

HB64 – Opening leads against suit contracts

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ QJ84 ♥ AQ6 ♦ AQ7 ♣ AQ6</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A7 ♠ 653 ♥ 97543 ♥ 2 ♦ KJ4 ♦ 1098653 ♣ 1097 ♣ 854</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ K1092 ♥ KJ108 ♦ 2 ♣ KJ32</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin: 0;">East has an obvious lead: the singleton ♥2. West quickly gains the lead with ♠A and gives East a ruff</p>	West	North	East	South		2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass			
West	North	East	South																		
	2NT	Pass	3♣																		
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT																		
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠																		
All Pass																					
<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 73 ♥ Q7543 ♦ J43 ♣ 1097</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ K1092 ♠ QJ84 ♥ KJ108 ♥ A96 ♦ Q2 ♦ AK7 ♣ KJ3 ♣ AQ6</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A65 ♥ 2 ♦ 109865 ♣ 8542</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin: 0;">Only a slight change from hand 1, but this time it is deeply damaging for South to lead ♥2. The point is that South has a trick: if North has another trick the defenders don't need a heart ruff to beat 6♠. A heart lead here saves declarer a guess as to who has ♥Q. Leading a singleton often does similar damage if a ruff is not achieved. South should lead ♦9 or ♠5.</p>	West	North	East	South			2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass		
West	North	East	South																		
		2NT	Pass																		
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4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass																		
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<p style="margin: 0;">♠ K7 65 ♥ A 7 65 ♦ K8 ♣ 653</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ QJ109 ♠ - ♥ 2 ♥ J1043 ♦ 754 ♦ QJ10962 ♣ A9872 ♣ J104</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A8432 ♥ KQ98 ♦ A3 ♣ KQ</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin: 0;">If West leads the singleton ♥2 it is likely to destroy the defensive heart trick. After ♥2 lead declarer takes ♥10 with ♥A and later crosses to ♥A and takes the marked heart finesse against ♥J. West doesn't want a ruff: his trumps are too good. West should lead ♠Q.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass							
West	North	East	South																		
			1♠																		
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠																		
All Pass																					

<p> ♠ 95 ♥ A9 ♦ A954 ♣ J10432 ♠ KQJ104 ♠ A87 ♥ K8 ♥ Q 63 ♦ J1087 ♦ KQ632 ♣ K7 ♣ A8 ♠ 632 ♥ J107542 ♦ - ♣ Q965 </p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If North listens to the bidding he can see an almost certain way to beat 4♠. East/West have bid and supported diamonds. South can have at most one diamond. North cashes ♦A and leads ♦9 for South to ruff. ♦9 is a McKenney signal: a high diamond asking for a heart return (the higher of the two side suits), allowing a second diamond ruff.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>														
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<p> ♠ KQJ109 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ AQ10 ♣ 4 ♠ 5 ♠ A876 ♥ K9532 ♥ 7 ♦ 73 ♦ 9854 ♣ A985 ♣ QJ107 ♠ 432 ♥ 864 ♦ KJ2 ♣ K632 </p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Leading a singleton in declarer's side suit often damages partner's holding. Here declarer wins, drives out ♠A and comfortably makes 12 tricks, using the diamond entries to dummy to finesse hearts. With 4 trumps East does better to lead from length, aiming to wrest trump control from declarer. East leads ♣Q. Declarer ruffs at trick 2 and tries to draw trumps but another club lead from East leaves him with more trumps than declarer.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>														
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<p> ♠ 7 ♥ J10532 ♦ Q62 ♣ 10862 ♠ J862 ♠ K10953 ♥ KQ ♥ A7 ♦ AJ105 ♦ K843 ♣ 973 ♣ AQ ♠ AQ4 ♥ 9864 ♦ 97 ♣ KJ54 </p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South doesn't expect much from North and just wants to defend as passively as possible. Faced with a choice between the red suits he should pick hearts, the longer suit. This leaves declarer to guess who has ♦Q. This is another example which demonstrates that leading shortage can be costly if you don't achieve a ruff.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass				
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>														
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<p>♠ 4 ♥ Q854 ♦ AQJ53 ♣ 942</p> <p>♠ 862 ♠ QJ107 ♥ 762 ♥ A3 ♦ 972 ♦ K84 ♣ A875 ♣ QJ103</p> <p>♠ AK953 ♥ KJ109 ♦ 106 ♣ K6</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>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It is almost never right to underlead a side suit ace at trick 1 against a suit contract so West should automatically rule out a ♣5 lead. West should also think twice before cashing ♣A: aces are meant to beat opponents' honours, not small cards. West may lead a heart. East wins ♥A and switches to ♣Q.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass			
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<p>♠ 10843 ♥ 10982 ♦ A76 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ AKJ65 ♠ 2 ♥ Q ♥ AKJ65 ♦ 1053 ♦ 842 ♣ AK83 ♣ QJ109</p> <p>♠ Q97 ♥ 743 ♦ KQJ9 ♣ 762</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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♣</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3♦ is fourth suit forcing. This looks similar to hand 7 but look at the bidding. East's 3♦ seems to be looking for a diamond stopper. West doesn't appear to have one. When opponents look at 3NT but then reject it in favour of 5♣ or 5♦ it usually pays to lead the fourth suit, whatever your holding in it. It is almost never right to underlead a side suit ace at trick 1 against a suit contract, but North should start with ♦A.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass		
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<p>♠ 85 ♥ 9742 ♦ AKQ105 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ A63 ♠ QJ10972 ♥ 653 ♥ A ♦ 762 ♦ 984 ♣ 10842 ♣ A75</p> <p>♠ K4 ♥ KQJ108 ♦ J3 ♣ QJ96</p>	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : 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>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It is almost never right to underlead a side suit ace at trick 1 against a suit contract. West should think twice before cashing ♠A, even though East overcalled 1♠: aces are meant to beat opponents' honours, not small cards. East will need quick entries so perhaps it is best to allow East to lead spades. West should try leading a club. East wins ♣A and switches to ♠Q.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass							
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																		
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<p> ♠ 52 ♥ 9852 ♦ 1095 ♣ A652 ♠ AKQJ108 ♠ 93 ♥ KQJ ♥ A104 ♦ K6 ♦ AQJ432 ♣ QJ ♣ 43 ♠ 764 ♥ 763 ♦ 87 ♣ K10987 </p>	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : 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>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>East has long diamonds. West has long spades. The defenders must quickly take what they can in the other suits. North cashes ♣A, notes South's encouraging ♣10 signal and North continues with a second club.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass		
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<p> ♠ AKQJ108 ♥ KQJ ♦ 86 ♣ AJ ♠ 764 ♠ 52 ♥ 763 ♥ 9852 ♦ K7 ♦ 1095 ♣ Q10987 ♣ K652 ♠ 93 ♥ A104 ♦ AQJ432 ♣ 43 </p>	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : 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></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South has long diamonds. North has long spades. The defenders must quickly take what they can in the other suits. East should lead the suit where he needs least help from partner: ♣2. When West comes in with ♦K the defenders can now cash a club trick.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				1♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass	
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<p> ♠ 954 ♥ K53 ♦ J543 ♣ A53 ♠ AQ762 ♠ KJ108 ♥ AQ ♥ 642 ♦ K76 ♦ A109 ♣ Q74 ♣ K62 ♠ 3 ♥ J10987 ♦ Q82 ♣ J1098 </p>	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : 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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Neither West nor East have shown any long suits, so there is no reason for North to take unilateral action in the side suits. A trump lead is passive. Any other lead gifts declarer his 10th trick.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass														
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																						
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<p> ♠ A7642 ♥ AQ ♦ KQ6 ♣ Q74 ♠ Q53 ♠ 9 ♥ J1098 ♥ K753 ♦ J82 ♦ 7543 ♣ J109 ♣ A853 ♠ KJ108 ♥ 642 ♦ A109 ♣ K62 </p>	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : 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>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A singleton trump lead certainly isn't safe: it helps declarer find ♠Q. East should lead a passive diamond. Declarer will probably play for the drop in trumps and if the defenders remain passive they should beat 4♠.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass													
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																						
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<p> ♠ 65 ♥ K3 ♦ Q982 ♣ Q7652 ♠ 32 ♥ J64 ♦ A763 ♣ KJ43 ♠ AKJ74 ♥ Q10987 ♦ K5 ♣ A ♠ Q1098 ♥ A52 ♦ J104 ♣ 1098 </p>	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>West gives false preference to 2♠, preferring a 5-2 spade fit to a 4-3 heart fit but when East shows a 5th heart East bids the heart game. Dummy almost certainly has 2 spades and 3 hearts. South has good spades so it is sensible to try to prevent ruffs in dummy. The correct card from A x x of trumps is a small one. North wins ♥K and returns a heart to ♥A and a third trump. This leaves declarer with 2 spade losers.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass		
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		1♠	Pass																		
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<p> ♠ 9 ♥ AK87 ♦ 865 ♣ 95432 ♠ Q7 ♥ J954 ♦ K43 ♣ QJ108 ♠ K10832 ♥ Q10 ♦ A72 ♣ K76 ♠ AJ654 ♥ 632 ♦ QJ109 ♣ A </p>	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <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>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Why has North not given preference to 2♠? He probably has only one spade, so it will pay the defenders to try to prevent ruffs in dummy. Leading from K x x in trumps is fairly safe: if declarer has the ace the king will still make: if dummy has the ace the king was probably never going to make. East wins ♦A and returns a trump, allowing the defenders to draw a total of 3 rounds of trumps. Declarer is now seriously short of tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass							
West	North	East	South																		
			1♠																		
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦																		
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<p> ♠ KQJ86543 ♥ - ♦ 8653 ♣ J ♠ - ♥ K7643 ♦ 109 ♣ Q109754 ♠ A2 ♥ AQJ ♦ AKQJ742 ♣ K ♠ 1097 ♥ 109852 ♦ - ♣ A8632 </p>	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>5♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>DbI</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South has bid 5♠ as a sacrifice, but unless the defenders find the right lead it will make! Often when opponents sacrifice at a high level their only source of tricks is trumps. East should try to prevent cross ruffing by leading trumps. The right lead from ace doubleton of trumps is the ace. Even then 5♠ doubled is only 2 down, but that is better than letting it make!</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	4♠	5♦	5♠	Pass	Pass	DbI	All Pass								
West	North	East	South																		
Pass	4♠	5♦	5♠																		
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