

Defending No Trump Contracts – An Introduction to Signals

Signalling on Partner's Lead

When partner leads a suit and you are not unblocking or trying to win the trick, you will play a low card. You may have a choice of which low card to play. If you play a highish card, you are telling partner you like the suit. Your lowest card means you do not like the suit. This is called an attitude signal.

Some people reverse the meaning of attitude signals where a highish card means dislike and the lowest card means like. You will need to discuss with your partner which system you are using.

When Partner Leads an honour from a Long Suit

- Overtake or unblock if you have a doubleton honour
- Encourage if you have three or more cards and an honour
- Discourage if you have no honour



The Bath Coup

	Dummy	
West	♠ 7 4 3	East
♠ K Q T 9 4	Declarer	♠ 8 6 5
	♠ A J 2	

West leads the ♠K, dummy plays low and declarer allows the king to win. If west plays another spade, declarer makes two spade tricks.

This is known as the Bath Coup.

If east-west signal accurately, they can spoil declarer's fun. At trick one, east should play a discouraging card. If their system is "high encouraging", that will be the five. When declarer plays the two, west can see the five is east's lowest card and should not continue the suit.

If east-west use "low encouraging", east will play the eight. Again, west can see it is a discouraging card and should not continue the suit.

Later on, west hopes that east can lead a spade and declarer will get only one spade trick.