

SUIT PREFERENCE SIGNALS

When Partner leads a small card he has an honour that he is trying to establish. To help him do this you are required to play your highest card or the lowest of touching cards. But when partner leads an honour you give an attitude signal. If you play low encourage then this is your lowest card but if you play high encourage then you must play the highest card you can afford. From now on we assume you play low encourage.

You would encourage if you have a touching honour in that suit. For example if partner leads the K (promising the Queen) then you would encourage if you hold the jack. This is called an attitude signal and it takes precedence over all other signals.

BUT

If partner already knows the attitude then you can tell him something else. If, for example in a suit contract, partner leads the A and there is a singleton in dummy. Then the attitude is known. Blind Freddie can work out that the next lead of that suit will be ruffed so he does not need to be told by you. You therefore have an opportunity to tell him about a suit you do like. If you discount that suit and the trump suit then there are two other suits left. If you want the higher ranked suit then you play a high card and if you want the lower ranked suit play a small card. This is ***suit preference***.

EG

Contract	Partners lead	Dummy	You play	Meaning
4S	A♣	♠ AK4 ♥ KJ42 ♦ 76432 ♣ 4	9♣	No value in Clubs. The 9C is a big one I want the higher of H's and D's. Please lead a H as I have the AQ
4S	A♣	♠ AK4 ♥ KJ42 ♦ 76432 ♣ 4	3♣	No value in Clubs. The 3C is a small card showing I want the lower of H's and D's. Please lead a D as I have something for you.
4S	A♣	♠ AK4 ♥ KJ42 ♦ 76432 ♣ 43	5♣	Low encourage - keep Playing Clubs.
	K♣		6♣	This is suit preference. I want a Diamond lead.

Another use of suit preference is when you think you can give partner a ruff. You lead the A of Hearts and you think partner can ruff a heart. Think about which card you lead. Partner needs to know what suit to get back to your hand so they can rough another heart. Or even id she cant she would like to know where we maybe able to take extra tricks.

Contract 4S	Partners lead A♥ 2♥	Dummy ♠ AK42 ♥ QJ4 ♦ 7 ♣ Q753	You play 10♥ This is likely to be a singleton. Because you would encourage with a doubleton and play low. She wants a club and as you hold ; ♣ A862 Play the A then a little one Partner can ruff and you can start a cross ruff
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There are lots of opportunities to give suit preference. Make sure that it is obvious the you are not giving attitude.