

DEFENCE 18 – IMPROVING DEFENSIVE SIGNALS V

When partner leads an A from AK, and you play the Q, you are normally showing one of either of two things:

1. The card is a singleton and you have no choice, or
2. You have the J as well as the Q.

The point of this is to tell partner that you can win the second round of the suit and give partner the option to get to your hand for a lead through declarer. This can sometimes be vital:

♠ J7632	♠ 8
♥ 732	♥ QJ10
♦ J43	♦ 109876
♣ J4	♣ 10987
♠ 54	♠ AKQ109
♥ AK965	♥ 84
♦ 5	♦ AKQ2
♣ AQ652	♣ K3

South is in 4S. West leads the HA and East plays the HQ.

West carefully plays the H5 (suit preference – low card asking for the lower suit back). West wins the trick with the H10 and returns the C10 as instructed. West gets the CAQ with the 2 hearts and puts the contract down.

One side point: How did East know not to try to cash another heart before putting a club through? West could have kept going with the HK and another heart but instead put East on lead. Clearly, the club lead through is critical.

Note that if the club tricks are not taken, declarer will draw trumps and throw a club on the 4th round of diamonds and make their contract.

As the play of the Q shows a singleton or the J, the play of a J on an A lead also shows a singleton or the 10. This might allow partner to underlead AKQ in the suit or warn them that declarer has the Q and that they will have to switch.