

“‘Deception Plays’ / ‘False-Carding’ as Declarer in Duplicate Bridge: More ‘False-Carding’ Examples”

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

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Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through **“‘Deception Plays’ / ‘False-Carding’ as Declarer in Duplicate Bridge”** Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking the time to be with us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther, because I am so “warm and caring”!

Bruce: Errr, well, sorry again about that, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther.

Esther: Well, Bruce. Please try to exercise at least a modicum of empathy, assuming you have at least the limited capacity to do so. Can you imagine how relentlessly all the other girls in grades K through 4 of my elementary school years relentlessly, endlessly tormented me about my last name, Klinktoast-Houstonhousen?

Bruce: Well, yes, sorry again, Esther! Well, Esther, at the outset, am I correct that “False-Carding” is most often used by the Declarer rather than by the Defenders?

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¹ As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers’ Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by **Bruce Thompson**.

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. Yes, you are correct. Although Defenders sometimes execute "Deception Plays" or use "False-Carding" it is dangerous for Defenders to do so because when you "False-Card" you may confuse the Declarer but you may also confuse your own Partner. But the Declarer obviously does not have to worry about confusing the Dummy!

Bruce: Errr, well, sorry again about that, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther. Well, haven't you previously posted "Esther Bridge Lessons" about "Deceptive Play" by the Declarer?

Esther: Well, Bruce, yes, indeed! For example, I previously posted "Esther Bridge Lesson #119: **'All Is Fair in Love and War and Bridge': As Bridge Declarer It May Be Vital to Sometimes Be Intentionally Deceptive**":

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/deception.pdf>

I also have posted "Esther Bridge Lesson #148: **"When Playing as Declarer, the Critical Importance of Deceiving' Opponents Whenever You Can"**:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/deceiving.pdf>

Bruce: Well, Esther, why are you posting again on a topic that you have previously covered?

Esther: Well, Bruce, because the topic of "Deceptive Play" or "False-Carding" is important! And because I thought some more concrete examples would be helpful to you. The present examples and ideas are drawn from the web posting, "Deceptive Plays and False-Carding in the Game of Bridge":

<https://bridge-tips.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Deceptive-Plays-and-False-Carding-in-the-Game-of-Bridge.pdf>

Bruce: Well, Esther, OK. What is your first example of "False-Carding"?

Esther: Well, Bruce, here is Example #1: **"False-Carding to Suggest a Singleton Rather Than Your Actual Tripleton"**. Let's say that you are Declarer sitting SOUTH playing a Heart contract. Your LHO, WEST, leads

	NORTH	
	S: <u>K</u> J 7 5 3	
WEST		EAST
S: <u>4</u>		S: <u>A</u> 8 6 2
	SOUTH	
	S: Q T 9	

On these holdings both EAST and SOUTH are likely to presume that either WEST or SOUTH holds a singleton Spade. If EAST suspects that WEST initially held a Spade singleton then on Trick #2 EAST will return a Spade for a ruff by WEST. Sitting SOUTH, you should play your Spade Ten to try to make EAST think that WEST initially held the Spade Q,9,4 tripleton.

Bruce: Oh, my goodness, Esther. Well, can you give us another example?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course. Here is Example #2: **"False-Carding to Encourage an Opponent to Continue Leading the Same Suit"**. Let's say that E/W by Partnership Agreement play that when one Partner leads an Ace he is (1) "promising" the King and (2) asking Partner to "signal" whether Partner can win a 3rd Round of the same Suit either with (a) the Queen or (b) by ruffing.

	NORTH	
	S: T 5 <u>4</u>	
WEST		EAST
S: <u>A</u> K 8 6		S: J 9 <u>3</u>
	SOUTH	
	S: Q 7 2	

EAST's play of the Spade 3 on Trick #1 is a "signal" denying the ability for EAST to "win" Trick #3 in the Suit. Declarer SOUTH should play the Spade 7 on Trick #1 to try to make WEST think that EAST initially held the Spade Q,3,2 and is "encouraging" WEST to "continue" Spades on Trick #3.

Bruce: Oh, my goodness, Esther. Well, can you give us a third example?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course. Here is Example #3: **"False-Card Honors to Create Maximum Doubt About What Honors You Hold"**. Let's say that you sitting SOUTH are playing a **NT** contract.

	NORTH	
	S: 9 7 <u>3</u>	
WEST		EAST
S: <u>A</u> T 6 <u>4</u>		S: <u>J</u> 8 2
	SOUTH	
	S: K Q 5	

"Win" with your Spade King rather than with the Spade Queen. This may lead WEST to think that EAST initially held the Spade Q,J,x and therefore "continue" Spades the next time he is in the lead.

Bruce: Oh, my goodness, Esther. Well, can you give us a fourth example?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course. Here is Example #4: **"False-Card from the Dummy to Give the Defenders the False Impression that You Hold a Card Actually Held by One of Them"**. Let's say you as Declarer are playing a Spade contract and the 4 Hands hold:

	NORTH	
	S: <u>Q</u> 8 7 5	
WEST		EAST
S: A		S: K 9
	SOUTH	
	S: J T 6 4 3 2	

You know that E/W together hold 3 Trump Spades, the Spade A,K,9. You know that the most-likely "split" is 2-1. Lead the Trump Spade Queen from the Dummy. Your goal is to make EAST think that you are executing a finesse so that if EAST holds the Trump Spade King he may "cover" and thus you "drop" *both* the E/W Trump Spade Honors on the same Trick.

Bruce: Oh, my goodness, Esther. Well, can you give us more examples?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course. Here is Example #5: **"As Declarer False-Card to Obscure Your Actual Holdings"**. Let's say you are playing a Spade contract as Declarer. Let's say you are "on lead" holding:

	NORTH	
	S: 8 7 <u>5</u>	
WEST		EAST
S: A 6 4		S: 9 <u>3</u>
	SOUTH	
	S: K Q J T 2	

Once you are "on lead" your goal is to try to draw **2** Rounds of Trump. Lead the Trump Spade 5 from the NORTH Dummy. Do not play the Trump Spade King. Instead play your Trump Spade Queen. Your hope is that WEST may believe that EAST holds the Trump Spade K,x and so "ducks" on the **1st** Round of Trump being played.

As another example, let's say the **4** Hands hold:

NORTH	
S: A Q 5	
WEST	EAST
S: 8 6 4	S: T 9 3
SOUTH	
S: K J 7 2	

When you are "on lead", lead to the NORTH Dummy Queen. EAST may think that you finessed and that WEST holds the Spade King and so may later lead a Spade.

As still another example, let's say the **4** Hands hold:

NORTH	
S: K T 6	
WEST	EAST
S: A 9 5 2	S: 8 4 3
SOUTH	
S: Q J 7	

Once you are "on lead" lead the Spade Jack. If your LHO holds the Trump Spade Ace WEST may "duck" to give his Partner EAST an opportunity to "win" with the Trump Spade Queen.

Bruce: Oh, my goodness, Esther. Well, there seem to be a lot of ways that as Declarer I can be *deceptive* and confuse the Defenders or give them more opportunities to make mistakes!

Esther: Well, Bruce, you are exactly correct!