

Opening leads against a No Trump contract

Default:	4th highest of your longest (and strongest) suit	
Why?	This helps your partner to work out your length and strength in the suit for which you believe you can make tricks	
How does your partner know if you have led the 4th highest?	"Rule of 11"	
	11 less the value of the led card = Number of higher cards in the hands of Dummy, Partner and Declarer	
	Partner can see the number of higher cards in that suit in Dummy and her own hand	<p>If this already exceeds the number above, the lead could not have been the 4th highest.</p> <p>If, as is often the case, the lead is the 4th highest, your partner can work out whether Declarer has one or more higher cards than her – which helps her to know what to play.</p>

The remainder of this session is to cover the exceptions when a different lead is better

What do we take into account?

Your 13 cards

The bidding

The final contract

Opening leads against a No Trump contract

First exception to 4th highest of your longest suit

Same longest suit, but leading a **card** other than the 4th highest in a suit

Criteria		Examples of what to lead	
1	Top card from a sequence of 3 cards, headed by an honour (incl. 10)	K Q J 8 3	10 9 8 5 2
2	Top card from a broken sequence, headed by an honour	A K J 5 4	Q J 9 6 3
3	Top of an internal sequence, headed by an honour	A Q J 6 2	Q 10 9 7 3
4	The Ace from Ace, King followed by 2 or 3 more cards in suit	A K 5 4 3	A K 6 2
5	The second highest from a long suit with no honours (“high” for “hate”)	9 8 5 3 2	8 6 4 2
But			
Not the top card from two touching honours, other than for 4 above		K Q 5 3 2	J 10 8 5 3

Opening leads against a No Trump contract

Other possible exceptions to 4th highest of your longest suit

Consideration of which suit to lead

Did your partner bid a suit?

If yes,	Was it an opening bid?	It might only contain 4 cards and little strength in suit, e.g. J 8 5 2
	Was it an overcall?	At least 5 cards in suit which could be very useful in a N T contract

Did partner double an artificial bid such as a 2 ♣ Stayman or 2 ♦ / 2 ♥ Red Suit Transfer as a “Lead Indicator” for you

What is your holding in the suit your partner bid or doubled?	Do you have 3 cards in partner’s bid suit headed by an honour or 2 cards that are both Honours?
---	---

Which suit to lead

If partner’s bid was an overcall or a lead indicator, you should lead from partner’s suit.

If partner’s lead was an opening bid, take a view on whether her suit, including the cards you hold in that suit, is likely to be better than the suit you would otherwise lead

Which card to lead if leading from partner’s suit

Lead the same card as if this was your preferred suit without partner’s input

What to do if the Opposition bid the suit that is your longest

Avoid leading from this suit – find another

Are there any other indicators of what to lead from the Opposition’s bidding?

If neither of the opposition has shown interest in one of the majors, they are unlikely to have length or strength in that suit and your partner could have.

How strong is your partner?

By knowing the level of NT contract and your own strength, you can estimate your partner’s points. If you know partner is very weak, a “passive” 2nd highest card from a rubbish suit is likely to be better than leading a low card.