

MATAMATA BRIDGE CLUB
 TIPS FOR BETTER BRIDGE
 SIGNALS and DISCARDS
 Thursday 23 March 2017

You need to agree with your partner the type of signals and discards that you want to play. The following is called standard attitude and count.

Giving Attitude

- We play cards in a certain order to tell partner what we think of their lead.
- A high card says we like the lead and a low one denies interest.
- We use the same method when we are discarding, a high card shows we have useful cards in the suit thrown, a small card shows nothing of interest.
- High-low is not always used as an attitude signal.

Giving Count

- When following to the suit declarer is playing we normally give a count signal.
- A high card followed by a low card shows an even number of cards.
- A low card followed by a higher card shows an odd number of cards in the suit.
- Here is an example of a count signal in use against 3NT

	♠6 43	
	♥A	
	♦9 8 7 2	
	♣K Q 10 7 5	
♠952		♠J87
♥KQJ10		♥7432
♦J43		♦Q105
♣A63		♣982
	♠AKQ10	
	♥9865	
	♦AK6	
	♣J4	
	West	

- N/S reach 3NT and despite South's opening bid of 1♥ you lead the ♥K.
- The king is a strong lead asking partner to play an honour if they have one or to give a count signal otherwise.
- The ♥A wins the first trick and East plays the ♥7 – that's the highest card that can be spared and it makes the high-low signal, showing that East has an even number of hearts
- Trick 2 goes ♣5, ♣2, ♣J, ♣3.
- You correctly duck the first trick; you are not obliged to win a trick just because you can.
- To trick 3 South leads the ♣4, should you play your ♣A this time?
- Looking at all four hands it's easy to see that South has only two clubs, so it's right to win the second club, but how could you know this at the table?
- The answer lies in the card East played on the first round of clubs. It was the ♣2. That means that East has an odd number of clubs, one or three or five. If East has one, South has four clubs and it doesn't matter when you take your ♣A.
- East can't have five clubs, because you have just seen South produce a second club. So East must have three clubs and South only two.
- Win your ♣A and cash three heart winners. Whether you play diamonds or spades next, South must lose a diamond and go one down.
- But if you duck the second club or take the first one, South makes nine tricks – 4 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 2 clubs.

Giving a count signal works in a suit contract too:

♠64
♥A732
♦98
♣KQJ85

♠Q1053
♥KQJ9
♦5432
♣6

- You lead the ♥K
- Dummy wins the ♥A, partner plays the ♥4 and declarer the ♥5.
- Partner has three hearts
- Declarer cashes the ♠A dropping partner's ♠9 and ♠K on which partner throws the ♣2.
- Your ♠Q 10 will now always win two tricks
- Declarer plays the ♣A to your ♣6, dummy's ♣5 and partner's ♣3.
- Declarer now leads the ♣10, do you trump it now or wait a bit?
- Did you notice partner's signal? Partner threw the ♣2 on the spade and then played the ♣3. Partner is trying to show you 5♣ with that low-high signal. If partner has five clubs, South can only have two clubs.
- If you throw a loser on the second club, South will be in dummy and can throw his heart loser on a club winner.
- So you must ruff the second club and play your top hearts. South will ruff the third heart but as he cannot get to dummy to throw his diamonds away on the three club winners and 4♠ goes down.
- Give the agreed signal even if you can't tell how partner will use the information.
- When playing a high card, signal with the largest card you can afford.
- Watch the cards your partner plays. When declarer is playing a suit, play count signals.
- A high-low signal shows an even number. A low-high signal shows an odd number.
- On your lead, when either you or dummy are winning the trick, a high card shows attitude. A high card says 'I have something useful' A low card says 'I can't help you in this suit.'

How do I know which signal to give when partner leads and A or K?

A common usage these days, when holding both A and K is to lead:

A – asking partner to give an attitude signal

K – asking partner to give a (c) kount signal - against NT to unblock any honour they may have or if no honour then to give kount

Correct lead against NT?

KQxxx

Answer – unless the bidding suggests otherwise, lead 4th highest, Not the K