

## Basic Defensive Strategies II

### Signalling Attitude, Part 2

By Neil Kimelman

Last article we discussed signalling attitude. As a review, playing upside down signals, a low card encourages when partner leads a suit. However, when declarer leads a suit, either from dummy or their hand, the signal is count. Last article gave an example of an attitude signal. Here are others:

**Example 1:** When you have high cards in the suit led.

West North East South

1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass

4♠ All Pass

Your partner, North, leads the ♦2.

Dummy

♠Q84

♥432

♦A76

♣Q103

You hold: ♠A3 ♥9652 ♦KQ93 ♣876.

When dummy wins the ace at trick one, encourage a continuation by playing the 3.

Other valid reasons you may want to encourage in a suit partner leads:

- a) You know you do not want partner to make a disastrous shift to a different suit.
- b) You want to mislead declarer as to the location of the honours in the suit led.\*

\*Although this can be a winning tactic, extreme caution in deception is recommended if your signal may cause partner to mis-defend.

Usually the partner making the signal (the Signaller) is the captain of the defence, at this point in time. Unless the opening leader (the Receiver of the signal) has a good reason not to follow the Signaller, they should follow partner's attitude signal.

However, remember that attitude signals are informative, but should be considered in the full context of the hand. Here are two such examples where thinking is required:

### Example 2:

Let's say that E-W have the following auction, with N-S silent:

West East

1♠ 2♠

4♠

Partner leads ♦Q. Declarer plays small from dummy.

Dummy (East)

♠A73

♥10432

♦K4

♣10432.

You (South)

♠K42

♥J875

♦A1083

♣J8

Sure partner made a good lead, giving you two quick diamond tricks. But, the objective is not to win two diamond tricks, but get as many tricks as possible. The first objective on this deal should be limiting declarer from ruffing any diamond losers in dummy. Therefore discourage a diamond continuation. Partner should be able to figure out a trump switch, with no reason to lead a heart or club. The full deal:

North

♠6

♥Q95

♦QJ65

♣ Q9765

West

East (Dummy)

♠QJ10985

♠A73

♥ AK

♥10432

♦972

♦K4

♣ AK

♣10432.

You (South)

♠K42

♥J875

♦A1083

♣J8

Notice that declarer misplayed the hand. They would be better off playing the ♦K at trick one. Now the game is unbeatable. Here is the same auction and lead, but different holdings:

**Example 3:**

West East

1♠ 2♠

4♠

Partner leads ♦Q. Declarer plays small from dummy.

Dummy (East)

♠1083

♥K632

♦K4

♣QJ108

You (South)

♠75

♥AQJ8

♦A108632

♣J

Here you want a heart shift. Discourage at trick one, and partner should be able to work things out. A trump suit is not likely to be the winner, with a source of tricks in the club suit. The full deal:

North

♠J6

♥107

♦QJ972

♣9754

West

♠AKQ432

♥J94

♦6

♣AK

East (Dummy)

♠1083

♥K632

♦K4

♣QJ108

You (South)

♠75

♥AQJ8

♦A108632

♣J

When partner switches to a heart, the spot card is informative. If they had three or more hearts they would lead a low one. So when the lead the ♥10, you know to give partner a heart ruff at trick four, and not try and cash the diamond ace.

One other point of interest on this hand. Notice, that if heart suit was headed by the ♥AK, not ♥AQ, it is still right to discourage diamonds. If you get complacent, declarer will ruff the diamond at trick two, and quickly take their 10 tricks!

## Communication between the defenders

We continue to look at attitude situations at trick one. There are times you do not want to win the trick with an ace, but encourage, keeping the communication between the defenders.

Here is such a situation:

**Example 4:** You are South ♠K95 ♥AQJ53 ♦J108 ♣Q5.

West North East South

1♥

2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass

4♠ All Pass

Partner leads the ♥9. It looks as if partner has led shortness, likely from a doubleton. Play the ♥3, encouraging.

Communication is a theme that I will explore further in this series, as it is critical, not only on open lead, but throughout the play of the hand.

I will continue to look at attitude signals in the April article.