

Leading a king against NTs

The normal methods of leading are:

Suits	Card	Asking Pard to show?	Typical holding
	A or Q	Attitude (high-low) High to encourage, low to discourage	
	K	Count: • low then high = odd number • High then low = even number	
NTs	A or Q	Attitude (high-low) High to encourage, low to discourage	
	K	Unblock an honour	KQ10(x) AKJ10(x)

Example hands:

Board 21: North/South Vul Dlr North

♠ KJ2		♠ A75
♥ KQ5		♥ 1084
♦ A82		♦ KQ107
♣ A842		♣ Q109
♠ Q10863		
♥ AJ		
♦ J653		
♣ 65		
	♠ 94	
	♥ 97632	
	♦ 94	
	♣ KJ73	

Contract 3NT by North. East leads the ♦K (asking for an unblock) and West plays the jack, Declarer ducking. Now it is safe for the defence to continue ♦s and take 5 tricks. If ♦s are not continued Declarer wraps up 10 tricks thanks to the placement of the ♥A.

Note: If West doesn't unblock the ♦J, East will switch, fearing a Bath Coup (Declarer holding the AJx).

Board 23: Both Vul Dlr South

	♠ K987	
	♥ 83	
	♦ J98	
	♣ KQ85	
♠ AJ5		♠ Q1032
♥ Q1052		♥ AJ9
♦ Q54		♦ AK102
♣ A64		♣ J10
	♠ 64	
	♥ K764	
	♦ 763	
	♣ 9732	

Contract 3NT by West.

Lead: ♣Q!

North can't lead the ♣K as it would ask South to unblock, and you don't want that with only KQxx. So he leads the Q and South *encourages* with the 3. With a better holding he would play the more encouraging 7 but Opener should see that the 2 is missing, so Pard must have it and is making a slight encouragement. With ♣J10 in Dummy, North continues with the clubs and holds Declarer to 9 tricks. On a major lead, Declarer will make 11 tricks.

Board 5: N/S Vul Dlr North

	♠ Q82	
	♥ 10	
	♦ A765	
	♣ KQ1064	
♠ A965		♠ J10
♥ 2		♥ AK98754
♦ Q1094		♦ K5
♣ J973		♣ A2
	♠ K743	
	♥ QJ63	
	♦ J82	
	♣ 85	

Contract 3NT by West.

After this awful bidding:

West	North	East	South
	1♣	X	1♥
1♠	P	3♥	P
3NT	P	P	P

Lead: ♣K

Declarer wins with the ace, Partner playing the 8 (showing count), and runs the ♠J to your queen.
What now?

You should realise that Partner hasn't got the ♣J as he would have played it at Trick 1. Therefore, it is dangerous to continue clubs. Play ♦A and another killing the ♥ suit. Even a ♥ switch kills the contract. But continuing clubs gives Declarer 3 club tricks to go with 2 spades, 2 hearts and two diamonds.