

SUIT PREFERENCE SIGNALS

Suppose that you have a suit with several cards of equal trick-taking power. Sometimes, this equal power is zero. Do not despair – in specific agreed-upon cases, you can send a suit preference signal when giving a ruff or following suit.

Giving Partner a Ruff

- You are leading a suit, expecting partner to ruff. The rank of the card led signals the preferred suit for partner to return after the ruff. Show a re-entry to facilitate a second ruff.
- A *high* card suggests the *higher*-ranking of the two remaining side-suits; a *low* card suggests the *lower*-ranking.

Singleton in Dummy (versus a suit contract)

- Partner leads an ace against a suit contract, and dummy has a singleton. If there is no future in the suit for the defense (and no reason to make dummy ruff), attitude is irrelevant.
- Your partner will need to decide which, if any, of the other two side-suits to attack. Signal your preference (excluding trumps) by playing a high card for the higher-ranking suit or a low card for the lower-ranking suit. Middle says, “meh.”

Key points

- Suit preference works if partner watches the spot cards.
 - A middle card indicates no side-suit preference.
 - Attitude and count signals take priority over suit preference.
- Most agree that suit preference applies in the above cases.

< 1 >

North Deals

None Vul

♠ 9 3

♥ A J 9 7 3

♦ K J 8 2

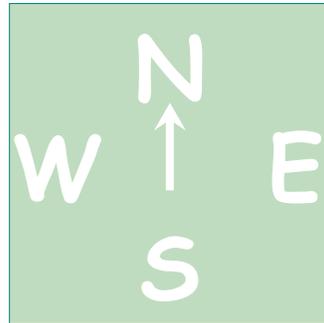
♣ 6 5

♠ A Q J

♥ 10 8 6 5

♦ Q

♣ K 9 7 3 2



♠ K 8 7 5 4

♥ K Q 4

♦ 6 4 3

♣ A Q

♠ 10 6 2

♥ 2

♦ A 10 9 7 5

♣ J 10 8 4

West

North

East

South

Pass

1 ♠

Pass

Pass

2 NT

Pass

All pass

2 ♣

4 ♠

4 ♠ by East

Lead: ♥ 2

Down 1 — EW -50

< 2 >

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ J 6 4

♥ K 8 5

♦ K 10 8 7

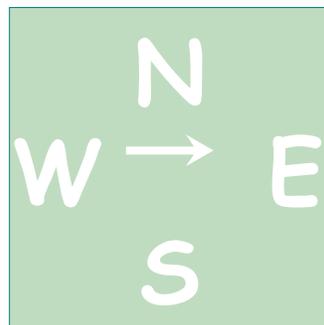
♣ K 8 7

♠ 9 7 5

♥ Q J 7 6

♦ 3

♣ J 9 6 5 2



♠ A 2

♥ 10 9 4 3

♦ 9 6 4 2

♣ A 10 4

♠ K Q 10 8 3

♥ A 2

♦ A Q J 5

♣ Q 3

West

North

East

South

Pass

2 ♠

Pass

4 ♠

All pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♦ 3

Down 1 — NS -100

< 3 >

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ 4

♥ 9 7

♦ Q 7 2

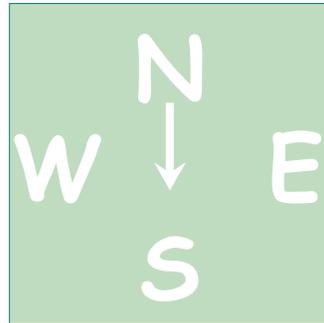
♣ A Q 10 8 5 4 2

♠ K 8 6

♥ A J 10 3 2

♦ A J

♣ J 9 3



♠ Q J 10 5

♥ K Q 8 4

♦ K 6 5 4

♣ 7

♠ A 9 7 3 2

♥ 6 5

♦ 10 9 8 3

♣ K 6

West

North

East

South

1 ♥

3 ♣

4 ♥

Pass

All pass

4 ♥ by West

Lead: ♠ 4

Down 1 — EW -100

< 4 >

♠ 2

West Deals

♥ 9 7 4

Both Vul

♦ A K J 9 8 2

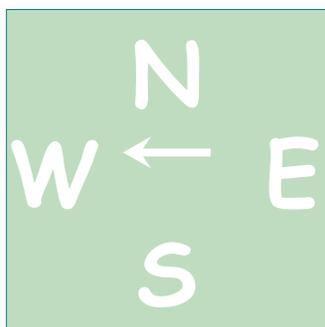
♣ K 10 9

♠ A 10 7 3

♥ A K 8 3 2

♦ 4

♣ Q 6 5



♠ Q 8 6 5

♥ J 5

♦ Q 10 3

♣ 8 4 3 2

♠ K J 9 4

♥ Q 10 6

♦ 7 6 5

♣ A J 7

West

North

East

South

1 ♥

2 ♦

Pass

2 NT

Pass

3 ♦

All pass

3 ♦ by North

Lead: ♥ J

Down 1 — NS -100

< 5 >

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A K J 9 8 7

♥ 2

♦ 5 4 2

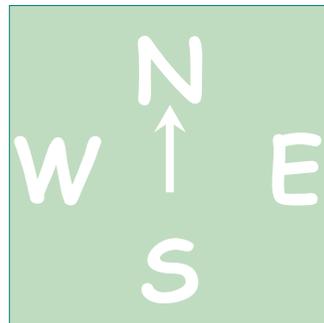
♣ A 6 5

♠ 6 5 4 3

♥ 5 3

♦ K Q 10

♣ K 4 3 2



♠ Q 10

♥ A K J 10 9 7

♦ A J 3

♣ Q 7

♠ 2

♥ Q 8 6 4

♦ 9 8 7 6

♣ J 10 9 8

West

North

East

South

1 ♠

2 ♥

Pass

Pass

2 ♠

3 ♥

All pass

3 ♥ by East

Lead: ♠ 2

Down 1 — EW -50

< 6 >

♠ 8

East Deals

♥ A 10 9 8 3

E-W Vul

♦ Q 10 6 5

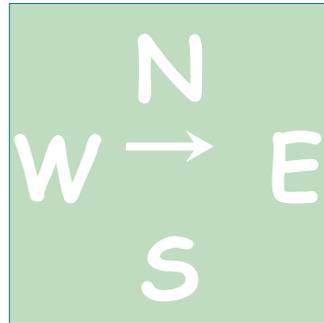
♣ A Q 5

♠ A K J 10 6

♥ 7 2

♦ 8 4 2

♣ J 10 9



♠ Q 5 4 3 2

♥ 5

♦ K J 9

♣ 8 7 6 4

♠ 9 7

♥ K Q J 6 4

♦ A 7 3

♣ K 3 2

West

North

East

South

1 ♠

3 ♠

4 ♠!

Pass

Pass

5 ♥

All pass

5 ♥ by South

Lead: ♠ K

Down 1 — NS -50

< 7 >

♠ J 9 6 5 2

South Deals

♥ A J 6

Both Vul

♦ 5 3 2

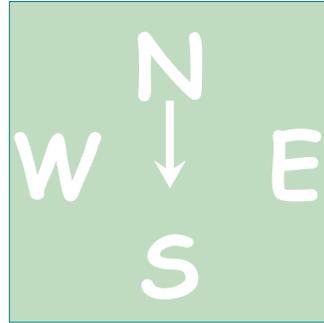
♣ 7 2

♠ A 10 4

♥ Q 8 2

♦ J 4

♣ A K Q 10 4



♠ 7 3

♥ K 10 7 4

♦ A Q 10 9 7

♣ J 3

♠ K Q 8

♥ 9 5 3

♦ K 8 6

♣ 9 8 6 5

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

2 ♣

Pass

2 ♦

Pass

3 NT

All pass

3 NT by West

Lead: ♠ 5

Down 2 — EW -200