What is the result?