

HB62 Opening leads against no trumps

<p> ♠ A43 ♥ A109 ♦ Q64 ♣ K652 </p> <p> ♠ J105 ♠ 9876 ♥ Q62 ♥ J543 ♦ J1098 ♦ K72 ♣ 743 ♣ AQ </p> <p> ♠ KQ2 ♥ K87 ♦ A53 ♣ J1098 </p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>Leading away from an unsupported jack is never attractive: you need partner to hold a lot of high cards in the suit to make it work and you are far more likely to open up a frozen suit, as shown here. The best lead is a passive ♠8. Declarer has only 8 tricks: Defenders now have to avoid giving him a ninth.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1NT	Pass	3NT				
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>										
	1NT	Pass	3NT										
<p> ♠ 10853 ♥ Q62 ♦ 1098 ♣ 743 </p> <p> ♠ Q92 ♠ A4 ♥ K87 ♥ A109 ♦ AK3 ♦ J654 ♣ J1098 ♣ K652 </p> <p> ♠ KJ76 ♥ J543 ♦ Q72 ♣ AQ </p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South has a hand that would prefer not to be on lead, particularly as partner is likely to have very little. The minor suits can be ruled out. Leading away from an unsupported jack is never attractive: you are far too likely to open up a frozen suit, as shown here. A spade is best: North has ♠10 and South can persevere with spades to set up two tricks.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	3NT	All Pass	1NT	Pass				
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>										
3NT	All Pass	1NT	Pass										
<p> ♠ Q763 ♥ Q5 ♦ 87 ♣ KQ1083 </p> <p> ♠ J54 ♠ K982 ♥ 974 ♥ KJ1032 ♦ Q643 ♦ J9 ♣ 974 ♣ A5 </p> <p> ♠ A10 ♥ A86 ♦ AK1052 ♣ J62 </p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>West has a choice between identical holdings in clubs and hearts. East didn't have the opportunity to overcall either clubs or hearts at the one level so it seems a guess. The only clue is that North/South might have made a greater effort to find a heart fit if either of them held four, so that sways it in favour of leading ♥7. All things being equal, prefer the major.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>										
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦										
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT										
<p> ♠ 754 ♥ 53 ♦ J764 ♣ KJ32 </p> <p> ♠ 832 ♠ A106 ♥ A1084 ♥ KQ9 ♦ A9 ♦ K1053 ♣ AQ109 ♣ 754 </p> <p> ♠ KQJ9 ♥ J762 ♦ Q82 ♣ 86 </p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Listen to the bidding. Defenders clearly have nothing to spare for their game. North should aim to give nothing away. If North decides on a passive lead, prefer the longer holding (spades). You will see that either minor gives a trick away, while a heart lead picks up ♥J for declarer. As it happens a spade lead strikes gold, but the important thing is that it gives nothing away.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>										
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass										
3NT	All Pass												

<p> ♠ QJ3 ♥ AJ84 ♦ A92 ♣ 1074 ♠ 10982 ♠ 754 ♥ 10762 ♥ 53 ♦ 8 ♦ J764 ♣ A986 ♣ KJ32 ♠ AK6 ♥ KQ9 ♦ KQ1053 ♣ Q5 </p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>Declarer should easily succeed give time. With 31/32 points 10 tricks shouldn't be hard, so East must aim to find his weakness. The only realistic chance is a club lead to find the sort of layout shown</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1NT	Pass	4NT
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>						
	1NT	Pass	4NT						
<p> ♠ 10982 ♥ 10762 ♦ 83 ♣ 986 ♠ AK6 ♠ QJ3 ♥ AKQ ♥ J984 ♦ KQ5 ♦ A1092 ♣ 10754 ♣ AQ ♠ 754 ♥ 53 ♦ J764 ♣ KJ32 </p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>6NT All Pass</p> <p>Neither declarer or dummy have suggested long suits. Declarer may well have to play all 4 suits himself to come to 12 tricks, so South shouldn't present him with gifts by leading away from honours in the minor suits. A spade suit (South's longer major) is as safe as anything. Declarer can succeed but in practice he is likely to fail.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1NT	Pass
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>						
		1NT	Pass						
<p> ♠ K108 ♥ 765 ♦ A98 ♣ AK32 ♠ J5432 ♠ Q7 ♥ 943 ♥ QJ102 ♦ 7642 ♦ QJ10 ♣ J ♣ Q1098 ♠ A96 ♥ AK8 ♦ K53 ♣ 7654 </p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pass 3NT All Pass</p> <p>West can lead a spade, his longest suit, but with no entries he will need a very favourable spade layout to set up and cash the suit. More likely, a spade lead will only succeed in opening up a frozen suit (as here) and giving declarer his ninth trick. A diamond lead is likely to be passive, with just the chance of setting up a length trick.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				1NT
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>						
			1NT						
<p> ♠ J5432 ♥ 943 ♦ 76 ♣ AK6 ♠ K76 ♠ A9 ♥ AK8 ♥ 765 ♦ K53 ♦ AQ98 ♣ 8543 ♣ QJ109 ♠ Q108 ♥ QJ102 ♦ J1042 ♣ 72 </p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This time North has two potential entries to the spades, making a lead of ♠3 far more promising. The defence can set up and enjoy 3 spade tricks before declarer can establish clubs.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>						
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass						

<p> ♠ Q107 ♥ AK8 ♦ K53 ♣ 6532 </p> <p> ♠ K98 ♠ A5432 ♥ QJ102 ♥ 943 ♦ 108 ♦ 7642 ♣ A987 ♣ 4 </p> <p> ♠ J6 ♥ 765 ♦ AQJ9 ♣ KQJ10 </p>	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>You should never underlead a side suit ace at trick 1 against a suit contract, but that certainly doesn't apply against no trumps. A lead of ♠3 is very attractive here. Partner wins trick 1 with ♠K and returns ♠9, his next highest from an original 3-card holding. East allows declarer to win this, following suit with ♠2 to show he started with a 5-card suit. When West wins ♣A another spade allows the suit to run.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	3NT
West	North	East	South						
	1NT	Pass	3NT						
<p> ♠ J1094 ♥ 1087 ♦ A86 ♣ 743 </p> <p> ♠ 852 ♠ K3 ♥ AKQ ♥ J432 ♦ KQJ10 ♦ 753 ♣ J109 ♣ AKQ2 </p> <p> ♠ AQ76 ♥ 965 ♦ 942 ♣ 865 </p>	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3NT All Pass</p> <p>It would not be completely silly for South to lead a spade, but as you see that just presents declarer with a ninth trick. If South leads passively (a heart) North will gain the lead with ♦A and North will see that the only realistic chance is a spade switch. Underleading honours is far more attractive with a 5-card suit than with a 4-card suit.</p>	West	North	East	South			1NT	Pass
West	North	East	South						
		1NT	Pass						
<p> ♠ 852 ♥ AKQ ♦ KQJ10 ♣ J109 </p> <p> ♠ AQ763 ♠ 104 ♥ 96 ♥ 108752 ♦ 942 ♦ A86 ♣ 865 ♣ 743 </p> <p> ♠ KJ9 ♥ J43 ♦ 753 ♣ AKQ2 </p>	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pass 3NT All Pass</p> <p>With a 5-card spade suit a spade lead is obvious: ♠6. Declarer wins cheaply but East gains the lead with ♦A and a spade return sets up 5 tricks for the defenders. Underleading honours is far more attractive with a 5-card suit than with a 4-card suit.</p>	West	North	East	South				1NT
West	North	East	South						
			1NT						
<p> ♠ Q10987 ♥ 107 ♦ AK ♣ 10742 </p> <p> ♠ 32 ♠ KJ4 ♥ AQJ ♥ K43 ♦ QJ1098 ♦ 432 ♣ AKQ ♣ J953 </p> <p> ♠ A65 ♥ 98652 ♦ 765 ♣ 86 </p>	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3NT All Pass</p> <p>South is going to lead partner's suit, but which card? If South leads ♠A declarer has 9 easy tricks, including 2 spade stoppers. If South leads ♠5 declarer takes partner's ♠Q with ♠K, but needs to set up diamonds. North wins ♦K and returns ♠10. Whether declarer covers with ♠J or not, the defence gets 6 tricks.</p> <p>Once you decide to lead partner's suit, lead the same card as you would have led if you had chosen to lead that suit without partner bidding it: in this case the lowest from three to an honour.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass
West	North	East	South						
1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass						

<p> ♠ 65 ♥ A106 ♦ K9 ♣ AKQ876 ♠ 4 ♥ 5432 ♦ AQJ1032 ♣ 92 ♠ AJ10973 ♥ KJ7 ♦ 54 ♣ 103 ♠ KQ82 ♥ Q98 ♦ 876 ♣ J54 </p>	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It is not always right to lead partner's suit. Declarer seems well prepared for a spade lead, West's spade singleton will not help set spades up, and West does have an excellent alternative: ♦Q. Dummy wins ♦K but East should realise that West's failure to lead his suit marks West with a very poor spade holding. East should grab the lead as soon as possible with ♠A or ♥K and return a diamond.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
West	North	East	South										
	1♣	1♠	1NT										
Pass	3NT	All Pass											
<p> ♠ 1098 ♥ 1098 ♦ KQJ ♣ 10985 ♠ 732 ♥ K76 ♦ A107 ♣ Q742 ♠ KJ6 ♥ Q54 ♦ 652 ♣ AKJ6 ♠ AQ54 ♥ AJ32 ♦ 9843 ♣ 3 </p>	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Frequently you are on lead to 1NT with nothing to guide you. Dummy might have 2 points or 10. Often if you fail to find an attacking lead necessary to beat the contract you will get another chance: this suggests a passive diamond lead. You will see that leading either major automatically gives declarer a 7th trick. If South defends passively (leading a diamond), for all his 23 points declarer is struggling to find a 7th trick.</p>	West	North	East	South			1NT	All Pass				
West	North	East	South										
		1NT	All Pass										
<p> ♠ 62 ♥ 765 ♦ 5432 ♣ J1098 ♠ KJ109 ♥ J1098 ♦ A8 ♣ K42 ♠ 8543 ♥ 432 ♦ 976 ♣ AQ5 ♠ AQ7 ♥ AKQ ♦ KQJ10 ♣ 763 </p>	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>West should try to picture the South and North hands. South has a very good hand: 20-22 HCP. North has practically nothing, so it will be hard for declarer to get to dummy to take finesses. Often the best defence when an opening 2NT is passed out is to go completely passive and hope declarer has to continually lead from broken honour sequences in his hand. On this hand declarer has more solid sequences that would normally be the case and a spade lead gifts him his 8th trick. A better passive lead is ♥J.</p>	West	North	East	South				2NT				
West	North	East	South										
			2NT										
<p> ♠ A875 ♥ QJ654 ♦ 9 ♣ Q62 ♠ 96 ♥ 2 ♦ AKQJ654 ♣ 874 ♠ KQ43 ♥ AK3 ♦ 872 ♣ K53 ♠ J102 ♥ 10987 ♦ 103 ♣ AJ109 </p>	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3NT shows a solid 7-card minor suit and no card higher than a queen outside: called a Gambling 3NT.</p> <p>Declarer has solid diamonds so North must arrange to take his tricks quickly. A heart lead would be fatal. It is normal to lead an ace against a gambling 3NT. North leads ♠A and sees that the only chance is to now take 4 club tricks. He should switch to ♣Q at trick 2 to keep the lead if dummy withholds ♣K.</p>	West	North	East	South	3NT	All Pass						
West	North	East	South										
3NT	All Pass												