

Opening Leads and Strategies against a Suit Contract

Duplicate Lite

Jane Youngberg



Listen to the bidding for clues.

In general, decide if you should be setting up your partner's hand or your own hand.

Can you count how many points are in each hand?

Active leads in a game contract

Passive leads in a partial contract

The Importance of Opening Leads

If you make the best opening lead, you will have an advantage of almost ¼ of a trick.

Unique Book – focus on fact rather than opinion
“Winning Suit Contract Leads”

By David Bird and Taf Anthias

• Computer Simulations to analyze the best opening leads

• Generated [5000](#) deals for the west hand that match the North South Bidding.

2

When to lead a trump?

You will give up a trick in all other suits: Hearts are trump

♠ Kxxx, ♥ xx, ♦ Q10xx, ♣ Axx

The opposition have decided on a second suit:

Auction: 1H P 1S P 2H P 2S P 3C P P P

General Strategies for Opening Leads in a Suit Contract.

- The lead of a low card suggests an honour: Q 7 4 3
- Always lead the top of a sequence: AKx, KQxx, QJ10x,
- A **singleton** is a “Gift from Above” in a suit contract
- Did your partner bid? **This is a first priority!!** But a singleton may be better
- **Never under lead an Ace!**

Surprising Result

E/W vulnerable

N/S not vul

E	S	W	N
1H	1S	2S	4S
P	P	X	P
P	P		

Clearly, North is bidding on air as East/West has shown at least 23 HCP!

North is making a sacrifice because North/South are not vulnerable. North probably has less than 6 HCP and knows that East/West can make 4H.

6

E S W N
1H 1S 2S 4S
P P X P
P P

E/W vulnerable
N/S not vul

WEST LEAD?

When the opposition has stolen the bid, what should you lead??

HCP 11

♠ 10 5
♥ Q 9 7 2
♦ A Q 2
♣ K 8 6 5

7

Bidding:
1S P 2S P
P P

LEAD?

Your Hand

♠ 8 2
♥ A 9 6 3
♦ 7 5
♣ K Q 8 5 4

10

♠ 10 5
♥ Q 9 7 2
♦ A Q 2
♣ K 8 6 5

Lead	IMP Down 4	MP Average Tricks
5S	28.2%	5.72
2H	32.8%	5.87
AD	28.5%	5.71
5C	31.1%	5.80

9

Bidding:
1S P 2S P
P P

Your Hand

♠ 8 2
♥ A 9 6 3
♦ 7 5
♣ K Q 8 5 4

Lead	IMP	MP
KC	14.5%	4.42
7D	19.2%	4.45
AH	14.5%	4.30
2S	14.5%	4.31

10

Lead	IMP Down 4	MP Average Tricks
5S	28.2%	5.72
2H	32.8%	5.87
AD	28.5%	5.71
5C	31.1%	5.80

"Bergen for the Defense" pg 80 "When the opponents sacrifice, always lead a trump, even if you have a singleton"

"Eddie Kantar teaches Modern Bridge Defense" pg 33 "Your side has the most points, yet they wind up playing the hand (the nerve!) Lead a trump."

9

Bidding:
1S P 3S P
4S P

LEAD?

Your Hand

♠ 10 6 4
♥ 6 2
♦ K 10 7 6 3
♣ Q J 6

12

Bidding:
 1S P 3S P
 4S P

Your Hand
 ♠ 10 6 4
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ K 10 7 6 3
 ♣ Q J 6

Lead	IMP	MP
4S	8.3%	2.25
6H	<u>10.2%</u>	<u>2.31</u>
6D	7.4%	2.20
QC	9.8%	2.25

Bidding:
 1S P 2S P
 4S P P P

Your Hand
 ♠ A 9 8 4
 ♥ K Q 9 3
 ♦ 5
 ♣ Q 10 6 3

Lead	IMP	MP
4S	64.1%	3.88
KH	68.8%	4.0
5D	<u>73.0%</u>	<u>4.13</u>
3C	61.9%	3.84

Leading from a Doubleton

Leading from a doubleton is not such a bad lead, especially a worthless doubleton (without an honour).

14

General Conclusions

1. A singleton is a “gift from above”
2. Leads from doubletons are much more effective than most players think.

17

Bidding:
 1S P 2S P
 4S P P P

LEAD?

♠ A 9 8 4
 ♥ K Q 9 3
 ♦ 5
 ♣ Q 10 6 3

15

3. When the opposition have stolen the bid, do not lead a trump. Generally, the same is true with splinter bids.

4. Often avoid leading from an honour and three small such as **Q 9 7 2**.

5. **K J x x**, or **K J 10 x**. Try to find another lead.

18

1

♠ AQJ4
♥ KJ73
♦ J84
♣ 75

♠ 102
♥ 54
♦ A109732
♣ A86

♠ K9873
♥ 982
♦ 5
♣ J1093

♠ 65
♥ AQ106
♦ KQ6
♣ KQ42

Bidding:
N E S W
1NT P
2C P 2H P
4H P P P

**Lead?
A "Gift" from above**
♦ 5

Signals!!!
East takes the A of D and returns the 2 of D, hoping that west has a singleton.

The 2 indicates a club return. When west returns a club, East can give West another "Ruff"

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

12
4 8
16

19

4

♠ A1087
♥ K82
♦ 985
♣ K72

♠ 62
♥ AJ65
♦ 762
♣ 10953

♠ 94
♥ Q1074
♦ KQ103
♣ J64

♠ KQJ53
♥ 93
♦ AJ4
♣ AQ8

Bidding:
N E S W
1S P
2S P 4S P
P P

**Lead?
K of Diamonds.
Top of a sequence**

Signals!!!
Upside down – signal with the 7!!
Dangerous to continue

If you lead another Diamond, Declarer will score an extra trick. It is important to switch!! If you lead another suit, the contract will be defeated because Declarer will score the Ace and the Jack!

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

10
8 5
17

22

2

♠ A942
♥ KJ75
♦ K42
♣ 52

♠ 1053
♥ 83
♦ A10963
♣ J98

♠ KJ87
♥ 62
♦ Q75
♣ K1073

♠ Q6
♥ AQ1094
♦ J8
♣ AQ64

Bidding:
N E S W
1H P
3H P 4H P
P P

**Lead?
All side suits will give up a trick. Lead a trump.**

Any other lead and declarer will make the contract as you have given away a trick!

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

11
9 5
15

20

3

♠ AQ43
♥ Q83
♦ J105
♣ Q85

♠ K10852
♥ A65
♦ 72
♣ K106

♠ J76
♥ 74
♦ K643
♣ J942

♠ 9
♥ KJ1092
♦ AQ98
♣ A73

Bidding:
N E S W
1H P
1S P 2D P
3H P 4H

**Lead?
2 of clubs, the unbid suit and the 2 indicates an honour.**

Partner would never under lead an Ace
Declarer must have the Ace!
When declarer plays the 5 from dummy, play the 10.
Rule: when partner's lead indicates an honour and there is an honour in dummy and you have a higher honour, it is correct to insert your second highest card providing it is 9 or more.

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

11
5 10
14

21