

## 23) How to signal with discards.

Defence is as important as attack. One can manage to make an opponents contract fail if discarding signals have been properly agreed upon.

Discards ought to be differentiated in case of NT or suit contracts. We have however to keep in mind that the first discard is the most important and the most meaningful one.

Discards made later on during play, are in fact forced discards and therefore less transparent.

### Discards in a suit contract.

#### Discards in the same suit.

Let us suppose that the opponents contract is in ♥ and partner leads a ♣. If we want to encourage partner to keep on playing ♣, we would play a high ♣ card, if instead we are not interested in ♣, we would play a low ♣ card. So that high card encourages and low card refuses.

#### Discard outside the suit played.

These discards are usually made when declarer draws trumps and we have no more trumps to play. This is the moment to signal to partner the suit we would like him to lead at the first occasion. Let us still suppose that ♥ is trump, and on third round of trumps we have no more ♥ to play. In such a case if we discard an even card, the discard is preferential: if we are discarding an even low card, partner, at the first occasion, should play the lower ranking suit ( LRS) between the two left, excluding the trump suit and the discarded suit. If instead we discard an even high card, partner, at the first occasion, should play the higher ranking suit ( HRS) between the two left, always excluding the trump suit and the discarded suit.

Trump being ♥, if we discard the ♣2, we are asking partner to lead a ♦ whenever he can.

If instead we discard the ♦10, that means that we would like partner to lead a ♠ at the first occasion.

In the same example, with ♥ as trump, if we cannot furnish ♥ any more and we play an odd card, high or low it does not matter, for instance the 3 or the 7 of ♦, that means that we want partner to lead directly ♦ at the first opportunity.

The same technique is used when we are not in a position to play the requested suit, keeping in mind that trump suit is always excluded and

that the first discard is the most meaningful.

To make it short, in the first discard outside the suit requested, an even card is preferential while an odd card calls directly the discarded suit. The above technique allows us to signal a preference for a given suit in two ways, either discarding an odd card in the desired suit, or discarding the right even preferential card. In this way we are always sure to be able to inform partner to lead ♦ at his first opportunity either by discarding an odd ♦ card (3,5,7,9) or a low even ♣ such as 2 or 4 , or again by discarding a high even ♠ card such as 8 or 10. Any such card would carry a very clear message: as soon as you can lead a ♦ please.

### **Discards in a NT contract**

#### **Discards in the same suit**

Opponents are playing in a NT contract and our partner leads a ♣. If we want partner to continue to play ♣ we would furnish a low card if instead we have no interest in ♣ we would furnish a high card. For obvious reasons it is the opposite of what happens in suit contracts. High card refuses and low card encourages.

#### **Discards outside the requested suit**

Opponents play a NT contract and declarer or partner plays for instance ♠ and we do not have any more ♠ to furnish. In NT contracts, discards outside the demanded suit are always preferential. If, for instance, we play a small ♣, odd or even it does not matter, that means that we would like partner to play the LRS, excluding ♠ and ♣, at the first occasion, that is to play ♦. The same request can be made by discarding a high ♥ , odd or even it does not matter. Such discard again would mean: “lead a ♦ as soon as you can “. In this way, we can therefore “call” the desirable lead in two different ways, making sure that we will always have the appropriate card to make such call.