

## Discarding

"Discard." This word does not refer to any old signal you give when following suit. A discard is a card that you throw away when you CANNOT follow suit. This is an opportunity to give a message to partner when defending. For our purposes here, we are only discussing discards when declarer has led i.e. defenders' discards. In discarding, you will be playing a card in another suit.....but not a trump. When you are unable to follow suit and either cannot or will not trump in, you must perforce throw away a card. This is called a discard.

Remember that while keeping partner informed or clued in with your discards, declarer has the advantage of seeing them also. Note that your opponents are entitled to know what discarding methods you use. When asked you must explain your methods. All of you would simply reply (if asked) that you play "standard leads and carding".

Attitude discards are the simplest system of signalling. If you use standard signals (which is what we recommend for you and what most people use), a high card in the suit discarded encourages that suit and a low card discourages it.

*Some people play upside-down signals. This is the opposite of standard. This is also a good system but don't muss it up. Be on the same page as partner at all times. Discuss with partner what you are playing.*

Note that it is only the first discard in a suit that we have to pay attention to.

So what can we tell partner by our first discard? That we have an interest in a particular suit, usually because we hold an honour in that suit, ideally the ace or the king. This is not a command to partner to lead this suit ; it may or may not be sensible to do so ; that depends on many things. But you are helping partner to unravel some of the mysteries of the jigsaw puzzle that is your hand.

How do we impart that message? Some people don't bother at all. In this case, partner is blindfolded, in a very dark forest and no guiding light...you are not helping her to know what to do next. Why keep partner in the dark? Help her so that your side can take as many tricks on defense as possible.

Why bother?

"If only you had led me a spade, partner...." or "You could have given me a ruff in diamonds...." How often have you heard those words, or something very like them, drift across the bridge room during play?

Well, of course, it would be nice if partners were always clairvoyant, but they never are. The ones who seem to be are almost certainly using signals. This probably gains them on average at least one extra defensive trick on every hand on which they are defenders. That is a huge amount, especially in duplicate bridge.

You can show by your discard, the suit you would prefer partner to lead: The simplest discard system of all is to discard a high card in a suit you want led. This must be the first discard you make because if you are forced to make a number of discards you tend to throw away small cards whenever possible.

Discarding a low card as your first discard, suggests that you have no interest in that suit.

Sometimes, especially against No Trump contracts, it would be wiser to not discard a high card in a suit you DO wish led as by so doing, you may waste a trick. Thus, you should often choose to discard cards in suits you do NOT wish led. This way, partner will be able to figure out what you DO wish led, by a process of elimination.

Let's look at an example:

		J105	
		Q65	
		A76	
		K654	
A98 <u>6</u> 43			---
432			AKJ9
J102			9543
8			J10732
<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	KQ72	
		1087	
<b>1N</b>	<b>3N</b>	KQ8	
		AQ9	

For those playing Puppet Stayman:

1NT	3C
3D	3NT

At trick one of spade suit led (6) by partner, East has no Spades and wishes to tell partner to lead a heart. If he discards the 9 of hearts, West will indeed lead a heart to East. BUT then East will have squandered a trick in hearts by wasting the 9 Hearts.

Instead, especially because this is No Trumps, East should discard the 3 Diamonds. (She could discard first the 2 Clubs, but since it is a black card on West's black card, then West might not notice...better to discard the 2 diamonds.

Declarer wins the first trick with K Spades and leads another spade as it is imperative that she drive out the Ace Spades in order to make her contract. West wins with the Ace and East now has an opportunity for yet another discard. East must discard the 2 Clubs now. Now the picture is complete. East has said to partner: "Do not lead a diamond. Do not lead a club." It would be insanity for West to lead another spade. This leaves West with no choice but to pick the leftover suit to lead: West should lead a heart. Look what happens now...East will score 4 heart tricks as well as West scoring the Ace Spades. Five tricks. Down one!

Thus versus No Trumps, a negative discard is often the best strategy, saving our high good cards for defeating the contract.

Another example may be seen in this next hand:

	1095		
	752		
	AKJ10		
	862		
J43			76
<u>9</u> 3			AKQ84
8543			962
9743			QJ10
<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>
1H	DbI	P	2D
P	2S	P	4S
			AKQ82
			J106
			Q7
			AK5

So why on earth did South double instead of overcalling Spades which would have been simpler?

An overcall shows 8-17 points (including distribution). South has too many points to make just an overcall. Thus, the only way South can show a bigger hand than an overcall is to use the word: "Double" first and then bid her suit later. This shows a hand that was too big to overcall. 18 or more points and a five card or longer suit.

West leads 9 hearts...(East opened 1H). East wins with Q Hearts and leads back A hearts. West plays 3 Hearts. East leads King hearts. What should west discard now?

Dummy is now out of hearts so it would not be normal for East to lead another heart. BUT West really wants East to lead a heart (because West has J Spades and this will now become a trick)

So! West should now discard the 3 clubs. East is looking at crummy clubs in dummy. When dummy is on your right, lead to the weakest suit in sight...BUT because west discarded the 3 of clubs, East knows NOT to lead a club. Perforce he must now lead a heart. He would NEVER dream of leading a diamond as dummy's diamonds are too fabulous.

If declarer ruffs with a high spade, then west's J spades will be promoted into a trick.

Another hand for you to ponder!

				Q98	
				KJ	
				J743	
				J1075	
32					765
Q987					65432
AKQ5					108
K32					A84
<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	AKJ104	
				A10	
<b>1S</b>	<b>DbI</b>	<b>2S</b>	<b>All pass</b>	962	
				Q96	

West plays A diamonds, King diamonds and then Queen diamonds (don't be worrying about setting up dummy's J diamonds) ...East has signalled high then low, showing a doubleton so you know that you can take a trick with Q diamonds. Don't think about leading a small one instead of the Q and making partner ruff when you can take a trick yourself. And do NOT lead back a 4th diamond for partner to ruff when you know she will be overruffed.

On Q diamonds, East is forced to make a discard. East must discard the 8 clubs now. Why?

Two reasons: It tells West to lead a club at first opportunity AND it shortens East's supply of clubs. This has to be a good thing. Maybe East can score a ruff in clubs soon?

West (at trick four) now shifts to 2 Clubs (bottom of something) to East's Ace. East leads back 4 Clubs to West's King and West leads another club. East ruffs this. Down one!

## DOUBLE TROUBLE

You are the responder to the Takeout double, sitting West. What will you bid on the following hands?

N    E    S    W  
1D   Dbl P    ?

1. S 8752    H 63            D 108752    C K4
2. S Q5        H J976            D 82            C K8642
3. S AK74    H J3            D J62            C Q8642
4. S A5        H K87642        D 72            C Q83
5. S AK743    H Q4            D 1062            C 874
6. AQ1053    H AJ3            D 732            C Q4
7. 964         H Q82            D AQ            C 97632
8. S 1075    H 942            D 10832        C Q73

Answers below. Scroll down to bottom of article.

You are now the doubler (EAST) and it is your turn to bid again.

N    E    S    W  
1D   Dbl   Pass   1S  
Pass ??

- |    |        |          |        |        |
|----|--------|----------|--------|--------|
| a) | S KQ32 | H A64    | D 92   | C K832 |
| b) | D AQ3  | H AQ84   | D 82   | C J842 |
| c) | S KQ2  | H AQJ973 | D 4    | C AK3  |
| d) | S Q104 | H AQJ83  | D AJ10 | C K4   |
| e) | S QJ94 | H AQJ98  | D 3    | C AK4  |

Answers a) to e)

a) Pass.

You have already promised at least 13-15 points when you made your takeout double. Your partner may have only

S 6532  
H 532  
D 532  
C 532

In bridge, you must constantly ask yourself: "Have I already told my story??" In order to make a takeout double, you already said " I have at least 13-15 points." You have NO more than that.

b) Pass.  
See a)

c) 3H .

Your hand was too good to make an overcall. If you make an overcall, it promises 8-17 points (including distribution). In order to show 21 points, double first and then show your suit. Partner will know you have a long suit (5 cards or more) and had too many points to make a simple overcall.

d) 2H .

To double first and then bid your best suit at cheapest level shows 18 or more points and at least a five card suit.

e) 3S .

To double and then raise partner to 2S would have shown 16- 18 points. To raise to 3S will show 19-21 points.

### Answers: 1-8

1. 1S      When you are responder to a takeout double, with 0-8 points, you bid your best suit at the cheapest level.
2. 1H      See # 1.
3. 2S      Now you have 9-11 points. You need to show a bit more by jumping one level showing 9-11 points and at least four S 's. You have 11 points and a SIX card suit. Show a better hand by a double jump.
4. 3H      See # 3.
5. 2S      This shows 13-15 points & a five card or longer Spade suit. When you find yourself unable to bid a major in response to a takeout double & are tempted to bid a minor instead, consider whether you can bid NT.
6. 4S
7. 1NT      When your only long suit is the opponents' suit and you are responder to a takeout double, you will have to make your cheapest bid in a 3 card suit. You cannot pass partner's takeout double or they will make 1D, doubled and the score will be MINUS 740.
8. 1H

## THIRD HAND PLAY

from Introduction to Defence by Eddie Kantar  
JUST fully revised by Barbara Seagram. Coming out this Fall.

Dummy

S Q74

You

S 2

S K93

West leads the S two and dummy plays the queen. East would cover with the king. If dummy plays low, East would save the king-holding it over the queen-and play the nine instead.

You have all heard of third hand high but not when there is an honour in dummy and it is not played. If you are third hand in that scenario, you in third hand must insert your second highest card, **provided it is a 9 or better.**

Now picture the same diagram assuming that East started with K 8 3. If dummy plays low East would play the king. If third hand is to retain his honor card over dummy he must be able to insert a nine or higher. If he cannot, he plays his honor card. This calls for a little practice.

Assume you are always East and your partner leads the two.

**dummy (North)**  
**S K 7 3**

**West leads**  
**S 2**

**You are East**  
**(a) S A Q 9**  
**(b) S Q 10 5**  
**(c) S A J 9**  
**(d) S A 6 4**  
**(e) S Q J 10 4**  
**(f) S A J 10 9**  
**(g) S A 10 8**  
**(h) S J 9**

**Assuming dummy plays low, which card should East play when partner leads the S 2?**

## **Solutions**

**(a) The queen.**

**Common sense should tell you this. The queen is as good as the ace, with the king sitting in the dummy.**

**(b) The queen.**

**When dummy has an honor higher than your highest, you simply play third hand as if there were no honor in the dummy at all.**

**(c) The jack.**

**Retain the higher honor over dummy's honor and play the next highest card as long as it is the nine or better.**

**(d) The ace.**

**You have no card as high as the nine to play, so you have to play your highest card.**

**(e) The ten.**

**Lowest of three touching equals.**

**(f) The nine.**

**The jack, ten, and nine are all equals, and you must save the ace to catch the king so you play the nine, the lowest of touching equals. Remember to always win from the bottom but lead from the top!!**

**(g) The ten. Save the ace to capture the king.**

**(h) The jack.**

**Third hand high when dummy has an honor higher than your highest.**