

## Beginner Corner 103

### Signalling with your discard

When you are discarding (ie cannot follow to the suit led), you can send a message to partner with your discard. Using the signalling formula, “throw high means aye, throw low means no”, you have a choice. You can either throw high in the suit you want partner to lead; alternatively, you can throw low in a suit you don’t want and hope partner can work out what you do want.

While it is undoubtedly clearer to discard high in the suit you want, to do so can throw away a potential trick. This is particularly the case in notrumps, where you may be discarding a length winner.

In (A), West cashes ♥A v 4♠ and follows with ♥K. This gives East the opportunity to signal with his discard. He is keen on clubs, holding ♣A, so discards ♣10 (he can afford to — ♣10 will not win a trick).

West now knows not to lead a third heart (hoping East can over-ruff dummy) nor a diamond. West switches to ♣K (top of two), then ♣4 to ♣A. East recognises his partner’s “high-low” signifies a doubleton, so leads a third club. West ruffs and that’s down two.

In (B), West leads ♥4 v 3NT. Declarer wins dummy’s ♥K and needs one more heart trick to make nine. Best is to try to sneak it now, rather than run clubs and make the defence easier.

However, when dummy’s ♥7 is led at trick two, East has the chance to signal with his discard. Desperate as he is for a spade, he

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

<div>A</div>	<div>♠ J542</div> <div>♥ J6</div> <div>♦ KQ93</div> <div>♣ QJ5</div>		
<div>♠ 93</div> <div>♥ AK10873</div> <div>♦ 1042</div> <div>♣ K4</div>	<div><div><div>N</div><div>W</div><div>E</div><div>S</div></div></div> <div>♠ AKQ76</div> <div>♥ Q942</div> <div>♦ A</div> <div>♣ 986</div>	<div>♠ 108</div> <div>♥ 5</div> <div>♦ J8765</div> <div>♣ A10732</div>	
S	W	N	E
1♠	2♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	End		

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

B	<p>♠ Q52 ♥ K7 ♦ 1054 ♣ AKJ103</p>		
<p>♠ 97 ♥ A86432 ♦ Q86 ♣ 86</p>	<div><div>N</div><div>W</div><div>E</div><div>S</div></div> <p>♠ 8643 ♥ QJ105 ♦ AK3 ♣ Q9</p>	<p>♠ AKJ10 ♥ 9 ♦ J972 ♣ 7542</p>	
S	W	N	E
1NT	Pass	3NT	End

cannot afford to throw a high spade — he’d be discarding the fifth defensive trick. Knowing partner will never lead clubs looking at dummy, East discards ♦2, discouraging diamonds.

West wins ♥A and reasons that hearts and clubs are futile, partner has said no to diamonds, so spades it must be. He switches to ♠9 and East is soon winning ♠10 and cashing ♠AKJ. Down one.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk