Discards

- This talk will discuss methods for defensive discarding and some tips on which ones to make.

Auction (no one vulnerable):

(1H)-2S-(2NT)-p
(4H) – all pass

Partner leads the ace of spades (ace from ace/king):

♠ QJ76
♥ 94
♦ KJ85
♣ KJT

♠ 2
♥ 8532
♦ AQT2
♣ 9843

- The ace holds, and partner continues with the king.
- What do you discard to get partner to switch to a diamond?
Auction (no one vulnerable):

(1H)-2S-(2NT)-p
(4H) – all pass

Partner leads the ace of spades (ace from ace/king):

♠ QJ76
♥ 94
♦ KJ85
♣ KJT
♠ 2
♥ 8532
♦ AQT2
♣ 9843

1. STANDARD DISCARDs:

- On your first discard, a high discard in a suit (8,9,10) says you *like* that suit
- On your first discard, a low discard in a suit (2,3,4) says you *don’t like* that suit
- Middle discards (5,6,7) send a neutral message, but look at the visible spots as sometimes these can be encouraging or discouraging as well

What card should a player playing standard discards throw on the king of spades?

Experienced MIT pair that plays standard discards:
Auction (no one vulnerable):

(1H)-2S-(2NT)-p
(4H) – all pass

Partner leads the ace of spades (ace from ace/king):

| ♠ | QJ76 |
| ♠ | 2    |
| ♠ | 2    |

| ♥ | 94   |
| ♥ | 8532 |
| ♥ | 8532 |

| ♦ | KJ85 |
| ♦ | AQT2 |
| ♦ | AQT2 |

| ♣ | KJT  |
| ♣ | 9843 |
| ♣ | 9843 |

2. UPSIDE DOWN DISCARDS

- Playing “upside-down” means that you use the opposite strategy as you do in standard
- If you want to encourage in a suit, you play a low card in that suit (2, 3, 4)
- If you want to discourage in a suit, you play a high card in that suit (8, 9, 10)
- Middle cards tend to be neutral but watch the spots (5, 6, 7)

What card would you play playing “upside down discards?”
Upside down advocates point out that in standard, they would have to play the ♦T to encourage. That may cost a trick later as the eight will set up in dummy.

MIT experienced pairs that play “upside-down discards”:

Pam Miller/Jim Rasmussen
Steve Willner/Brad Mampe

Auction (no one vulnerable):

(1H)-2S-(2NT)-p
(4H) – all pass

Partner leads the ace of spades (ace from ace/king):

♠ QJ76
♥ 94
♦ KJ85
♣ KJT
♠ 2
♥ 8532
♦ AQT2
♣ 9843

3. LAVINTHAL DISCARDS

- Lavinthal discards use a different strategy than standard or upside down
- In Lavinthal, the first card you discard indicates you don’t want a switch to that suit
- The rank of the card played then gives suit preference for which suit you want partner to switch to
- A high spot indicates a switch to the higher of the two remaining suits
- A low spot indicates a switch to the lower of the two remaining suits
- In general, the most important message is that you don’t want the suit you have played.
- Neutral messages are much tougher to send playing Lavinthal.
What card would you discard if you were playing Lavinthal discards?

MIT experienced pairs that play Lavinthal discards:

Jeff Scott/Steve McDevitt
Gloria Tsoi/Brian Duran

Auction (no one vulnerable):

(1H)-2S-(2NT)-p
(4H) – all pass

Partner leads the ace of spades (ace from ace/king):

♠ QJ76
♥ 94
♦ KJ85
♣ KJT

♠ 2
♥ 8532
♦ AQT2
♣ 9843

4. ODD/EVEN DISCARDS

- Playing odd/even discards, you use the integer quality of the card to send messages
- Playing an odd card (3, 5, 7, 9) encourages in that suit
- Playing an even card (T, 8, 6, 4, 2) discourages in that suit
  - A high even card asks for the higher of the other two suits
  - A low even card asks for the lower of the other two suits
- Neutral messages are really hard to send playing odd/even
- Advocates like that this way gives the most options to demand a specific shift

Which card would you discard playing odd/even discards?
MIT experienced pairs that play odd/even:
Barry Margolin/James Jones (against suits only)
Rob Hasserjian/Roger Li

What does our second discard mean since the first one sends a signal?

- Almost always, this card is used to give count in the suit played
- It is good practice to give “present count” in most situations (high from even, low from odd)
  - If I play a suit with 5 cards left, I play my lowest spot
  - If I play a suit with 4 cards left, I played my second lowest spot

What does it mean when we discard an honor (A, K, Q or J)?

- Discarding an honor tends to show an honor sequence that is so solid, you can afford to drop an honor
- Always drop the highest of equals when discarding an honor to send the clearest message.

Partner starts the defense to 3NT by leading two high spades:

♠ 8 ♥QJT983 ♦ T752 ♣ 83

The right heart discard at trick 2 is the ♥Q. This tells partner that you have a solid sequence, and denies having the king.

Steve’s Tip #1: If dummy is on your right, when in doubt, keep parity with dummy.

Steve’s Tip #2: If declarer is on your right, when in doubt, pitch what declarer does.

Steve’s Tip #3: Remember the auction!
1S-2D
2NT-3NT

65
T432
QJT
T432

You lead the diamond queen. Dummy’s shape is 2-3-5-3. You figure out later that declarer is either 5-4-1-3 or 5-3-1-4. Which is more likely? Which suit do you keep?