

WHICH CARD TO PLAY FROM AN HONOUR SEQUENCE

An Honour sequence is a sequence of cards headed by an honour (A, K, Q, J or 10)

As Defender on Lead:

As the defender on lead, you normally lead top of a sequence (K from KQ, Q from QJ, J from J10 etc). This is called, "Leading with a Leader". It tells your partner that you have the card immediately below the one you have led.

So, from this holding as West:

```
      432
KQJ65      98
      A106
```

You would lead the K.

As Defender Following to Partner's Lead:

When you are the defender following to partner's lead, you should play the lowest of a sequence. This is called "Following with a Follower". It tells your partner:

1. You don't have the card immediately below the one you have played, and
2. You might have some of the honours immediately above the card you have played.

So, from this holding as East:

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      432
98      KQ1065
      AJ7
```

After partner leads the 9, you should play the Q.

When declarer wins the ace, partner knows you don't have the J, but might have the king.

Alternatively, on this holding as East:

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      432
98      K10765
      AQJ
```

You are forced to play your K (third player plays high) and the fact you didn't play your Q tells partner declarer has this card.

Sometimes you can place every card in the suit with this process:

1065

Q7432 8

K

You lead the 3, 5 from dummy, partner contributes the 8 and declarer wins with the K.

Partner must have the 9 (otherwise declarer would have won with this card)

Partner must have the J (otherwise declarer would have won with this card)

Declarer must have the A (otherwise partner would have played it, third player plays high)

As Declarer:

Generally, you should play the top of a sequence.

If you play lower or the lowest card you normally let the defenders work out that you have the remaining cards in the sequence:

432

65 A98

KQJ107

As the South declarer, you lead the 2 from dummy, East ducks playing the 8. You should play the K, leaving the defenders unsure where the Q and J are. If you play the 10, East knows you have the KQJ because their partner did not win the trick with one of these cards.

Similarly, when drawing trumps avoid showing off with little cards:

432

65 87

AKQJ109

As the South declarer, you shouldn't draw trumps by playing the 9 then the 10. The defenders know you have the AKQJ because their partner is not winning the tricks with any of these cards. Better to play the AK and leave the defender's wondering if partner might have the Q.

There are exceptions as declarer. A well known one is where you are worried about ruffs. You might lead a low card to induce a defender not to take their A and give partner a ruff.

432

A65 87

KQJ109

If I'm worried about a ruff in another suit, as the South declarer I might lead the trump 9 rather than the K to induce the West hand to duck with the A for fear of dropping an honour in their partner's hand.

The basic rules for playing touching honors:

* On defense, play the card that clarifies your holding best for your partner

* When declaring, play the card that will give the defenders the most trouble or doubt about your hand
Most of the time, the highest card is best as declarer