



Opening leads against a Trump contract

5 May 2020

Opening Leads against Trump Contracts

- ♦ Primary objective:

- ♣ **To win tricks with your highest cards**

- ♥ Unlike No Trumps, the smaller cards in a longer suit are very unlikely to win tricks

- ♠ **You want to win tricks with your higher cards before Declarer can ruff the suit**

- ♦ There are two types of lead:

- ♣ **Active** – where we try to develop tricks straight away

- ♣ **Passive** – where we try not to give away tricks

- ♥ In general, we make:

- ♠ active leads against no trump contracts, and

- ♠ passive leads against trump contracts

but not always!

Suit and card to lead against a Trump contract

Suit to lead (from non-trump suits)	Card to lead	Exceptions	Examples and Effectiveness	
Suit bid by partner	Low with honour (except Ace); otherwise, second highest	You would need a very good reason not to (and partner might not play with you again)	Source: Andrew Robson	
Touching honour cards (include 10 as an honour)	Top card	Do not lead from suit with an "internal sequence" such as K, J, 10, 7	AK74 KQJ6 KQ76 QJT4 QJ52	10 9 8 8 7
Singleton card	No choice		3	9
Longest 3+ card suit with one or more Honours that are not in a sequence	Lowest card	Do not lead from under an Ace	Q952	4
		Avoid leading with 3 cards to the Queen	K752	2
		Avoid leading from suit with a tenace, e.g. KJ	KJ53	2
		Risky to lead with 4 cards to King or to Jack	AT74	0
Longest suit without an Honour	Second highest card		852	4
Doubleton suit	Highest card		83	5
			J4	2
Avoid leading from a suit headed by an Ace (without having the King) except against a Slam contract. If you feel you have to lead from a suit with an Ace, lead the Ace				

What you can learn from your Partner's Opening lead

Indication from partner's lead	Action prompted by partner's lead Also take note of Dummy's hand
Card led from a suit bid by you No indication of other cards in the hand of partner	
Card from a suit not bid by you	
If an honour Partner might have the next highest card in suit (or the Ace if a King was led, asking for Count)	+ Return suit if higher honour cards have been drawn from first round of cards and partner's next card is now a winner
If not an honour If a low card Partner might have an honour in suit Partner unlikely to have doubleton Lead could have been a singleton card	+ Return suit for partner to win in suit (if remaining higher honour cards are not in Dummy's hand) or ruff
If a higher, non-honour card Partner unlikely to have an honour in suit Lead could be second highest in 3+ cards that are unlikely to win tricks Lead could be from a doubleton suit Lead could have been a singleton card	- Do not lead back this suit (unless you have a winner) + unless you and / or Dummy are long in suit so you think partner led a singleton - return a card for possible ruff

When to lead a trump card

Leading from the Trump suit	
When not to lead a trump	When to lead a trump
1 When you have a singleton Partner likely to have 3 or 4 and you will weaken her hand	1 Declarer is playing in the second suit that she bid
	2 Opponents have made a sacrifice, have less points than you and are hoping to win tricks by ruffing
2 When you have length in trumps	3 Opponents bid 3 or 4 suits, do not have a good match and will need to win tricks by ruffing
	4 Your partner doubled opponents' contract for penalties or passed your take-out double – indicates partner has strong hand in trumps

Example 1

You are in East position

Your hand is:

♠ K 7 6
♥ Q J 10
♦ 10 8 3
♣ 9 5 4 3

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	PASS	3 ♠	PASS
4 ♠	PASS	PASS	PASS

What is your Opening lead? Q ♥

Example 2

You are in South position

Your hand is:

♠ 8 6 5
♥ 9
♦ J 8 6 5 3
♣ J 5 3 2

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
	1 ♠	PASS	3 ♠
PASS	4 ♠	PASS	PASS
PASS			

What is your Opening lead? 9 ♥

Example 3

You are in West position

Your hand is:

♠ 7

♥ A K 4 3 2

♦ 8 4 3 2

♣ 9 7 6

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
		1 ♠	PASS
3 ♠	PASS	4 ♠	PASS
PASS	PASS		

What is your Opening lead? A♥

Example 4

You are in South position

Your hand is:

♠ Q J T

♥ Q 6 3

♦ K J T 7

♣ 9 4 2

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
	1 ♠	PASS	1 NT
PASS	2 ♥	PASS	PASS
PASS			

What is your Opening lead? 3♥

Example 5

You are in South position

Your hand is:

♠ Q 6 3
 ♥ A J 8 3
 ♦ Q 5 4
 ♣ J 7 2

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
			1 ♦
PASS	1 ♠	PASS	2 ♦
PASS	2 ♥	PASS	2 ♠
PASS	3 ♠	PASS	4 ♠
PASS	PASS	PASS	

What is your Opening lead? 2 ♣

Example 6

You are in North position

Your hand is:

♠ K Q J
 ♥ A J 10 9
 ♦ J 9 8 7 5
 ♣ 2

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
			1 ♠
PASS	2 ♣	PASS	2 ♠
PASS	3 ♣	PASS	4 ♠
PASS	PASS	PASS	

What is your Opening lead? K ♠



Thank you