

## Leading Trumps and Leading Singletons

1. When is it a good idea to lead trumps (people often lead a singleton trump if they have one or right or wrongly?)
2. When is it a good idea to lead a singleton? . . . or is it never a good idea?

### 1. First, when to lead a singleton trump?

For intermediate players **never** lead a singleton trump on the opening lead. It's one of the worst opening leads possible. If you have one trump, there are clear indications that your partner has some length (he won't have a lot of trumps, otherwise the opposition have ended up in a godawful contract). But this is a typical situation, with the trump holding shown.

	North A J x x x	
West Q x x		East x
	South K 10 x x	

You can see that North should normally play for the drop of the Q, but East's lead has solved his problem.

### When should you lead a trump (not a singleton)?

A standard case is, when the dummy has bid another suit and later supported the declarer e.g.

N	E	S	E
[1H]	P	[2D]	P
[2H]	P	[4H]	P

South has some length in Diamonds and support for Hearts (but fewer than four). South is likely to be short in another suit. It is likely that North will be using South's three trumps to ruff in the short (South) hand (a hand with fewer than four trumps). This gives North extra tricks. You can stop this by attacking trumps.

Normally, your trump lead will be from small cards. There are obvious dangers in leading a trump from Qxx or Kx. Be aware that the lead from Jx or Jxx is *also likely to cost a trick*. In this case, where we have the auction above, it's a question of whether you're brave enough to attack trumps knowing that you may give up your honour trick (you may not, as North might finesse against it anyway, or you may, as the play progresses, be able to keep leading trumps which will gain you more tricks than the loss of your honour). Otherwise, you may want to make a more passive lead.

If you can find no better lead, a trump lead if you have 2 or 3 small ones is relatively safe.

**Forget that old 'bridge wisdom' – 'if in doubt lead a trump'.** It would probably be more accurate to say, *if in doubt, don't lead a trump.* Actually I can hardly think of any of those old adages which are true.

### 2. When is it good to lead a singleton (in a trump contract)?

Assuming this is not a singleton trump, you should lead it against a trump contract unless it's a singleton King. The exception is when you have good trumps, in this case you actually don't want to ruff, so don't lead your singleton. You want to wait until declarer tries to remove trumps and get's the bad news. At that point, your long trumps may well control the hand and you could be in a position to take out Declarer's trumps e.g.

Spades	K Q 10 x
Hearts	x
Diamonds	x x x
Clubs	Q J x x x

If the opponents are in Spades, you will have 'natural' Spade tricks i.e. cards that will make anyway. You want to use them to overruff Declarer or take out his Spades. You don't want to waste them by ruffing, so don't lead a Heart (or a trump).

An exception to this would be if partner has bid Hearts. Now you lead a Heart, not because you're trying to ruff but because you expect your partner to take high-card tricks in Hearts.