

## **SIGNALING – THE KEY TO THE DEFENSE**

“**Signaling**” is the language of defensive play. It is the method by which Defenders exchange information about the make-up of their hands.

### **Three Categories of Standard Defensive Signaling:**

(1) **Attitude Signals Regarding a Specific Suit:** (The signaling which evidences whether Partner wishes to encourage a continuation of that suit already led, or, conversely, to discourage a continuation of the suit referenced),

(2) **Count Signals Regarding a Particular Suit:** (The signaling as to the number of actual cards one holds in a specific suit referenced),

(3) **Suit Preference Signals for a Particular Suit:** (The preferential signaling as to which suit you desire Partner to lead at his/her next available opportunity),

#### **(1) Attitude Signals**

1. **The Lead by Partner of any New Suit When that Suit is First Played:** (Whether at the start of the hand on the first card led at the start of the play of the hand, or at anytime during the extended play of the hand subsequent to the opening lead) When Partner **first makes the lead of any new, as-yet, un-led suit**, whether against a Suit Contract or a No-Trump Contract, it is important that the Partner of the one who leads do one of two things: a) A play of a high card which encourages a continuation, or b) the play of a low card which discourages a continuation, either from the perspective of Partner.

2. **When first Discarding (“Sluffing”) when showing out of any suit led:** - The play of a high card as one’s first discard shows an interest (encouragement) in the suit discarded; and, alternatively, the play of a low card evidences a lack of interest (discouragement) in the particular suit discarded.

#### **(2) Count Signals**

1. **When Declarer first Leads a Suit, either from the Dummy or from Declarer’s hand:** - When Declarer leads a suit, however, either from Dummy’s hand or from Declarer’s, each Defender should give the other **Count**, which reflects the number of cards each possesses in the suit led by Declarer. They each evidence an even number of cards (2, 4, 6, etc.) with a **High-Low Signal**; or an odd number of cards (1, 3, 5, etc.) with a **Low-High Signal**.

#### **(3) Suit Preference Signals**

1. **When following suit to Partner’s led suit but when it is clear to both you and to Partner that it would be useless for Partner to continue the suit.** – When continuation of any suit led by Partner appears fruitless, the play to Partner’s trick of a high card asks for a switch to the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits (the two suits exclusive of the Trump suit), and the play of a low card asks for a switch to the lower-ranking of the two remaining suits.

2. **When Leading a Card that you know will be trumped by your Partner:** - Such a signal is called a **Suit Preference Signal** or a “**Laventhal**” or a **Secondary Suit Signal**. The assumption is that there are two suits from which to choose other than the suit led which is about to be trumped and the Trump suit itself. **When giving a suit preference signal, a high card signals a preference for the higher of the two remaining suits, and a low card signals a preference for the lower of the two remaining suits.**