

Cover an Honour with an Honour (when NOT to)

Rules is rules right? Always cover an honour with an honour? Right? **WRONG!**

Like many bridge “rules”, covering an honour with an honour should be treated at best as a guideline. Its main purpose is to promote something in your hand, or partner’s.

When should you NOT cover? In the following examples the lead is bold and underlined.

1. You have weak length

	♥A1098	
♥K6532		♥?
	♥ <u>J</u> ?	

Partner has a shortage in this suit, possibly a singleton ♥Q. Playing your ♥K could crash partner’s high card and set up the whole suit for your opponents. Also your King will eventually be “high” when declarer runs out of cards to finesse with (as in the example below).

OR

	♥ <u>J</u> 864	
♥???		♥K7532
	♥???	

Someone has the ♥A and ♥Q. You can see 9 cards in this suit. Hang onto your ♥K and you will still have it when the ♥A and ♥Q have been played.

2. You have a “certain” trick by not covering. This is the trump suit. Dummy has a singleton honour.

The ♥Q is led from dummy. Do NOT cover.

	♥ <u>Q</u>	
♥432		♥K75
	♥AJ10986	

Declarer will be very grateful if you play your ♥K. His trump loser has disappeared. If you hang onto it declarer will almost certainly have to lead away from his hand to your ♥K later.

3. You have weak trumps with Q or J

	♥ <u>10</u> 32	
♥Q9		♥J75
	♥AK864	

Covering the ♥T with the ♥J will not promote anything in partner’s hand and will actually cost the defence their trump trick. Declarer is “fishing”.

OR

	♥A1098	
♥Q?		♥?
	♥K <u>J</u> 732	

Here is another keen fisherman at work. Declarer has no plans to finesse. Play low (smoothly). If you don’t cover the ♥J declarer will play dummy’s ♥A and have to decide whether to finesse or play for the drop when he leads back towards his hand. You should be ready for this so you can play at an even tempo.

Cover an Honour with an Honour (when NOT to)

4. You have a longer suit than dummy (or declarer)

	♥A10	
♥K76		♥43
	♥ <u>Q</u> J9852	

If this is the trump suit you ♥K will eventually be a certain trick if you play low. It will still have nuisance value if it is a side suit. Covering will kill your ♥K and not promote anything in partner's hand.

5. Cover the LAST honour

	♥ <u>J</u> 105	
♥Q86		♥K94
	♥A732	

If you cover the ♥J with the ♥K your side will win only one trick in this suit. Play low on the ♥J. Cover if declarer continues with the ♥10. You will then win 2 tricks in this suit.

OR

	♥ <u>Q</u> J9	
♥1086		♥K54
	♥A732	

Covering the first honour exposes partner's ♥10 to a finesse. Play low on the ♥Q. Cover if declarer continues with the ♥J.

When declarer leads from hand and you do not know if is the first, last, or other honour. If you want to win the post mortem, it is recommended to cover the first honour whenever there is a chance to promote a trick for your side.