



Pat Harrington

## The right attitude

In the past two articles, we examined the defense of some suit contract deals where the opening lead is the ace from an ace-king combination. We saw that it is not automatic to cash the king at trick two. If the opponents have the queen, we don't want to make it good for them, but partner might have a holding that makes it desirable to have the suit continued. In that case, partner will give an *encouraging attitude signal* by playing the highest card he can spare.

Because the main concern in continuing with the king is the fear that we will allow the opponents to win the undeserved queen, partner will often encourage when he holds the queen. Holding Q-7 -3, partner can play the 7, the highest card he can spare. With 7-5-3, partner plays the 3,

# Play & Learn

his lowest card, to discourage. If only attitude signals were that simple! Look at this problem from East's perspective. South plays in 4♠ after North opens 1♣. West, your partner, leads the ♥A (ace from ace-king) and this is what you can see:

### Dummy

♠ J 6 5 3  
♥ 9 7 6  
♦ K 7 3  
♣ A K Q

### You

♠ K Q 10  
♥ 10 8 4 2  
♦ J 10  
♣ 9 8 7 6

What card will you play to this trick?

Think about your answer again with this additional information: An attitude signal isn't about what you have, but about what you want to happen next. Have you counted your defensive tricks? Do you see a way that you might defeat 4♠? Once you have your defensive plan, take a look at the complete deal to see how you did.

♠ —	♠ J 6 5 3	♠ K Q 10				
♥ A K J 3	♥ 9 7 6	♥ 10 8 4 2				
♦ 9 8 6 4 2	♦ K 7 3	♦ J 10				
♣ 10 5 4 2	♣ A K Q	♣ 9 8 7 6				
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	♠ A 9 8 7 4 2					
	♥ Q 5					
	♦ A Q 5					
	♣ J 3					

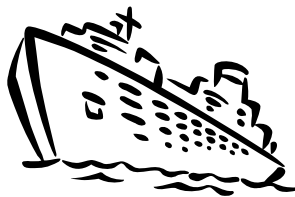
How many trump tricks did you count when you made East's defensive plan? After dummy came down, you should have counted on winning two spade tricks. Your high spades are well-located over dummy's jack and you have two tricks. Partner's opening lead of the ♥A tends to show the king, so you hope to win four tricks. The spade tricks aren't going anywhere, but partner's second heart trick might get away. In fact, if partner doesn't cash the ♥K at trick two, declarer can play three rounds of clubs, discarding his second heart loser, and 4♠ will make. If you follow your instinct and play the discouraging ♥2 at trick one, partner might abandon hearts for fear of setting up declarer's queen.

You want partner to play the ♥K because it will be the setting trick if it cashes. Play an encouraging heart at trick one: The 10 sends a loud, clear signal. Yes, the 8 would probably work, but you should make it a practice to play the highest card you can afford when encouraging.

It's relatively easy to give an attitude signal that tells partner *what you have*. It takes a real bridge player to give an attitude signal that tells partner *what you want*. □

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