

# Covering Honours

*by Kelly Peirse*

When you start to learn bridge you are told to “cover an honour with an honour” – and then you find that sometimes you shouldn’t cover, and you don’t know where you are!

The golden rule is that you should only cover when it might benefit your side.

Some examples – in each case you have to play before dummy:

- 1 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy AJ1098
- 2 Q led, you hold K109, dummy Axx
- 3 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy AJx
- 4 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy Ax
- 5 10 led, you hold Qx(x), dummy AJxx.

ANSWERS:

- 1 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy AJ1098

It would be absurd to cover the Q as it can’t help your side. Your K is doomed but hang on to it as long as possible.

- 2 Q led, you hold K109, dummy Axx

Cover – you will make your 10 or you may promote a card for partner

- 3 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy AJx

Cover – you may promote your partner’s 10 or 9

- 4 Q led, you hold Kxx, dummy Ax

In NT or the trump suit, don’t cover (you will then make your K).

In a side suit, cover – especially if dummy still has a trump.

- 5 10 led, you hold Qx(x), dummy AJxx

Unless you are pretty sure your partner has the K, don’t cover. Declarer may be looking for the Q and might play the A and finesse the other way to your Q.

It is easier **when the lead is from dummy**. There is a simple rule to help you – **if dummy has touching honours, don't cover the first time**. You can't lose by this and you may gain handsomely, eg:

- a Dummy QJx, then you Kxx
- b Dummy J109, then you Qxx
- c Dummy QJ10xx, then you Kxx
- d Dummy Qxx, then you Kxx

ANSWERS:

- a Duck the Q lead and cover the J
- b Don't cover at all: it can't help you
- c Same as b
- d Cover – you may make something for partner.

Of course you must play at your normal speed and not give the show away by hesitating.

Incidentally, you must **never** try to deceive the declarer by hesitating when you have no high card – this is considered next door to cheating!

It helps to study the cards as soon as dummy goes down and try to foresee a covering problem.

The late Kelly Peirse was a key member of our club, being our secretary for many years, club president on two separate occasions, and our representative on the regional committee. Tragically, she died in a car accident in 2002. This article is taken from the club newsletter, which she used to edit, of September 1999.

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