

Leads and Defense Against No Trump

The trick-taking strategy on defense often varies depending on whether the final contract is no trump or a suit bid. Generally, when defending against suit contracts you need to take tricks as quickly as possible with either high cards or by ruffing. Against no trump you often take tricks with long cards by gaining the lead when the declarer is out of a suit. Therefore, your opening lead strategy may be somewhat different.

Leads against No Trump contracts:

- A.) Long suits- Lead your fourth highest card from your longest suit. Examples: a) AJ64 b) K7542 c) QJ5432 in each case you would lead the 4 of the suit.
- B.) Long suits headed by touching honors- With a suit headed by 3 touching honors (example: QJT2) or 2 touching honors and the fourth card in the sequence (example: KQT32) lead the highest card in the suit,
- C.) From short suits without an honor or any doubleton in a suit lead the top card (example: 962 lead the 9)
- D.) From short suits headed by touching honors lead the high card (example: JT2 lead the J)

Some rules about leading to keep in mind against No Trump:

1. While leading your longest suit is usually a good idea, if the opponents have bid the suit and also shown length in it, you might want to try something else.

2. Consider an unbid suit over any suit that the opponents have already bid.
3. When leading a suit that your partner has bid, lead the card in the suit that you would have led had the suit not been bid. Example: with K62 of a suit that partner has made an overcall in, lead the 2 and not the K.
4. Given a choice of two suits, both of which have been bid by the opponents, it is usually best to lead through dummy's suit rather than into declarer's suit.

Defending against No Trump Contracts:

When partner leads a small card in a suit and the 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 in the suit also contains the next lower card(s) you play the lowest of the 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 1NT-P-3NT-P-P-P with the following?

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| a) Q753 K65 KT65 76 | b) QJ532 K87 76 765 |
| c) Q643 8 KQ865 876 | d) QJT32 87 A54 876 |
| e) KQT87 8765 87 Q5 | f) 987 T982 K87 Q32 |