

of obtaining a ruff. A lead from a doubleton is stronger than from a trebleton because a ruff may follow. A doubleton or singleton lead has a better chance of success when the defender has a trump trick, as on the following hand:

♠ K 10 7 2    ♥ A 7 3    ♦ Q 10 8 5 2    ♣ 6

If West has to lead from this hand against Four Hearts his likely choice will be the 6 of clubs. Should partner have the Ace he may win and return a club for an immediate ruff. Since West has a trump trick there is a chance of a ruff even if partner does not hold ♣ A: West can win the first or second round of trumps and may find partner with an entry in spades or diamonds.

#### FORCING LEADS

If the contract on the hand above had been Three or Four Spades the singleton lead would not have been so strong, since West would have two likely trump winners in any event. A better defence might be to play what is known as a forcing game: to lead diamonds, the long suit, and hope to weaken the declarer's trump position by forcing him to ruff more often than he can afford.

#### TRUMP LEADS

It is often sound play to lead the trump suit itself, either for safety or with the idea of preventing the declarer from making his trumps separately. From a holding such as 8 6 3 in the trump suit a low card should be led, for the higher one will sometimes acquire some value as the play develops.

#### THE LEAD AGAINST A SLAM

Against a slam contract, more than any other, the lead depends not on the holding in individual suits but on the general defensive plan. Especially when it seems that the declarer in a small slam has a side suit to develop, an attacking lead from a King or Queen may be called for. The defence will try to set up a quick

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Q 10 9 6

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♦ K 6

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### THE LANGUAGE OF DEFENCE

trick before declarer has forced out the one certain winner in the defending hands.

#### CONVENTIONS IN THE LATER PLAY

The same signals for showing strength and weakness are used in suit play as at no-trumps, and the same convention is followed of leading the top card of a sequence and playing the bottom one.

Very common in suit play is the peter to show a doubleton. It often occurs on the opening lead:

(i)	J 7 3	(ii)	J 7 4
	A K 5 4      8 2		K Q 10 6 3      8 5
	Q 10 9 6		A 9 2

In (i) West leads the King and East plays the 8. Reading this as a come-on signal, West continues with the Ace and gives his partner a ruff on the third round. In the second example West's King loses to the Ace, but if the defenders gain the lead before trumps are drawn they can ruff out the Jack after East has signalled with the 8 and 5.

When partner shows that he can ruff it is generally right for a defender to continue a suit even though declarer may be able to over-ruff. That is clearly the best defence on the following hand, which illustrates various forms of defensive signalling:

	♠ 8 2	
	♥ Q 7 2	
	♦ Q 10 5 3	
	♣ K Q 10 4	
♠ 9 6 4		♠ Q 5
♥ A K 10 6 4 3		♥ J 5
♦ K 6		♦ J 9 7 4 2
♣ 9 2		♣ A 8 5 3
	♠ A K J 10 7 3	
	♥ 9 8	
	♦ A 8	
	♣ J 7 6	
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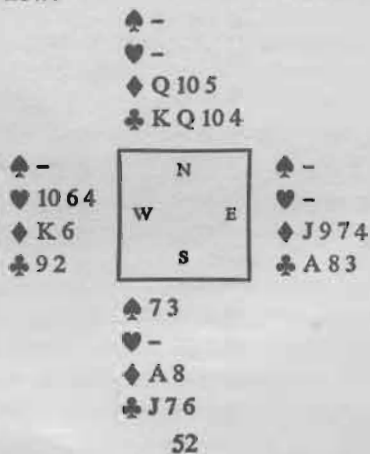
South plays an optimistic contract of Four Spades. West leads the King of hearts and East begins a peter by playing the Jack.

(Digressing for a moment, it is usual to peter with J x, but not with Q x. The play of the Queen under partner's King shows either a singleton or a combination headed by Q J.)

West can calculate that if East has a doubleton, so has South. However, it is advisable to continue the suit in order to kill dummy's Queen. So West continues with the Ace of hearts and a small one.

Although it does not affect the result of this hand, an important principle arises here. East may realize, especially if his partner has overcalled in hearts, that he is going to be over-ruffed. Nevertheless, he should put in his high trump, the Queen. Suppose that partner had held 10 x x or, possibly, J x; then the Queen, if over-ruffed, would promote a trump trick in partner's hand.

As it happens, South can over-trump the Queen without danger to his trump holding. He does so and plays three rounds of trumps to draw the trumps against him. A diamond is thrown from dummy on the third round. East has to discard twice. On the second round he discards the 2 of diamonds, suggesting that he has no high honour in this suit. On the third round he may throw the 5 of clubs, preparing a high-low signal to show strength. The position is now:



South leads the 6 of clubs to dummy. That tells East that he must hold up his A. In the end the defence will win a diamond one down.

There are two further signals that might hand, though they would not have affected trick 3 when West, it will be recalled, what he knew was going to be ruffed. His heart 10 6 4 3 and it could make no practical he led. In such a situation he could have a suit-preference signal. By leading an ace such as the 10, he could have shown strength of the outstanding suits - diamonds in partnership using the convention (and although the 10 would be the right card to play, in diamonds; the 3 would suggest some value).

The other signal that might have been 'echo'. In the trump suit only, a peter shows three cards. Thus, West could have petered to give partner an early count of the trumps; however, this trump echo is reserved for a defender wants to convey to his partner if the trumps are not drawn. It would mean one had three trumps, for that would be the declarer.

That last remark perhaps echoes a thought in the reader's mind since the beginning of various signals to show strength and length: are they not just as helpful to the defender?

Of course, experienced players do it on every occasion: they know that in many cases it is able to work out what is wanted from the declarer. A convention like leading fourth best of a suit, indeed, often been attacked on those occasions where it gives information to the declarer, that is, the writing on the wall than the means to the contract. In general, it is more important.

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contract of Four Spades. West leads begins a peter by playing the Jack. It is usual to peter with J x, but not Queen under partner's King shows (notation headed by Q J.) East has a doubleton, so has South. continue the suit in order to kill continues with the Ace of hearts and

the result of this hand, an important may realize, especially if his parts, that he is going to be over- put in his high trump, the Queen. 10 x x or, possibly, J x; then the promote a trump trick in partner's trump the Queen without danger es so and plays three rounds of gainst him. A diamond is thrown nd. East has to discard twice. On he 2 of diamonds, suggesting that suit. On the third round he may a high-low signal to show strength.

10 5  
Q 10 4  
N  
E  
♦ J 9 7 4  
♣ A 8 3

THE LANGUAGE OF DEFENCE

South leads the 6 of clubs to dummy, and West plays the 9. That tells East that he must hold up his Ace until the third round. In the end the defence will win a diamond trick and South will be one down.

There are two further signals that might have been used on this hand, though they would not have affected the result. One was at trick 3 when West, it will be recalled, was leading a heart which he knew was going to be ruffed. His hearts at that point were the 10 6 4 3 and it could make no practical difference which one he led. In such a situation he could have made what is known as a suit-preference signal. By leading an unnecessarily high card, such as the 10, he could have shown strength in the higher valued of the outstanding suits - diamonds and clubs. Thus, for a partnership using the convention (and all good players do use it) the 10 would be the right card to play, in view of the honour card in diamonds; the 3 would suggest some value in clubs.

The other signal that might have been used was the 'trump echo'. In the trump suit only, a peter shows not a doubleton but three cards. Thus, West could have petered with the 6 and 4 to give partner an early count of the trumps. For the most part, however, this trump echo is reserved for occasions when a defender wants to convey to his partner that he can ruff some suit if the trumps are not drawn. It would not do to peter every time one had three trumps, for that would be too helpful to the declarer.

That last remark perhaps echoes a thought that may have been in the reader's mind since the beginning of this chapter. These various signals to show strength and weakness, shortness and length: are they not just as helpful to declarer as to the other defender?

Of course, experienced players do not send forth signals on every occasion: they know that in many situations partner will be able to work out what is wanted from knowledge of his own hand. A convention like leading fourth best certainly tells a tale and has, indeed, often been attacked on those grounds; but while it may give information to the declarer, that information is more often the writing on the wall than the means of presenting him with his contract. In general, it is more important to inform partner than

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to withhold information from declarer. That is the case for conventions; it would certainly be very difficult to play the defence without them.