

Article 10 a - Answers on "Covering an Honour"

This based on an article by Paul Boyer in the EBU Magazine.

We are typically told "cover an honour with an honour" to prevent declarer making tricks to which he is not entitled. *NB. We will count a 10 as an honour*

But is it always true?

Here are 6 examples where you are sitting behind dummy with declarer on your LHS with his unseen hand. On each occasion he is leading dummy through your hand. **Do you cover his honour?**

Hand 1

♠J62	South, playing 3NT leads the ♠J from Dummy.
N ♠Q97 S	Do you cover? Why (or why not)

Answer: Yes. You must cover with the ♠Q. Declarer could have the A, K or 10 all of which allow the 9 to perhaps be a winning card if you play ♠Q. If South holds AK and 10 then he will make them all anyway.

Hand 2

♠J109	South, playing 3NT leads the ♠J from Dummy.
N ♠Q87 S	Do you cover? Why (or why not)

Answer: No, don't cover. There is no point in covering a sequence as there can be nothing to promote in partners hand. If W has the ♠K it will be made anyway.

Hand 3

♠1083	South, playing 3NT leads the ♠10 from Dummy.
N ♠Q6 S	Do you cover? Why (or why not)

Answer: Yes cover. West may have various combinations ♠K9x or even ♠9xxx. If declarer has ♠AKJ9 he will make them all anyway.

Hand 4

♠QJ94 South, playing 3NT leads the ♠Q from Dummy.
N ♠K63 Do you cover? Why (or why not)
S

Answer: No, don't cover. It is usually wrong to cover the first of touching honours. If the ♠Q is led and then if you cover then should W have 10xx then S can finesse against your partner's 10 and make 4 tricks. Wait until the ♠J is led and cover that as you will limit opponents to 3 tricks. If partner doesn't have the ♠10 then N/S will make 4 tricks anyway.

Hand 5

♠QJ74 South, playing 3NT leads the ♠Q from Dummy.
N ♠K3 Do you cover? Why (or why not)
S

Answer: Yes. With only Kx you take the opportunity to take 2 honours when you can. If you don't cover then you will have to play it perhaps on the ♠4. What a waste of a King!! If you cover immediately S doesn't know now if you still have the ♠10x, should he not have it.

Hand 6

♠Q863 South opens 3♠ and plays in 4♠. Dummy
N ♠K9 wins the opening lead and leads Q♠
S Do you cover? Why (or why not)

Answer: Certainly not!!. Play the ♠9 as smoothly and quickly as possible. South must have seven spades for a pre-empt so partner is has a void. Why give S an easy option by covering he doesn't know whether the cars are 1-1 or 2-0. You cover an honour to promote partner's card **BUT how do you promote a void.** Play low innocently and watch declarer try to drop West's singleton K.

I wish I had known and can remember these answers in the future.