



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(309) Upside-Down Count and Attitude – Shift Count**

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Level: 5

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#### **General**

Normally when we lead a suit for the first time, the spot card we lead communicates our attitude about the suit to partner – we lead a low card to show that we have an honor (low from interest) and a high spot card to show that we have a bad holding (top of nothing). But there are times when we are shifting to a new suit where our attitude in the suit is already clear. In that case, we may want to communicate to partner our number of cards in this suit that we are shifting to – called shift count. Let's see how we communicate our count to partner in this situation, when we are playing *Upside Down Count and Attitude* (UDCA).

#### **Shift Count**

The most common situation where we give count to partner is when one of the opponents lead the suit (either from the declarer's hand or dummy). Giving count only applies if we are not involved in trying to win the trick. But there are other times when count may be important to communicate to partner. One of these situations is when we are leading a suit where our attitude is clearly known. This type of count is called *Shift Count* and we give it in a standard fashion (even if we play UDCA).

#### *Example 1*

Dummy holds KQJT.

If partner discards the 2, playing upside down, this lets us know they have the Ace. Then when we lead the suit partner already knows that we do not hold an honor in the suit (that we do not "like it"). In this situation, we communicate to partner how many cards we hold in the suit (our count). We do this by leading the top of a doubleton (or any even number of cards) and low from a 3-card holding (an odd number of cards). This is count in the standard way – "*Standard Shift Count*".

This shift count is important to partner because they may want to make a holdup play and win their Ace at the appropriate time.



*Example 2*

                  KQJT  
963                  A852  
                  74

If East discards the 2, letting us know they have the Ace, and West leads a low card (the 3), then East can work out to duck the first round of the suit and win the second round – cutting off declarer’s communication from the dummy (North).

**Attitude Takes Precedence**

Though count (shift count) can be available tool in certain situations, remember that it only applies where attitude is clearly known (or irrelevant).

*Example 3*

                  QJT9  
                  A762

If we see QJT9 in the dummy and partner discards the 2, showing an honor card in this suit, then when we shift to this suit our attitude is not clear – partner does not know who has the other missing honor (the King in this example). When we lead this suit our shift is not “shift count”, it is an attitude-oriented shift: from 873 we lead the 8 (top of nothing) and from K73 we lead the 3 (low from attitude).

**Conclusion**

Usually when we shift to a new suit, we communicate our attitude in the suit to partner. But when attitude is known, we can use our shift to a new suit to communicate count – shift count. The method of count that we use in this situation is standard (top of an event number, low from an odd number) even if we play upside-down count in other situations. Be sure to discuss this situation with partner and make certain you are on the same page about when this applies and how you are communicating count in these situations.