

THIRD HAND PLAY (Behind dummy)

- As third hand play your highest card, EXCEPT.....
- Do not waste your highest card if you cannot beat the cards played so far; or if partner's lead is *equivalent* to your highest card (do not fight partner).
- As third hand play the LOWEST of EQUALS when trying to win the trick. (This does not apply when you are signaling.)
- It is usually right to overtake partner's king with A-x; often right to overtake partner's queen with K-x; and sometimes right to overtake partner's jack with Q-x
- Do *not* unblock if dummy has a card that is likely to be promoted into a trick for declarer.
- If dummy (second hand) holds an honor in the suit led, third hand should usually finesse against it. The object is to capture dummy's honor at a later trick. Often this is obvious (e.g., A-Q behind the king) but in many cases it is not clear-cut.
- If your honor is *one step* above dummy's honor, finesse an eight or better if dummy plays low. (e.g., king is one step above queen, dummy has A Q 4, you have K 10 2, 3 led, dummy ducks, you play 10.)
- If your honor is *two steps* above dummy's honor, finesse a nine or better if dummy plays low. (e.g., ace is two steps above queen, dummy has Q 7 3, you have A 10 4, 2 led, dummy ducks, you play 10.)
- RULE OF ELEVEN: If partner leads an *eight* or lower, subtract the card led from 11. If partner has led fourth-best, the difference is the number of cards in the *other three hands* that are above the card led.
- The rule of 11 is also helpful in a negative sense. If you apply it and get an illogical answer, this indicates that partner has led a short suit.
- If declarer is marked for the ace, consider the merits of *not* playing third hand high.

FROM
 "How to Defend a Bridge Hand"
 by Bill Root

	Lead	Dummy	You	
1.	3	9 5 4	J 10 6	Play the ten. If you play the jack, you deny the ten.
2.	2	9 7 4	J 10 8	Play the eight. If you play the ten, you deny the eight.
3.	4	Q 6 5	A J 2	Play the jack.
4.	2	K 6 4	Q J 10	Play the ten.

	Lead	Dummy	You	
5.	2	K 6 4	Q J 10	Play the queen, a signal to tell partner that you have the jack and probably the ten.
6.	3	K 6 4	A 10 2	Play the ten.
7.	3	J 6 4	K 9 2	Play the nine.
8.	3	A Q 2	K 10 6	Play the ten; partner may have the jack.
9.	8	A Q 2	K 10 6	Play the king. Partner would not lead the eight if he had the jack.
10.	10	A 6 5	Q 7 2	Play the queen. Partner may have led the ten from K 10 9 x.
11.	10	A 6 5	K Q 2	Play the queen.
12.	Q	6 5 4	K 2	Play the king, to unblock.
13.	Q	10 4 3	K 2	Play the two. If you play the king, declarer will be able to win a trick with the ten.
14.	Q	6 5 4	K 8 2	Play the eight—an attitude signal—assuming you wish to encourage partner to continue leading the suit.
15.	Q	8 7 3	10 6 2	Play the six. A come-on signal is usually right if partner leads the queen and you hold the ten.
16.	A K	8 6 3	Q J 2	Play the queen, a signal telling partner that you have the jack.
17.	A K	8 6 3	Q 2	Play the two, even in a trump contract. If you play the queen, partner will think you have the jack and may underlead his ace.
18.	A K	9 5 2	7 4	Play the seven versus a trump contract if you wish partner to continue leading the suit so you can ruff the third round. (It is unlucky if declarer holds up with A J x.) But play the four versus a notrump contract.

Assume
 lead
 A from
 AKx..