

BFP BP L11 Opening Leads No Trump Contracts

Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K 9 6
♥ A 8 4
♦ K Q J 2
♣ 9 6 4

♠ 10 7 5 4
♥ J 6 5
♦ 7 5 4
♣ Q J 10



♠ 8 3 2
♥ K Q 10 3 2
♦ A 6
♣ 8 3 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	4	4	1	2	2
S	4	4	1	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A Q J
♥ 9 7
♦ 10 9 8 3
♣ A K 7 5

13
4 9
14

West North East South
 1 NT Pass 3 NT
All pass

Holding a hand with 9 HCPs, East knows that partner will have a maximum of 6 HCPs and probably less. The heart suit headed by the broken sequence ♥ KQ10 looks to be the only realistic chance of defeating the 3NT contract, so East's opening lead is ♥ K.

Against no trumps the ♥ K lead promises either ♥ QJ or ♥ Q10. West should play ♥ J under ♥ K so that partner knows to continue playing hearts.

East continues with ♥ Q and ♥ 10 to force out declarer's ♥ A and will get back in with ♦ A to make two more heart tricks taking the contract one down.

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Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q J 10 7 5
♥ J 9 3
♦ K 10 3
♣ 10 8

♠ K 9 3
♥ K 6 4
♦ Q 7
♣ A Q 9 7 3



♠ A 8 4
♥ A 7 5 2
♦ J 5
♣ K J 6 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	4	-	4	-	1
W	4	-	4	-	1

♠ 6 2
♥ Q 10 8
♦ A 9 8 6 4 2
♣ 4 2

7
14 13
6

West	North	East	South
		1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

South leads his fourth highest ♦ 6. North estimates South's possible HCPs: declarer has 12-14 HCPs, dummy 14, North has 7 so South has 5-7.

If declarer held ♦ A he would probably play dummy's ♦ Q to try for an extra trick, so South probably has ♦ A but not much more. Therefore, North plays ♦ K expecting to win the trick and then returns ♦ 10 to unblock the suit.

South wins ♦ A and another four diamond tricks, so the contract goes two down.

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Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K J 6
♥ 9 6
♦ A J 9 7 6
♣ A 9 8

♠ 9 8 5 4 2
♥ A 10 3
♦ 5 3
♣ Q 5 2



♠ A 7
♥ Q 7 5 4 2
♦ Q 10 4
♣ J 6 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	3	-	1	1
S	2	3	-	1	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ Q 10 3
♥ K J 8
♦ K 8 2
♣ K 10 7 4

13
6 9
12

West	North	East	South
Pass	3 NT	All pass	1 NT

West does not have a good lead so chooses second highest ♠ 8 from a poor suit.

East estimates his partner's possible HCPs: declarer has 12-14, dummy 13, East has 9 so West has 4-6.

The rule of 11 suggests ♠ 8 was not a fourth highest lead, so East should switch to leading his fourth highest ♥ 4.

When declarer plays ♥ J, West should win ♥ A and return ♥ 10 to unblock the suit. Declarer should allow ♥ 10 to win the trick but must take ♥ K when West leads ♥ 3.

East will eventually get back in with a diamond to take the contract one down with his winning heart.

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Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ Q 10 5 4

♥ A

♦ 6 4 3

♣ Q 10 7 6 3

♠ K 8 6

♥ K J 10 9

♦ K Q J 8

♣ 5 2



♠ A 7 3

♥ 7 4 2

♦ A 10 9 5

♣ A J 8

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	5	3	1	4
W	-	5	2	1	2

♠ J 9 2

♥ Q 8 6 5 3

♦ 7 2

♣ K 9 4

8
13 13
6

West

1 NT

North

Pass

East

3 NT

South

All pass

North leads fourth highest ♣ 6. South can estimate North's HCPs: declarer has 12-14, dummy 13, South has 6 so North has 7-9.

Declarer plays dummy's ♣ 8 at trick 1. The ♣ 6 looks to be a fourth highest lead so South can subtract 6 from 11 to deduce that there are 5 clubs higher than ♣ 6 in the other three hands. Those can all be seen in dummy and South, so declarer doesn't have a club higher than ♣ 6. This means that South can win the trick with ♣ 9, then return ♣ K followed by ♣ 4.

North will eventually get back in with his ♥ A to cash his remaining clubs, so the contract goes one down.

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Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A 6 4 3

♥ Q 4 3

♦ K Q 2

♣ Q J 3

♠ K 7 5

♥ K 10 2

♦ 9 5 3

♣ 9 7 6 5



♠ Q 10 9

♥ A J 6 5

♦ 10 7 4

♣ 10 4 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	2	1	2	2
S	2	2	1	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ J 8 2

♥ 9 8 7

♦ A J 8 6

♣ A K 8

14
6 7
13

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

East leads fourth highest ♥ 5 from the only four-card suit.

Using the rule of eleven on the opening lead, West calculates that declarer holds one significant heart, so should play ♥ K which wins the trick, and then return the highest remaining card ♥ 10, giving a count signal and finessing declarer's ♥ Q.

The contract is doomed as the defenders can now take four heart tricks and a spade.

The auction is correct, the right number of HCPs and the right holdings, but on this hand the wrong cards.

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Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K 7 5
♥ K 10 2
♦ 9 5 3
♣ 9 7 6 5

♠ J 8 2
♥ 9 8 7
♦ A J 8 6
♣ A K 8



♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ A 4 3
♦ K Q 2
♣ Q J 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	2	1	3	2
W	2	2	1	3	2

♠ A 10 9
♥ Q J 6 5
♦ 10 7 4
♣ 10 4 2

6
13 14
7

West	North	East	South
		1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

South leads fourth highest ♥ 5 from the only four-card suit.

North rises with ♥ K which wins the trick. Using the rule of eleven, North can calculate that declarer holds one significant heart. West returns the highest remaining card ♥ 10, giving a count signal and forcing declarer's ♥ A. Declarer may well hold up the Ace, but must play it eventually.

The contract is doomed as the defenders can take three heart tricks and two spades to take the contract one down.

The auction is correct, the right number of HCPs and the right holdings, but on this hand the wrong cards.

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Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

♠ K 10 9 2

♥ 7 4 2

♦ K J 10 3

♣ K 6

♠ A J 8 4

♥ Q J 8 6

♦ —

♣ J 10 9 8 7



♠ 5 3

♥ K 9 5 3

♦ Q 9 7 6 2

♣ 5 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	3	-	4	3
S	2	3	-	4	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ Q 7 6

♥ A 10

♦ A 8 5 4

♣ A Q 3 2

10
9 5
16

West

North

East

South

1 ♣

Pass

1 ♦

Pass

1 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

Declarer has bid clubs so West should not lead ♣ J. Best lead looks to be fourth highest ♥ 6 as there is more chance that East can help in that suit, and it also keeps ♠ A as an entry if an attack on hearts is successful.

By subtracting 6 from 11 East can work out that the other three hands have 5 hearts higher than ♥ 6. He can see 3 of those in dummy and in hand, so declarer has 2.

East's ♥ K drives out declarer's ♥ A leaving the defenders with three heart tricks and ♠ A. However, declarer can still make nine tricks if he drives out ♠ A before cashing his other winners.

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Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ J
♥ 10 6 5 4
♦ Q 10 7 3
♣ A J 4 3

♠ A 10
♥ A J 9 3 2
♦ A 5 2
♣ K Q 6



♠ Q 8 5 4 2
♥ Q 7
♦ K 8
♣ 10 9 8 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	-	3	3	2
W	3	-	3	3	2

♠ K 9 7 6 3
♥ K 8
♦ J 9 6 4
♣ 7 5

8
18 7
7

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

North has a choice between three 4-card suits. Declarer opened hearts so the choice must be one of the minors. There is a good chance that South may have a diamond honour and it also means that ♣ A can be retained as a possible entry, so ♦ 3 looks to be the best lead.

South can see 4 diamonds higher than ♦ 3 in his own hand and 2 in dummy, so declarer must have the other two in a probable holding of ♦ Ax2.

This lead should restrict declarer to eight tricks for one down. Any other lead may well allow him to make his contract.

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Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ Q 10 7

♥ A K 8

♦ K 5 3

♣ 6 5 3 2

♠ K 9 8

♥ Q J 10 2

♦ 10 8

♣ A 9 8 7



♠ A 5 4 3 2

♥ 9 4 3

♦ 7 6 4 2

♣ 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	2	-	-	2
S	3	2	-	-	2
E	-	-	1	-	-
W	-	-	1	-	-

♠ J 6

♥ 7 6 5

♦ A Q J 9

♣ K Q J 10

12
10 4
14

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

You should never underlead a side suit ace at trick 1 against a suit contract, but that certainly doesn't apply against no trumps. A lead of ♠ 3 is very attractive here.

Partner wins the trick with ♠ K and returns ♠ 9, his next highest from an original 3-card holding. East allows declarer to win this, following suit with ♠ 2 to show he started with a 5-card suit.

When West wins ♣ A leading another spade allows the suit to run. Contract one down.

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Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

♠ 10 8 5 3

♥ Q 6 2

♦ 10 9 8

♣ 7 4 3

♠ Q 9 2

♥ K 8 7

♦ A K 3

♣ J 10 9 8



♠ A 4

♥ A 10 9

♦ J 6 5 4

♣ K 6 5 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	4	2	1	2
W	4	3	2	1	2

♠ K J 7 6

♥ J 5 4 3

♦ Q 7 2

♣ A Q

2
13 12
13

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

South has a hand that would prefer not to be on lead, particularly as partner is likely to have very little.

The minor suits can be ruled out. Leading away from an unsupported jack is never attractive because you are far too likely to open a frozen suit, as shown here.

A spade lead looks best. North has ♠ 10 and South can persevere with spades to set up two tricks or take the contract one down.

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Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ Q 7 6 3
 ♥ Q 5
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ K Q 10 8 3

♠ J 5 4
 ♥ 9 7 4
 ♦ Q 6 4 3
 ♣ 9 7 4



♠ K 9 8 2
 ♥ K J 10 3 2
 ♦ J 9
 ♣ A 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	4	3	1	2	3
S	4	3	-	1	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A 10
 ♥ A 8 6
 ♦ A K 10 5 2
 ♣ J 6 2

9
 3 12
 16

West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

West has a choice between identical holdings in clubs and hearts. East didn't have the opportunity to overcall either clubs or hearts at the one level, so it seems a guess.

The only clue is that North/South might have made a greater effort to find a heart fit if either of them held four, so that sways the decision in favour of leading ♥ 7. All things being equal, prefer the major.

On this hand it turns out to be the critical lead to take the contract one down.

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Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 9 8 7 6
♥ J 5 4 3
♦ K 7 2
♣ A Q

♠ A 4 3
♥ A 10 9
♦ Q 6 4
♣ K 6 5 2



♠ K Q 2
♥ K 8 7
♦ A 5 3
♣ J 10 9 8

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	2	2	2	3
W	3	2	2	2	3

♠ J 10 5
♥ Q 6 2
♦ J 10 9 8
♣ 7 4 3

10
13 13
4

West	North	East	South
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Leading away from an unsupported jack is never attractive: you need partner to hold a lot of high cards in the suit to make it work and you are far more likely to open a frozen suit, as shown here.

The best lead is a passive ♠ 8. Declarer has only 8 tricks: the defenders must try to avoid giving him a ninth.

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Board 13

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ 6 5
♥ A 10 6
♦ K 9
♣ A K Q 8 7 6

♠ 4
♥ 5 4 3 2
♦ A Q J 10 3 2
♣ 9 2



♠ A J 10 9 7 3
♥ K J 7
♦ 5 4
♣ 10 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	-	1	1	2
S	3	-	1	1	2
E	-	2	-	-	-
W	-	2	-	-	-

♠ K Q 8 2
♥ Q 9 8
♦ 8 7 6
♣ J 5 4

16
7 9
8

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	1 ♠	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

It is not always right to lead partner's suit. Declarer seems well prepared for a spade lead, and West's spade singleton will not help set spades up, and West does have an excellent alternative.

West should lead the top of an internal sequence ♦ Q. Dummy wins the trick with ♦ K, but East should realise that partner's failure to lead spades marks partner with a very poor spade holding.

East should grab the lead as soon as possible with ♠ A or ♥ K and return a diamond to take the contract one down.

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Board 14

East Deals

None Vul

♠ 10 9 8
♥ 10 9 8
♦ K Q J
♣ 10 9 8 5

♠ 7 3 2
♥ K 7 6
♦ A 10 7
♣ Q 7 4 2



♠ K J 6
♥ Q 5 4
♦ 6 5 2
♣ A K J 6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	2	3	2	1
S	1	2	3	2	1
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A Q 5 4
♥ A J 3 2
♦ 9 8 4 3
♣ 3

6
9 14
11

West

North

East

South

1 NT

All pass

Frequently you are on lead to 1 NT with nothing to guide you. Dummy may have anywhere from two to ten HCPs.

Often if you fail to find an attacking lead necessary to beat the contract you will get another chance. This suggests a passive diamond lead. You will see that leading either major automatically gives declarer a 7th trick.

If South defends passively (leading a diamond), despite having a combined 23 HCPs declarer is struggling to find a 7th trick.

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Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ K 10 8
 ♥ 7 6 5
 ♦ A 9 8
 ♣ A K 3 2

♠ J 5 4 3 2
 ♥ 9 4 3
 ♦ 7 6 4 2
 ♣ J



♠ Q 7
 ♥ Q J 10 2
 ♦ Q J 10
 ♣ Q 10 9 8

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	2	2	2	2
S	2	2	2	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A 9 6
 ♥ A K 8
 ♦ K 5 3
 ♣ 7 6 5 4

14
2 10
14

West	North	East	South
Pass	3 NT	All pass	1 NT

West can lead a spade, his longest suit, but with no entries he will need a very favourable spade layout to set up and cash the suit. More likely, a spade lead will only succeed in opening a frozen suit (as here) and giving declarer his ninth trick.

A diamond lead is likely to be passive, with just the chance of setting up a length trick.

On a diamond lead declarer will struggle to find a ninth trick and may well go one down.

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Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 5 4 3 2
♥ 9 4 3
♦ 7 6
♣ A K 6

♠ K 7 6
♥ A K 8
♦ K 5 3
♣ 8 5 4 3



♠ A 9
♥ 7 6 5
♦ A Q 9 8
♣ Q J 10 9

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	3	2	1	2
W	4	3	2	1	2

♠ Q 10 8
♥ Q J 10 2
♦ J 10 4 2
♣ 7 2

8
13 13
6

West	North	East	South
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

This time North has two potential entries to the spades, making a lead of ♠ 3 far more promising.

The defence can set up and enjoy 3 spade tricks before declarer can establish his clubs to take the contract one down.