




	♠ K Q J 4 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ Q J 4	
♠ 7 3 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 2 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ 7 5	<div> <div>NORTH</div> <div>dummy</div> </div> <div> <div>WEST</div> <div>opener</div> </div> <div> <div>EAST</div> <div>responder</div> </div> <div> <div>SOUTH</div> <div>declarer</div> </div>	♠ A 6 5 ♥ 10 8 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ 10 9 8 6 2
  	♠ 10 9 8 ♥ K J 9 ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ A K 3	

As West, what do you lead against...

...a no trump contract:

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

...a trump contract:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Defence

The *Opening Lead* and *Partner's Response*

Book Pages 77-83 sections 5.1-5.4

Book Pages 84-88 sections 5.7

Objectives

Opening leads:

- Choosing a *lead* against *no trump* contract
- Choosing a *lead* against a *trump* contract

Partner's responses:

- *Responder's response*
- *The Rule of Eleven* - if we have enough time

Defence is hard - Good defenders communicate

Declarer has chosen *denomination* & *level*, their side has majority of *points*

Our side has to cooperate to win *tricks* and we cannot see *partner's hand*

Need to communicate to *partner* what you have (or don't have) to win *tricks*

Defenders win *tricks* in the same way as *declarer*:

- *top winners*
- *established winners*
- *length winners*

But you need to know where those *tricks* are...



Active vs. Passive leads

Active - A *lead* which looks to build the *defence's tricks* early and take *tricks* before they can get *discarded*

- Take the initiative
- Building *defensive tricks* early
- An element of risk

Passive - A safer *lead* which often aims to give nothing away and puts responsibility on *declarer* to find enough *tricks* to make their *contract*

- Little to no risk of giving a *trick* away
- Letting *declarer* make their mistakes
- Limiting *declarer's tricks*

Approach to choosing an *opening lead*

1. Is the *final contract* a *trump* or a *no-trump contract*
 2. Does the *auction* give you clues, did your partner *bid*
 3. Does the *contract / hand* require an *active* or *passive lead*
 4. Which *suit* gives you more *trick* taking options
 5. Which *card* within the *suit* - using *standard opening leads*...
- ...notice how we choose the *card* within the *suit* last

Standard opening leads

Lead an honour = I **LOVE** my suit

Lead a low card = I **LIKE** my suit

Lead a high card = I **HATE** my suit

'Standard' opening leads are so-called because on average they provide a good basis for your defence...

Partner usually leads back the opener's **LOVE** or **LIKE** suit

A

K

Q

J

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

Standard opening leads

***Standard leads* come with no guarantee
that they are the 'right' *lead***

**However when you've *defended* against
hundreds of *hands*, they offer the best
percentage of success**

A

K

Q

J

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

Suits to avoid

Unsupported aces against a suit contract

♠ A 6 4 2

A doubleton with one honour

♥ Q 4

Broken honour sequences against a suit contract

♣ A Q 8 4 or ♣ K J T 9

Suits bid by opponents

Priorities for *leading*

Best *leads* against *no trumps (NT)*

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- Spades

Which *card* to lead?

- $K\spadesuit$

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of three consecutive cards* headed by an honour

\spadesuit K Q J 8

\heartsuit 7 6

\diamondsuit K 7 5 2

\clubsuit J 4 3

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- Spades

Which *card* to lead?

- Q♠

Why?

- *Top of an internal sequence, of three honours of which two are in sequence*

♠ A Q J 8 5

♥ 7 6

♦ K 7 5

♣ J 4 3

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- *Diamonds*

Which *card* to lead?

- 3♦

Why?

- 4th highest (from one or two honours)
 - we make *tricks* from *length winners*, so our little *cards* will take *tricks*!

♠ K J 4

♥ 7 6

♦ K J 5 3 2

♣ J 4 3

Without a good *lead* against *NT*...

Make a safe / *passive lead*

Low priority *leads* vs NT

2nd highest from 4 or more low cards

♠ 9 8 6 4 3

Middle from 3 low cards (*MUD*)

♥ 7 3 2

Top of *doubleton*

♦ 9 8 4

♣ 6 5 3 2

Leading vs 3NT - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
<p>♠ Q J 10 4 2</p> <p>♥ 8 5</p> <p>♦ 9 5 3</p> <p>♣ K J 7</p>	<p>♠ J 8</p> <p>♥ 9 7 6 4 2</p> <p>♦ Q 8 5</p> <p>♣ A 10 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 5 4 2</p> <p>♥ A 9 3</p> <p>♦ J 7 6</p> <p>♣ 8 5</p>
<p>Q♠</p> <p>Top of a <i>sequence</i> of three headed by an <i>honour</i></p>	<p>7♥</p> <p>Second highest from a long <i>suit</i> but without an <i>honour</i></p>	<p>4♠</p> <p>Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i></p>

Leading vs 3NT - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
<p>♠ Q J 8 2</p> <p>♥ K J 3</p> <p>♦ A 8 4</p> <p>♣ 9 7 5</p>	<p>♠ Q 4</p> <p>♥ Q 3 2</p> <p>♦ J 7 5</p> <p>♣ 9 8 6 3 2</p>	<p>♠ Q J 8 4 2</p> <p>♥ K Q 9 4 3</p> <p>♦ K</p> <p>♣ 8 3</p>
<p>2♠</p> <p>Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i></p>	<p>8♣</p> <p>Second highest from a long <i>suit</i> but without an <i>honour</i></p>	<p>4♥</p> <p>Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i></p>

Priorities for *leading*

Best *leads* against *Trump contracts*

Opening leads against Trump contracts

- Against a *trump contract* it's usually the first two *rounds* of a *suit* that are important
- Concentrate on the quick-*trick*-taking potential of a *suit* – i.e. *honours*
- Subsequent *rounds* tend to be less important, since there is an increasing probability that they are going to be *ruffed*

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Spades*

Which *card* to lead?

- A♠

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more card sequence* headed by the Ace and King

♠ A K 3 2

♥ 4

♦ 8 5 2

♣ J 8 7 6 4

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Diamonds*

Which *card* to lead?

- 2♦

Why?

- Singleton - provides *ruffing* opportunities

♠ 4 3 2

♥ J 7 6 5 2

♦ 2

♣ Q 7 4 3

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to lead against *clubs*?

- *Clubs*

Which *card* to lead?

- *K♣*

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more honours*

♠ 4 3 2

♥ A Q J 5 2

♦ 2

♣ K Q 7 4

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to *lead* against *hearts*?

- *Clubs*

Which *card* to *lead*?

- Q♣

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more honours*
- No need to play the *singleton*, as your *hearts* are already *winners*

♠ 6 5 4 3 2

♥ A K

♦ 2

♣ Q J 7 4 3

Low priority leads vs Trumps

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Spades*

Which *card* to lead?

- 2♠

Why?

- Low from a *suit* with a single *honour* (risky)

♠ K 5 2

♥ 6 4

♦ 9 7 3 2

♣ 9 8 6 3

**Without a good *lead* against
Trumps...**

Make a safe / *passive lead*

Low priority *leads* vs *Trumps*

Top of a small *doubleton*

- e.g. against a heart *contract*

♠ 8 5

♥ 6 4 2

♦ J 9 8 3

♣ 10 8 6 3

Low priority *leads* vs *Trumps*

Second highest from four *cards*
without an *honour* or *MUD* from three

- e.g. against a heart *contract*

♠ 8 7 5 2

♥ 6 4

♦ 9 7 3

♣ 9 8 6 3

Leads to avoid vs Trumps

Unsupported Aces

Leading away from an Ace

Broken honour sequences

Leading away from a King

Suits bid by the opponents

Honour doubleton

Your lead against a heart contract?

- you could *lead a non-singleton trump*

♠ Q 5

♥ 6 4 2

♦ K J 8 3

♣ A 8 6 3

Pick your *lead* against 4♠ - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ 6 5 3 ♥ A J 6 4 2 ♦ Q 8 7 3 ♣ 10	♠ 8 7 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ J 10 9 3 2	♠ J 10 4 2 ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ K 10 6 ♣ A Q 3
10♣ <i>A singleton lead</i>	J♣ <i>Top of a sequence headed by an honour</i>	7♥ <i>Middle Up Down (MUD)</i>

Choosing the correct *suit* to *lead*

Bridge is a context game

Opening leads are no different

Look at the *auction*

South's *hand*

♠ Q 9 7 6

♥ K 10 7 6

♦ 9 6 2

♣ Q 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

On the *uncontested auction* 1NT (Pass) 3NT, we would normally *lead a heart*. Having gained more information from the *auction*, we now can stray from our list of priorities knowing a *heart lead* into *dummy's* likely five won't be productive, a *spade* and a *club* have similar downsides therefore the *auction* points us towards *leading the unbid suit*, a *diamond lead*, *middle* from three so 6♦ looks to be the best *lead*.

Look at the *auction*

South's *hand*

♠ A 7 6 4

♥ K 10 7 6

♦ 9

♣ Q J 4 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

A slightly stronger *hand* but now only one *diamond* makes the *diamond lead* less appealing, *partner* won't have enough to beat 3NT even with a smattering of *diamond honours* without a *2nd entry* and there aren't enough *HCP* in the *pack* for that. The 25 *HCP* from the opponents and our 10 *HCP* only leaves *partner* with 5 at most. A *low club lead* is now the best *lead* as a *heart, spade and diamond leads* look to not be fruitful.

Which *suit to lead*?

South's *hand*

♠ Q 3 2

♥ Q J 5 3

♦ 10 8 4 2

♣ 7 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

- A *trump lead* will help declarer find the queen
- A *heart lead* may promote tricks, but dummy has 4+ hearts so we might be setting up dummy's winners
- A *club lead* may allow ruffs later, but taking a ruff with ♠Qxx might swap a natural spade trick for a ruff
- A *passive diamond* is less likely to give anything away

Which *suit to lead*?

South's *hand*

♠ Q 3

♥ 10 9 5 3

♦ 10 8 4 2

♣ A K 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	1♠	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- East *bidding* 3NT over your *partner's* 1♠ *overcall* suggests at least one *stopper* in Spades in *declarer's hand*
- Your Hearts and Diamonds don't look interesting, your Clubs have two *winners*, but only two *honours* not three
- But your *partner bid* Spades (a clue!) *Leading* the Q♠ may knock out *declarer's stopper*, then your Clubs allow *entries* back to your *hand* to *lead* another Spade to *partner's* original 5+ card spade holding

Quiz...

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ 9 7

♥ K 10 4 3 2

♦ 9 7 3

♣ A Q 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

3♥ 4th highest

SOUTH	NORTH
	1♥
2♣	2♦
3NT	

9♠ the *unbid suit*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	1♠
1NT	3NT

7♦ *MUD*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠
2NT	3NT

9♠ *passive*

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ A 8 7

♥ 7

♦ K Q 2

♣ 9 7 6 4 3 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

7♣ the longest *suit*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♠	3♠

7♥ the *singleton*

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	6NT

K♦ to set up a 2nd trick

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	4♥

7♣ passive

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ Q J 10 9

♥ 8 5 4

♦ A 8 6 4 3

♣ 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

Q♠ top of a sequence or 4♦

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3♠
3NT	6NT

Q♠ a solid suit

SOUTH	NORTH
1♠	4♠

Q♠ cut down *cross ruffing*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	4♥

2♣ the *singleton*

Recap: *Leads vs NT*

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - three *consecutive cards* headed by an *honour*: K Q J 8

Top of an *internal sequence* - three *honours*, two are in *sequence*: A Q J 8 5

4th highest - from one or two *honours*: K J 5 3 2

Low priority:

2nd highest - from 4 or more low cards: 9 8 6 4 3

Middle from 3 low cards (*MUD*): 9 8 4

Top of *doubleton*: 5 4

Recap: *Leads vs Trumps*

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - two or more card *sequence* headed by the Ace and King: A
K 3 2

Singleton: 5

Top of a *sequence* - two or more *honours*: K Q 7 4

Low priority:

Low from a *suit* with a single *honour* (risky): K 5 2

Top of a small *doubleton*: 8 5

Second highest from four cards without an *honour* or *MUD*: 8 7 5 2 or 9 8 4

Recap: Opening Lead

Look at the *auction*, did your *partner bid*?

Does the *contract* or *hand* require an *active* or *passive lead*

Choose the *suit* to *lead*

Choose the standard card in that suit (**LOVE**, **LIKE**, **HATE**)

Without a good *lead*, make a *passive lead*

The 10 is **not** an *honour*, unless in an (*internal*) sequence:

○ J 10 x x or K J 10 4 or Q 10 9 7 the 10 is an *honour*

○ 10 9 x x the 10 is **not** an *honour*

A
K
Q
J
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2

Useful resource for *opening leads*:

[http://www.bidandmade.com/bridge_bid_and_play/
Bridge_Play_1101_Opening_lead_chart.php](http://www.bidandmade.com/bridge_bid_and_play/Bridge_Play_1101_Opening_lead_chart.php)

Responding to your partner's opening lead...

How do we tell *partner* what we think about their *opening lead*?

Signals and Discards - Standard ATTITUDE

High Encourages

HELD

Low Discourages

If partner's *lead* or *dummy* is *winning the trick* tell partner if they have made a good *lead*, e.g., you have other *honours*, or you want to *ruff* in a *suit contract*

A
K
Q
J
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2

Partner *leads an honour in no trumps*

♠ 6 5 4

♠ Q led

West North East
South

♠ K 9 8 5
HELD



Signal your ATTITUDE when partner is winning the trick
Respond with highest card you can without costing a trick

Partner *leads an honour in a trump contract*

♠ 6 5 4

♠ K led

West North East
South

♠ 8 3
HELD



Signal your ATTITUDE when partner is winning the trick
Respond with highest card you can without costing a trick

Partner *leads*, dummy wins

♥ A 5 4

♥ 2 led

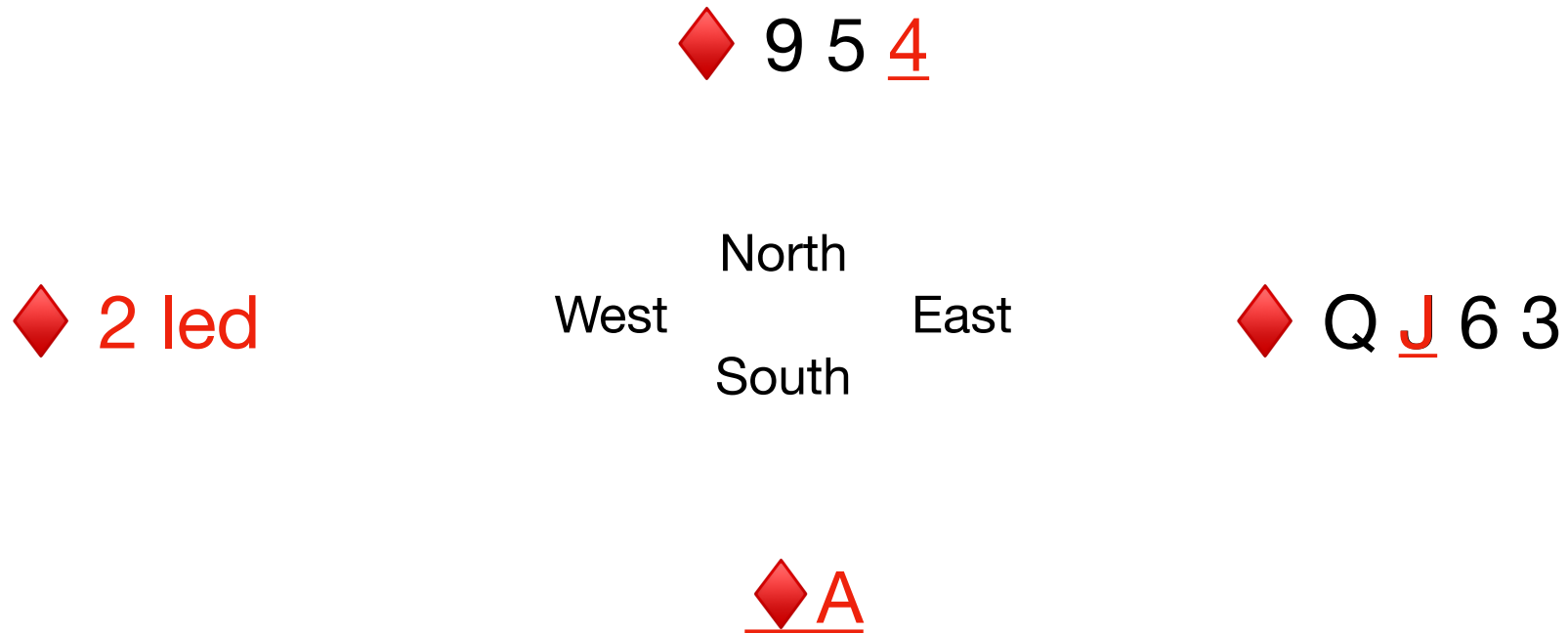
North
West East
South

♥ K 8 6 3
HELD



Signal ATTITUDE when *dummy* is *wining* and you cannot beat it
Respond with highest *card* you can without costing a *trick*

Partner *leads*, low cards in *dummy*



When *dummy* holds low cards
Respond with lowest *card* to try and *win* the *trick*

Partner *leads*, low cards in *dummy*

Who has the 10♦?

Who has the Q♦?

♦ K 8 7 2

West North East
South

♦ 9 5 4

♦ Q J 6 3

♦ A 10

South has 10♦ else East would *play* the 10♦ from ♦ J 10

West likely has Q♦ as South would *play* Q♦ not A♦

Partner *leads*, dummy wins

♥ A 5 4

♥ 2 led

North
West East
South

♥ K 8 6 3
HELD



Signal ATTITUDE when *dummy* is *wining* and you cannot beat it
Respond with highest *card* you can without costing a *trick*

Partner *leads*, low cards in *dummy*

♣ 9 5 4

♣ 2 led

West North
South East

♣ A J 3



Win the *trick* with A♣, but then what do you *lead* back?

Opener **LIKEs** clubs, so lead J♣ back to partner (*unblock suit*)

Partner *leads*, dummy plays low

♠ K 5 4

♠ 2 led

West North East
South

♠ A J 3



East must keep the A♠ to *stop* the K♠ from making a *trick* later
Opener low (**LIKE**) from an *honour* - either the Q♠ or the 10♠

Partner *leads an honour in no trumps*

♠ 6 5 4

♠ Q led

West North East
South

♠ 9 8 3
HELD



Signal your ATTITUDE when partner is winning the trick
Respond with lowest card when discouraging the suit led

Responding to *partner's opening lead*: summary

Responder plays high, except:

- If partner or *dummy* is winning: *signal attitude*
- *Respond* with the lower of *touching cards*
- Keep a high card (*underplay*) with an *honour* in *dummy*

The *Rule of Eleven*

Only used when *defending* against *no trumps*

What is your *lead* against 3NT?

♠ K J 7 6 4

♥ 10 9

♦ K 7 5

♣ J 3 2

4th highest:

- (from one or two *honours*)
- we make *tricks* from *length winners*, so our little cards will take *tricks*!

What does the 6♠ *lead* mean?

♠ 10 5 3

♠ 6 led

	North	
West		East
	South	

♠ Q 8 2

The *Rule of Eleven*

♠ 10 5 3

♠ 6 led West North
South East ♠ Q 8 2

6♠ + (10♠, Q♠, 8♠)

Six + Three = Nine

Eleven - Nine = Two

Declarer has **two** cards higher than 6♠

Take the number of *pips* on the card *led* (here the 6♠)

Add the number of cards higher than 6♠ you can see in *dummy* (10♠) and your hand (Q♠ and 8♠)

Deduct the result from *Eleven*

The answer is the number of cards higher than the 6♠ in *declarer's hand*

Here is the full layout



Either partner can continue to play *spades* when on *lead*

What does the *lead* mean?

♥ K 10 4 2

♥ 7 led

North
West East
South

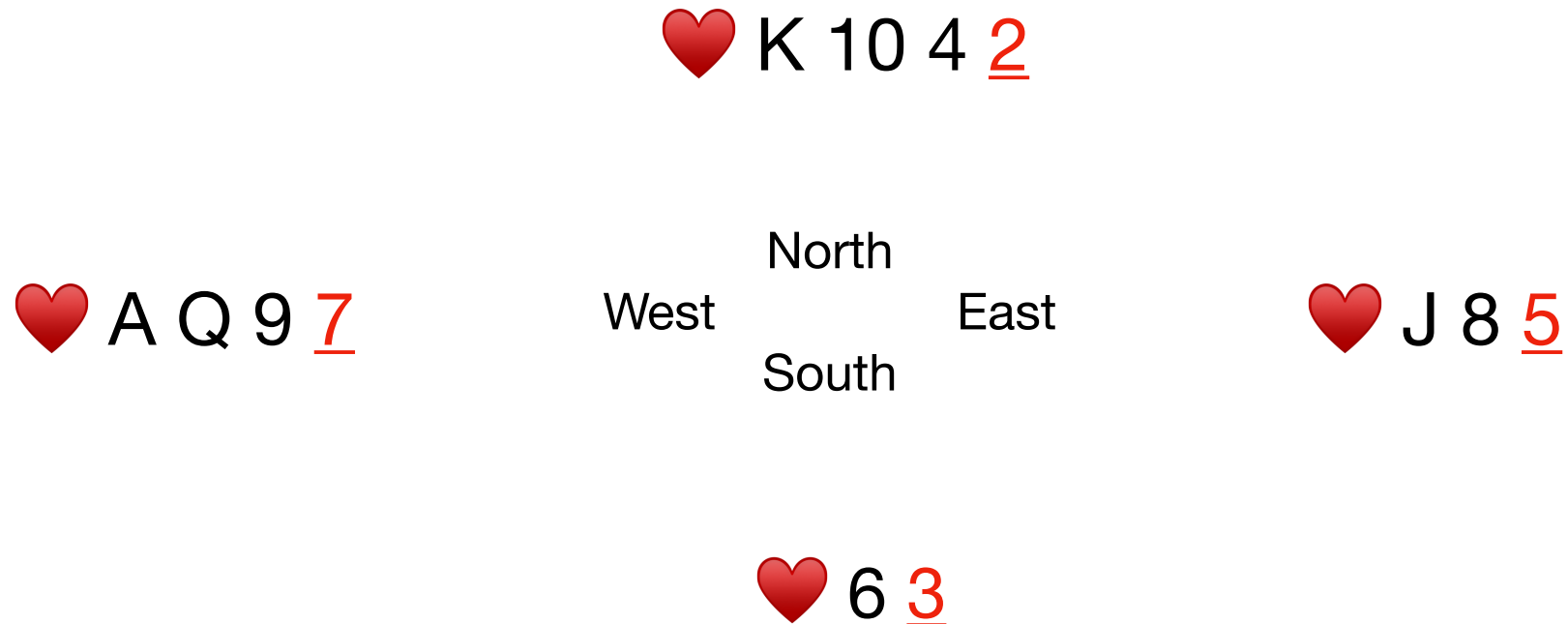
♥ J 8 5



What is partner's *lead* from? Is it 4th highest?

Use the *Rule of Eleven* to work it out before playing any card

Here is the full layout



7 plus 4 cards in your *hand* and *dummy* higher than the 7 = 11
If *lead* is 4th highest, then *declarer* has no card higher than the 7

What does the *lead* mean to *declarer*?

♦ K 10 4 2

♦ 6 led

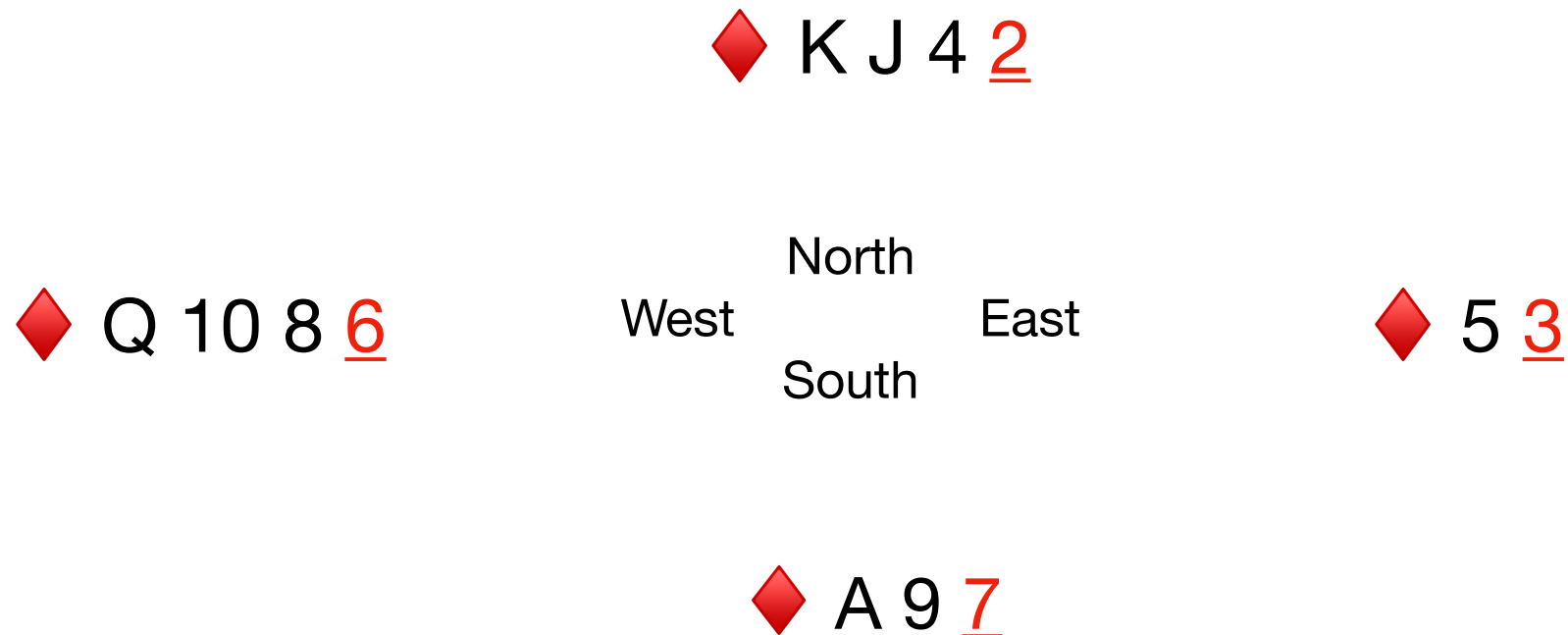
West North
 South East

♦ *Defender*

♦ A 9 7

The *Rule of Eleven* can also be used by *declarer* work out what cards higher than the *lead* are held by the *defender*

Here is the full layout



6 *led* plus 5 cards higher = 11, East has nothing higher 6 ♦
7 ♦ *wins*, win the A ♦ & *finesse* 9 ♦ to ♦ K J making 4 *tricks*

What does the *lead* mean?

♣ K J 4 2

♣ 8 led

West North
 South East

♣ Q 10 5 3



What is partner's *lead* from? Is it 4th highest?

Use the *Rule of Eleven* to work it out before playing any card

Here is the full layout

♣ K J 4 2

♣ 9 8 6

	North	
West		East
	South	

♣ Q 10 5 3

♣ A 7

8 *led* plus 4 = 12, *lead* cannot be 4th highest from an *honour*
If *leading* from *MUD*, they must have 9♣, so save your 10♣

Using the *rule of eleven*: summary

- Only used when *defending* against *no trumps*
- Use the *Rule of Eleven* on partner's lead of a *spot card*
- Work it out before you *play* to the *trick*
- It can tell you if partner is *leading* 4th highest
- Use it to work out if you should *return* partner's *suit*
- *Declarer* can use the same *rule*

Defence strategies

- Evaluate *auction*, *passive* vs. *active*, first choose *suit* to *lead*, then choose *card*
- Evaluate partner's *lead*
 - Was it **LOVE** (honour), **LIKE** (low), or **HATE** (high)?
 - *Top* of a sequence? What are they denying? *MUD*? *High-Low*?
- Show *ATTITUDE* to partner's *lead* - **High** **Encouraging**, **Low** **Discouraging**
 - You only show *ATTITUDE* if you don't need to *win* the *trick*
- Usually return *partner's lead*, especially if *opening lead* **LOVE** (honour) or **LIKE** (low)
- *Opener* should work out what the *third hand* play tells you:
 - Was it **High** **Encouraging**, **Low** **Discouraging**?
 - *Bottom* of a sequence? What are they denying?

Playing *hands*...

Suit Contracts	No-trumps
A xxx...	Axx x ...
Hxx x ...	Hxx x ...
Hx x	Hx x
H x	H x
x x	x x
A K	A K
K Q	K Q
Q J	Q J
A KQx..	A KQx..
K QJx..	K QJx..
Q J10x..	Q J10x..
J 109x.	J 109x.
10 98x.	10 98x.

Suit Contracts	No-trumps
A KJx.	A KJx.
K Q10x..	K Q10x..
Q J9x..	Q J9x..
A Kxx.	A K xx.
K Qxx..	K Q xx..
Q Jxx..	Q J xx..
A J10x..	A J 10x..
K J 10x..	K J 10x..
Q 10 9x..	Q 10 9x..
xx x ...	xx x ...
x x x	x x x
10 x x..	10 x x..

Suit Contracts	No-trumps	Comments
A xxx...	Axx x ...	Never under-lead 'A' against a <i>suit</i> / lead 4th highest against NT
Hxx x ...	Hxx x ...	4th highest
Hx x	Hx x	3rd highest
H x	H x	Top of a <i>doubleton</i> , but avoid K x, Q x leads (unless its partner's <i>suit</i>)
x x	x x	
A K	A K	Lower of <i>doubleton honour sequence</i> against a <i>suit</i>
K Q	K Q	
Q J	Q J	
A K Q x..	A K Q x..	Top of three <i>card honour sequence</i>
K Q J x..	K Q J x..	
Q J 10x..	Q J 10x..	
J 109x.	J 109x.	
10 98x.	10 98x.	

Suit Contracts	No-trumps	Comments
A KJx.	A KJx.	Top of '2 1/2' <i>card honour sequence</i>
K Q10x..	K Q10x..	
Q J9x..	Q J9x..	
A Kxx.	A K xx.	Top of <i>two-card sequence</i> against <i>suit</i> / 4th highest against NT
K Qxx..	KQxx.	
Q Jxx..	QJxx.	
A J10x..	A J 10x..	Ace against a suit / top of internal sequence against NT
K J 10x..	K J 10x..	
Q 10 9x..	Q 10 9x..	
x x xx...	x x xx...	2nd highest from nothing (Middle Up Down - MUD)
x x x	x x x	
10 x x..	10 x x..	2nd highest from nothing, even if 2nd highest is a '9'