

Leads and Defense Against Suits

Whereas against no trump contracts where length takes tricks, against suit bids you usually take tricks by setting up high cards or by ruffing. Since one of the best sources to get tricks is with high cards, your best lead is usually a suit that the opponents have not bid that you have some strength in.

Leads against Suit Contracts:

- A.) Touching honors- Lead the higher card of any two or more touching honors Examples: QJ32 or JT532 or AK5
- B.) Short suits- Lead a singleton or the higher card from a doubleton in a side suit if you want to have partner let you ruff that suit.
- C.) Lead your fourth best card from a suit with honors that are not touching. However, if your suit is headed by the ace, lead the ace and not a small card. Examples: K7652 or QT7 or A532
- D.) Lead trumps only when declarer has indicated two long suits and dummy has supported one of them.

Some rules to keep in mind when leading against suit contracts:

1. **NEVER** underlead an ace. Usually an ace without the king to go with it is not a good lead. But, if the bidding indicates that you should lead a suit that is headed by the ace, then lead the ace and not a small card.

2. Short suit leads are more dangerous than leads from length. Only lead a singleton or doubleton if you want to ruff and if you think your partner will be able to get the lead to give you a ruff.
3. Always lead the top card from a doubleton, whether it is the 32 or the K2.
4. Repeat rule 1. **NEVER** underlead an ace against a suit contract.

Defending against Suit Contracts:

When partner leads a small card in a suit and dummy plays low, as the third hand you generally want to play your highest card in order to try and win the trick. However, when your highest card also contains the next lower card(s) you play the lowest of touching cards. Example: If partner leads the 4 of a suit and dummy has small cards you should play the K with KJ8 but play the J with QJ8.

If partner leads a small card and dummy is going to win the trick, you should play a high card if you like partner's lead and a low card if you do not like partner's lead.

What do you lead against 1H-P-2H-P-4H-P-P-P with the following?

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| a) K865 87 Q76 6542 | b) K543 87 QJ76 765 |
| c) 87 A65 K876 J876 | d) 87 QJ7 K6543 T65 |
| e) A87 876 K65 JT54 | f) KQ62 765 A876 95 |