

Opening Leads Against Suit Contracts

<div><div><div>♠QJ84</div><div>♥AQ6</div><div>♦AQ7</div><div>♣AQ6</div></div><div><div>♠A7</div><div>♥97543</div><div>♦KJ4</div><div>♣1097</div></div><div><div>♠653</div><div>♥2</div><div>♦1098653</div><div>♣854</div></div><div><div>♠K1092</div><div>♥KJ108</div><div>♦2</div><div>♣KJ32</div></div></div>	<div>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>2♣¹</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦²</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2N³</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣⁴</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4N⁵</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♦⁶</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♥⁷</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>6♠⁸</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <div>1 Eight playing tricks or 21-22 balanced; 2 Relay; 3 21-22 balanced; 4 Stayman; 5 RKCB; 6 Three aces; 7 ♠Q?; 8 Yes.</div> <div>East has an obvious lead - the singleton ♥2. West quickly gains the lead with ♠A and gives East a ruff. Note that here West knows for sure that East holds a singleton – North is marked with two or three hearts. If North holds a doubleton then so does East. East would not lead small from a doubleton therefore North has three hearts, etc.</div>	West	North	East	South		2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦ ²	Pass	2N ³	Pass	3♣ ⁴	Pass	3♠	Pass	4N ⁵	Pass	5♦ ⁶	Pass	5♥ ⁷	Pass	6♠ ⁸	All pass	
West	North	East	South																						
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Pass	5♦ ⁶	Pass	5♥ ⁷																						
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<div><div><div>♠73</div><div>♥Q7543</div><div>♦J43</div><div>♣1097</div></div><div><div>♠K1092</div><div>♥KJ108</div><div>♦Q2</div><div>♣KJ3</div></div><div><div>♠QJ84</div><div>♥A96</div><div>♦AK7</div><div>♣AQ6</div></div><div><div>♠A65</div><div>♥2</div><div>♦109865</div><div>♣8542</div></div></div>	<div>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>2NT¹</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♣²</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4NT³</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦⁴</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>5♥⁵</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♦⁶</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6♠</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <div>1 19-20, balanced; 2 Stayman; 3 RKCB; 4 Three aces 5 ♠Q? 6 ♠Q and ♦K</div> <div>Only a slight change from the first deal but this time it is deeply damaging for South to lead ♥2. The point is that South has a trick. If North has another trick the defenders <i>don't need a heart ruff</i> to beat 6♠. A heart lead here saves declarer a guess as to who has ♥Q. Leading a singleton can be worse than futile if a ruff is not forthcoming. South should lead ♦10 or ♠5.</div>	West	North	East	South			2NT ¹	Pass	3♣ ²	Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT ³	Pass	5♦ ⁴	Pass	5♥ ⁵	Pass	6♦ ⁶	Pass	6♠	All pass		
West	North	East	South																						
		2NT ¹	Pass																						
3♣ ²	Pass	3♠	Pass																						
4NT ³	Pass	5♦ ⁴	Pass																						
5♥ ⁵	Pass	6♦ ⁶	Pass																						
6♠	All pass																								
<div><div><div>♠9</div><div>♥AK87</div><div>♦865</div><div>♣95432</div></div><div><div>♠Q7</div><div>♥J954</div><div>♦K43</div><div>♣QJ108</div></div><div><div>♠K10832</div><div>♥Q10</div><div>♦A72</div><div>♣K76</div></div><div><div>♠AJ654</div><div>♥632</div><div>♦QJ109</div><div>♣A</div></div></div>	<div>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <div>Why has North not given preference to 2♠? He probably has only one spade so it will pay the defenders to try to prevent ruffs in dummy. Leading from K x x in trumps is fairly safe. If declarer has the ace, the king will still make. If dummy has the ace the king may well be useless anyway. East wins ♦A and returns a trump allowing the defenders to draw three rounds of trumps. Declarer is now short of the trick target and will take just six winners.</div>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass											
West	North	East	South																						
			1♠																						
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦																						
All Pass																									

<div>♠ 95</div> <div>♥ A9</div> <div>♦ A954</div> <div>♣ J10432</div> <div>♠ KQJ104</div> <div>♥ K8</div> <div>♦ J1087</div> <div>♣ K7</div> <div>♠ A87</div> <div>♥ Q 63</div> <div>♦ KQ632</div> <div>♣ A8</div> <div>♠ 632</div> <div>♥ J107542</div> <div>♦ -</div> <div>♣ Q965</div>	<div>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3 ♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4 ♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <div>If North listens to the bidding he can see a certain way to beat 4 ♠. East/West have bid and supported diamonds and so South can have at most one diamond. North cashes ♦ A and leads ♦ 9 for South to ruff. ♦ 9 is a suit preference signal, the play of this high diamond asking for the return of the higher ranking side suit (a heart). This sequence of plays allows South to receive a second ruff and the defeat of the very good game contract is achieved.</div>	West	North	East	South	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass		
West	North	East	South														
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦	Pass														
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass														
4 ♠	All Pass																
<div>♠ KQJ109</div> <div>♥ AQJ10</div> <div>♦ AQ10</div> <div>♣ 4</div> <div>♠ 5</div> <div>♥ K9532</div> <div>♦ 763</div> <div>♣ A985</div> <div>♠ A876</div> <div>♥ 7</div> <div>♦ 9854</div> <div>♣ QJ107</div> <div>♠ 432</div> <div>♥ 864</div> <div>♦ KJ2</div> <div>♣ K632</div>	<div>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <div>Leading a singleton in declarer's side suit often damages partner's holding. It's also doing the declarer's donkey work. Declarer wins, drives out ♠ A and makes twelve tricks, using the diamond entries to dummy to finesse in hearts. With four trumps East does better to lead from length, aiming to wrest trump control from declarer. East leads ♣ Q. Declarer ruffs at trick two and tries to draw trumps but another club lead from East leaves East with more trumps than declarer. This forcing defence gives East/West four tricks – two in trumps and two in clubs.</div>	West	North	East	South		1 ♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1 ♠	Pass	1NT														
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠														
Pass	4 ♠	All Pass															
<div>♠ 7</div> <div>♥ J10532</div> <div>♦ Q62</div> <div>♣ 10862</div> <div>♠ J862</div> <div>♥ KQ</div> <div>♦ AJ105</div> <div>♣ 973</div> <div>♠ K10953</div> <div>♥ A7</div> <div>♦ K843</div> <div>♣ AQ</div> <div>♠ AQ4</div> <div>♥ 9864</div> <div>♦ 97</div> <div>♣ KJ54</div>	<div>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <div>South doesn't expect much from North and just wants to defend as passively as possible. Faced with a choice between the red suits he should pick hearts, the longer suit. This leaves declarer to guess who has ♦ Q. This is another example that shows that leading from a short suit can be costly if no ruff materialises.</div>	West	North	East	South			1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass				
West	North	East	South														
		1 ♠	Pass														
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass														

<div>♠KJ108</div> <div>♥642</div> <div>♦A109</div> <div>♣K62</div> <div>♠9</div> <div>♥K753</div> <div>♦7543</div> <div>♣A853</div> <div>♠Q53</div> <div>♥J1098</div> <div>♦J82</div> <div>♣J109</div> <div>♠A7642</div> <div>♥AQ</div> <div>♦KQ6</div> <div>♣Q74</div>	<div>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <div>A singleton trump lead certainly isn't safe as it helps declarer find ♠Q. West should lead a passive diamond (♦5 – second from a bad suit). Declarer will probably play for the drop in trumps and if the defenders remain passive they should beat 4♠, taking a trump, a heart and two clubs.</div>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
West	North	East	South														
			1♠														
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠														
All Pass																	
<div>♠Q1098</div> <div>♥A52</div> <div>♦J104</div> <div>♣1098</div> <div>♠AKJ74</div> <div>♥Q10987</div> <div>♦K5</div> <div>♣A</div> <div>♠32</div> <div>♥J64</div> <div>♦A763</div> <div>♣KJ43</div> <div>♠65</div> <div>♥K3</div> <div>♦Q982</div> <div>♣Q7652</div>	<div>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All pass</td></tr></table> <div>East gives false preference to 2♠, preferring a 5-2 spade fit to a 4-3 heart fit but when West shows a fifth heart East bids the heart game (eight card fit). Dummy almost certainly has two spades and three hearts. North has good spades so it is sensible to try to prevent ruffs in dummy. The correct card from A x x of trumps is a small one. South wins ♥K and returns a heart to ♥A and a third trump follows. This leaves declarer with two spade losers and nine tricks for declarer are the limit.</div>	West	North	East	South	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass
West	North	East	South														
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass														
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass														
3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass														
<div>♠AK953</div> <div>♥KJ109</div> <div>♦106</div> <div>♣K6</div> <div>♠QJ107</div> <div>♥A3</div> <div>♦K84</div> <div>♣QJ103</div> <div>♠862</div> <div>♥762</div> <div>♦972</div> <div>♣A875</div> <div>♠4</div> <div>♥Q854</div> <div>♦AQJ53</div> <div>♣942</div>	<div>Board 1 (Talk) : Dealer North : Love All</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1N/2♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <div>It is almost never right to underlead a side suit ace at trick one against a suit contract so East should automatically rule out a ♣5 lead. East should also think twice before cashing ♣A - aces are meant to beat opponents' honours, not small cards. East may lead a heart. West wins ♥A and switches to ♣Q. Now, with the diamond finesse failing, the contract is doomed.</div>	West	North	East	South		1♠	Pass	1N/2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1♠	Pass	1N/2♦														
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥														
Pass	4♥	All pass															

<p>♠ 52 ♥ 9852 ♦ 1095 ♣ K652</p> <p>♠ AKQJ108 ♠ 93 ♥ KQJ ♥ A104 ♦ 86 ♦ AQJ432 ♣ AJ ♣ 43</p> <p>♠ 764 ♥ 763 ♦ K7 ♣ Q10987</p>		<p><i>Board 2 (Talk) : Dealer East NS Vulnerable</i></p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1 ♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2 ♠¹</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3 ♠²</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4 N³</td><td>Pass</td><td>5 ♥⁴</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6 ♠⁵</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>1 16+ (either good 5+ suit and 4+good diamonds support or, as here, an excellent 6+spade variant); 2 Confirms 6+spade variant; 3 RKCB (reasonable to assume partner has a control in his long suit); 4 Two aces, no ♠Q; 5 Might have tried for 7 ♠ by asking for ♦K</p> <p>East has long diamonds. West has long spades. The defenders must quickly take what they can in the other suits. North should lead the suit where he needs less help from partner - ♣2 (in fact if there is a trump trick that will come naturally without broaching the suit). When South comes in with ♦K the defenders can now cash a club trick.</p>				<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1 ♦	Pass	2 ♠ ¹	Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠ ²	Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4 N ³	Pass	5 ♥ ⁴	Pass	6 ♠ ⁵	All pass		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																										
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6 ♠ ⁵	All pass																												