

Tips on Leading

Most inexperienced bridge players look to game and slam bids for success, and, when they work, they are very exciting. But those hands are often few and far between. A more consistent technique for reaching the winners circle is signaling.

The principles of signally are very basic. When a player leads a low card to his partner, a (2, 3, 4, etc.) it tends to show strength and tolerance for a return lead. The lead of a high card (7, 8, 9, for instance) denotes weakness and discourages a lead back.

The following hand illustrates how this simple technique can be devastating on defense.

	AK3	
	KQJ8	
	QJ84	
	K10	
54	9	Against a 4 Spade bid, West leads the 4 of Spades
9752	A1043	(Weak) East takes the Ace. He then leads the 9 of
A6	9752	diamonds, telling partner not to lead back the suit.
98532	AQ76	West leads the 9 of clubs through the King to the
		Ace and Queen, thus setting the contract.
	QJ108762	
	6	
	K103	
	J4	

Although signaling is easy to understand, it is not always simple to perform effectively. Both the signaler and his partner must be alert to the meaning of the signals and respond correctly. And, of course, you can only signal with the cards you are dealt. If you don't have the right card to send the proper signal, you might send a negative signal in another suit and hope for the best.