

## PASSIVE OPENING LEADS

You want to be patient and make declarer work for all his tricks. Your goal is to make a safe opening lead that won't give declarer a "cheap" or undeserved trick.

How do you know when a passive lead is your best choice? The auction tells you that declarer has a strong hand and dummy (and/or partner) will be very weak.

Your RHO opens 2 NT (20-21 HCP's) and LHO raises to 3 NT.

What's your lead, holding:            986   AQ62   KQ43   Q6

With almost all the out-standing honors on your right, partner can't hold more than 2-3 HCP's. Your lead should be a passive 9 of spades. Unlikely to set up tricks for your side, But probably won't help declarer. You'll be on lead again soon, and if your spade lead was indeed safe, you should continue the suit. If a switch is necessary, you'll have a better idea of which suit to choose later.

You're defending a suit contract where the opponents are fairly balanced. On these hands, declarer will usually have to play the side suits himself, so it's best to sit back and wait for your tricks.

Your RHO opens 1 heart, your left hand opponent bids 2 NT (Jacoby) opener bids 4 hearts  
You're on lead holding:

Q74   5   108432   KJ64   What's your lead?

Opponents have shown game level strength and their hands rate to be semi balanced. Singleton trump is the most dangerous lead, (partners always seem to hold (QXX). It's risky to lead away from your club or spade honors. That leaves the "nothing" suit - diamonds – so lead the 3 of diamonds.

"Lead from nothing, get nothing" should be your expectation with most passive leads.

A safe lead may also be an attacking combination – such as a suit headed by AK, KQJ, QJ10- These are usually good choices for a lead to any contract. If you aren't dealt these easy holdings, you'll sometimes have to select a passive lead. Passive leads include: a lead from a topless suit, when in doubt, lead through strength, a lead from length, the longer your suit, the less likely it will be that declarer needs to develop his own tricks in that suit.

Q762 DEALER – 1 Diamond  
KJ5 2 Spades  
QJ108  
A6

93  
962 PASS  
432  
QJ1093

10 1 Heart  
AQ1084 Pass  
AK75  
852

AKJ854  
73 1 Spade  
96 4 Spades  
K74

You're West and on lead, what's your lead?

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AQ4 DEALER – 2 NT  
753 3 Diamonds  
AK4  
AK106

J1083  
K1096  
Q53 PASS  
92

97 PASS  
82 PASS  
J10976  
8754

K652  
AQJ4  
82 3 Clubs  
QJ3 6 NT

East leads the J of diamonds, declarer wins, and cashes 4 clubs, what do you discard on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> club and why?

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Avoid going overboard with the give-them-nothing strategy at match points. If others Holding your cards will be leading from their KJXXX suit to 3 NT, don't try to out-think them by choosing a "brilliant" lead from your XXX suit. Like other unusual leads, going passive when you know the field will be aggressive is a gamble that rates to lose in the long run.