



Opening Leads Against Notrump Contracts

Vic Quiros

Agenda

- **General Concepts**
- Choosing the Suit
- Choosing the Card in Partner's Suit
- Leading the Top of a Sequence
- Leading a Low Card
- Some Complete Examples
- Listening to the Bidding

Choosing the Suit

- Partner's suit
- Your suit
- The unbid suit
- Consider the level
- Risk vs. reward
 - Usually be aggressive
 - Occasionally play passively
 - Judgment

Choosing the Card

■ Partner's Suit

- Top of a sequence
- Top of a doubleton
- Low otherwise

■ Your Suit

- Top of a sequence or interior sequence
- Fourth best otherwise

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Example

Your hand: ♠ 10 9 7 6 2
 ♥ 8 6
 ♦ A 9 4 3
 ♣ K Q

- What do you lead in each case?

- 1. Contract is 1NT and partner overcalled hearts. ♥
- 2. Contract is 1NT with no bidding from your side. ♠
- 3. Contract is 3NT and one opponent opened 1♠. ♦
- 4. Contract is 6NT. ♣

Conclusions

- Try to establish the partnership's longest (and strongest) suit.
 - Partner's
 - Yours
- Avoid the opponents' suits
- Consider the level

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Choosing the Card in Partner's Suit

- Consider how declarer might play the suit.
- Send a message with your lead.
- Make it easy for your side to take all of its tricks.

Example #1

- Partner has bid hearts. What would you lead from: ♥**K**8
- The suit could be:

You:

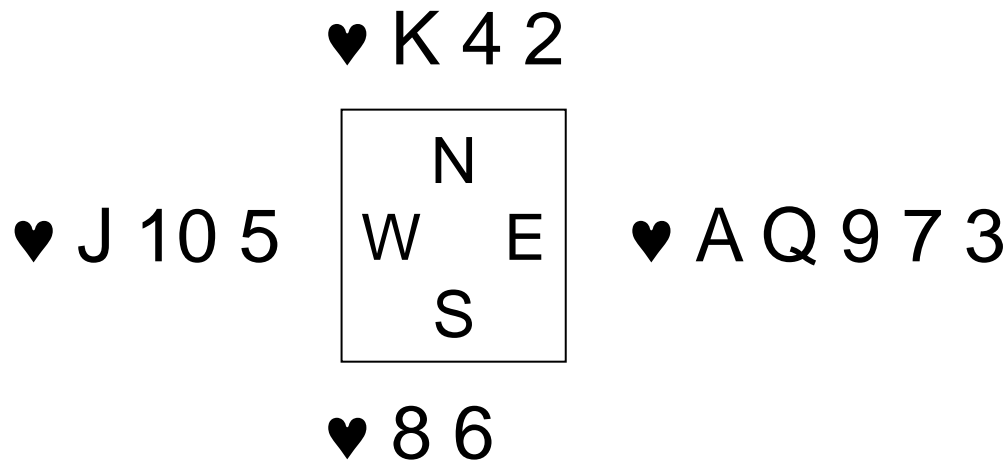
♥ K 8

Partner:

♥ A Q 9 7 3

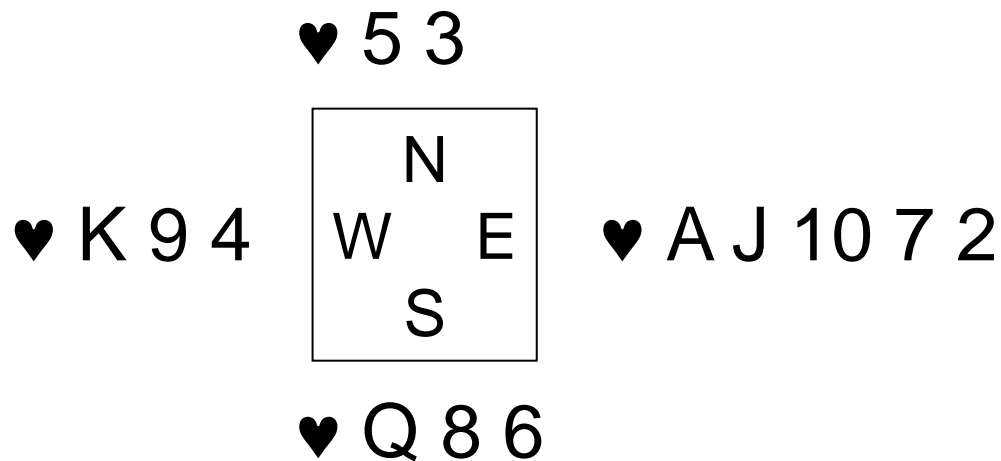
Example #2

- Partner has bid hearts. What would you lead from: ♥(J)10 5
- The suit could be:



Example #3

- Partner has bid hearts. What would you lead from: ♥ K 9 ④
- The suit could be:



Quick Quiz

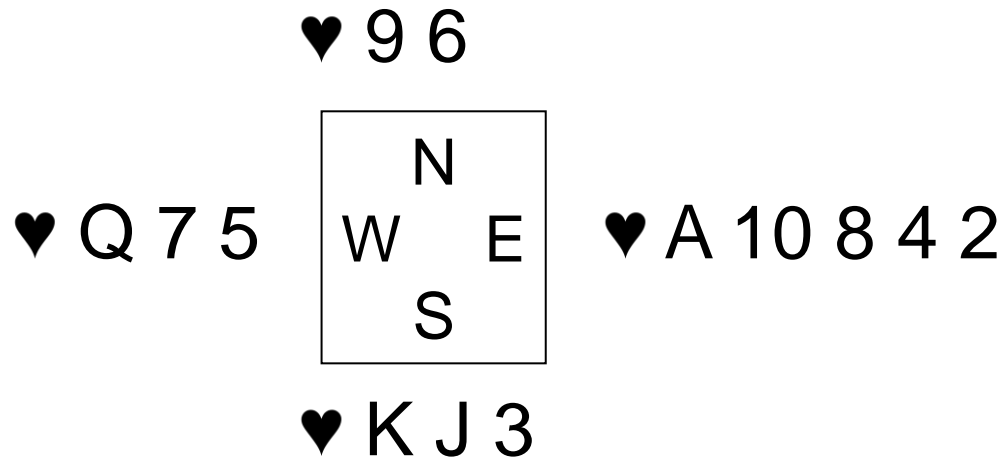
- Partner has bid hearts. What do you lead in each case?

		Possible Hands for Partner:
1.	♥ Ⓝ J3	♥ K Q 8 7 5
2.	♥ Ⓞ QJ 3	♥ A 10 9 6 2
3.	♥ Q 7 Ⓟ	♥ A 10 8 4 2

- Let's look more closely at #3.

Quiz Add-on

- The suit layout might be this:



- Can you see what happens if you lead the Q?

Conclusions

In leading partners suit:

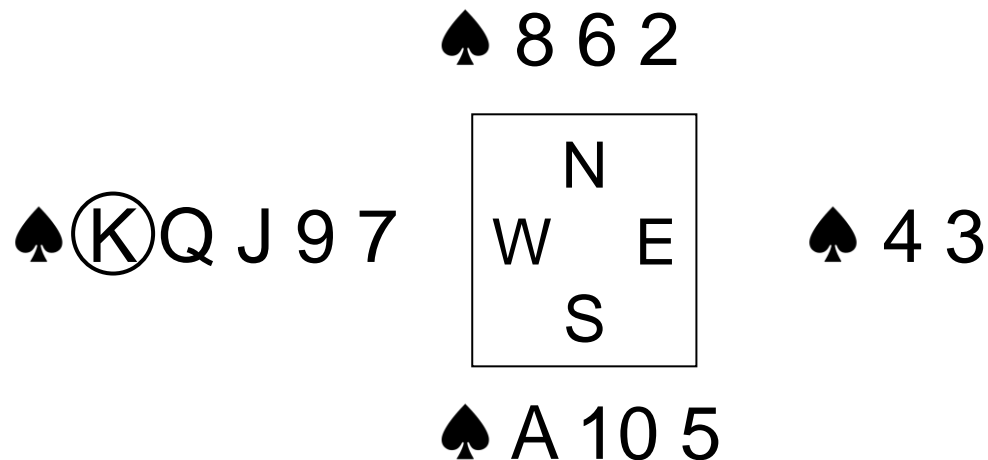
- Top of a doubleton
- Top of touching honors
- Otherwise lead low from three or more cards.

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Leading the Top of a Sequence

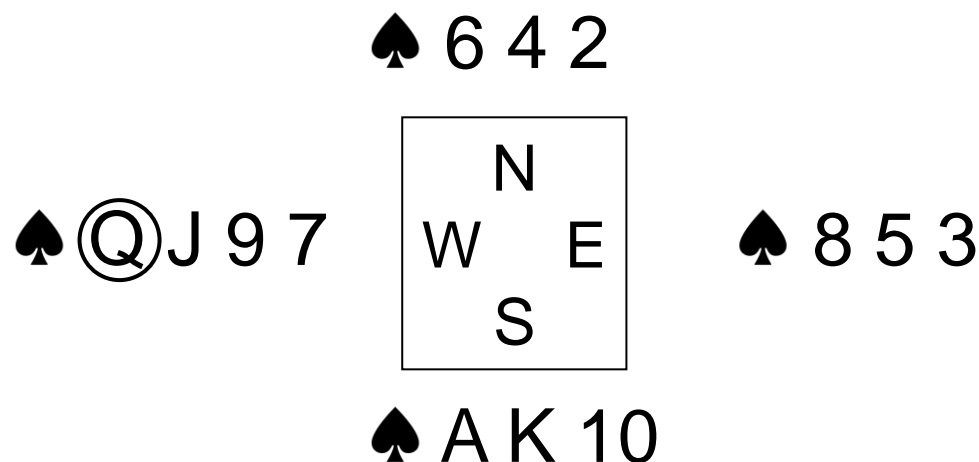
- Consider the following suit layout:



- Which card should you lead? Why?

Broken Sequence (1 of 2)

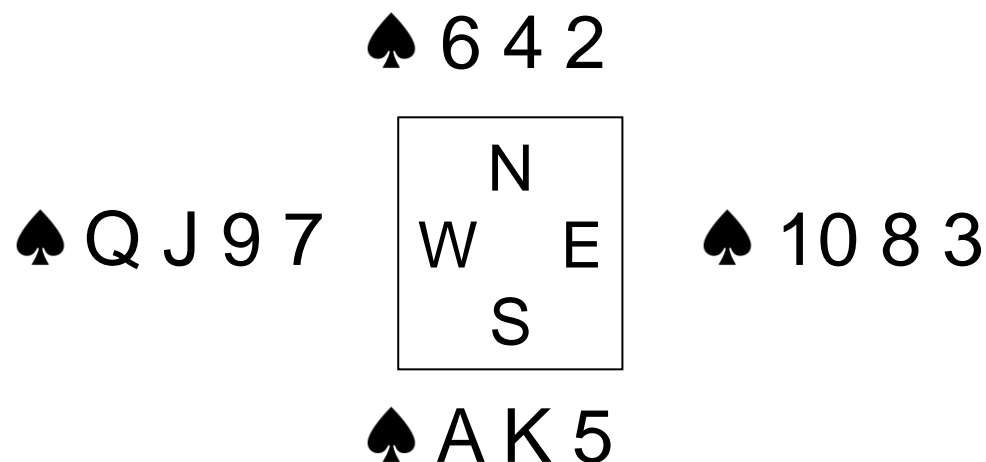
- Now consider this one:



- Which card should you lead?
- If declarer wins the A and you gain the lead, now what?
- Can partner help?

Broken Sequence (2 of 2)

- Switching a card:

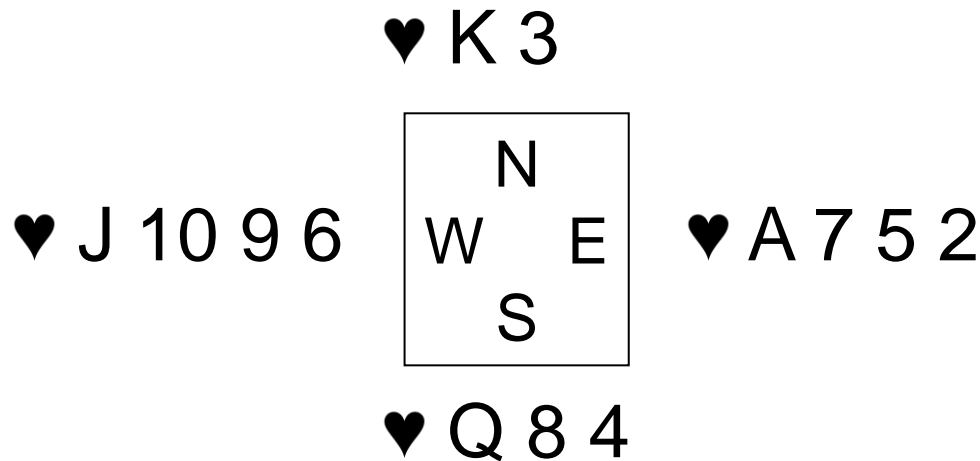


- Again you lead the ♠Q. What should partner play?
- If declarer wins the A and you gain the lead, now what?

Quick Quiz

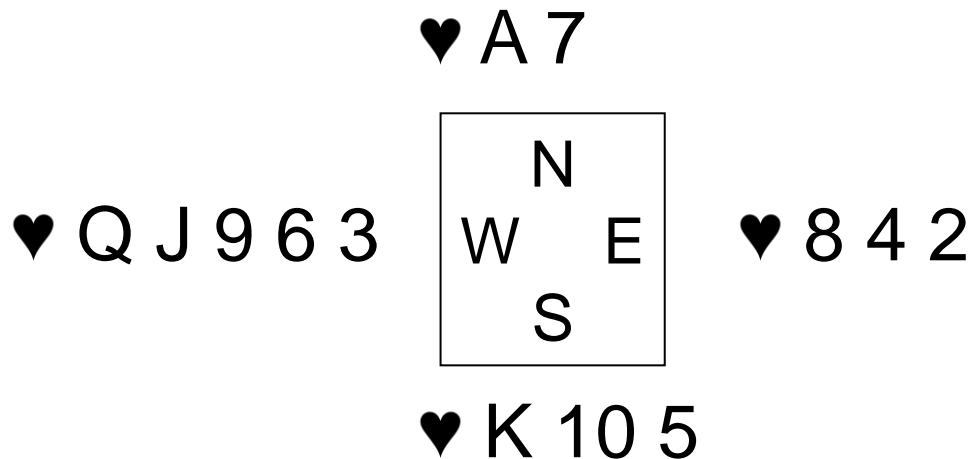
- You are leading your own suit against a NT contract
- Which card do you lead?
 1. ♥(J)10 9 6
 2. ♥(Q)J 9 6 3
 3. ♥A(J)10 4 3
 4. ♥(K)Q J 8 3
- #3 is called an “interior sequence”

The suit in #1 could be:



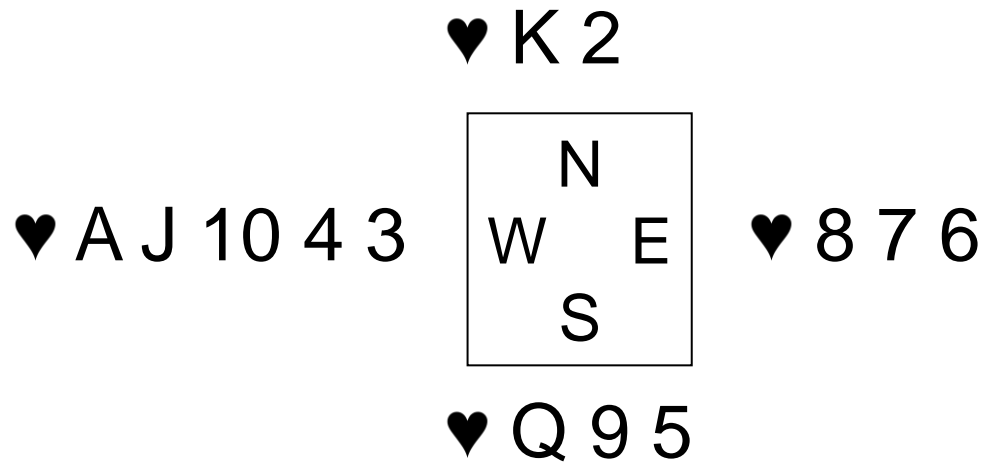
- How many tricks should your side take?

The suit in #2 could be:



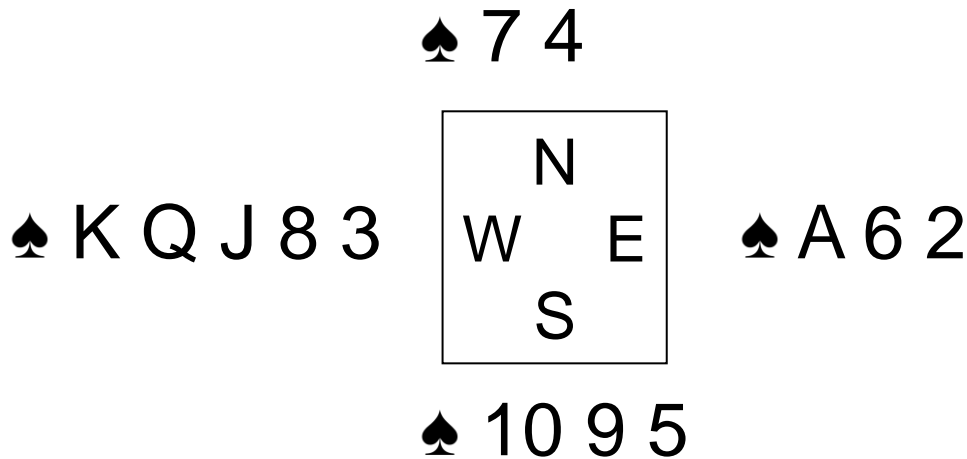
- How many tricks should your side take?

The suit in #3 could be:



- How many tricks should your side take?

The suit in #4 could be:



- How many tricks should your side take?

Conclusions

In leading your own suit or an unbid suit:

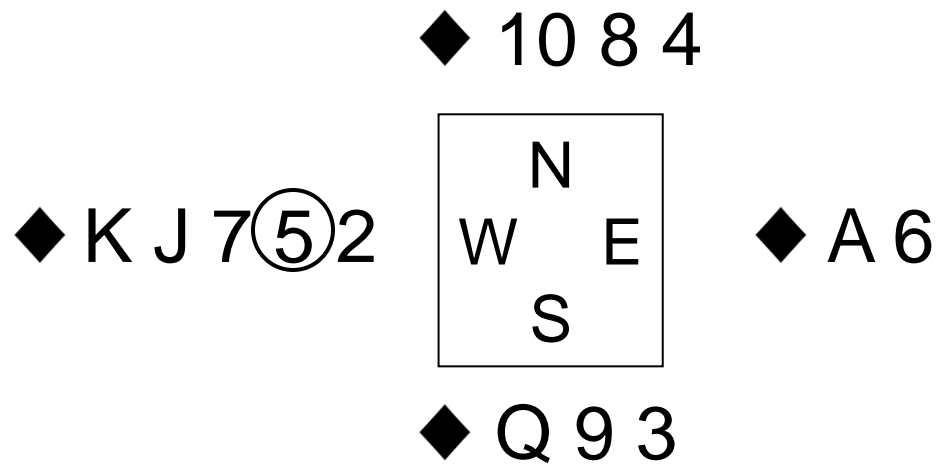
- Top of a 3-card or longer sequence
- Top of a broken or interior sequence
- Otherwise lead low from three or more cards.
- If leading from a broken or interior sequence, be careful!

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Example #1

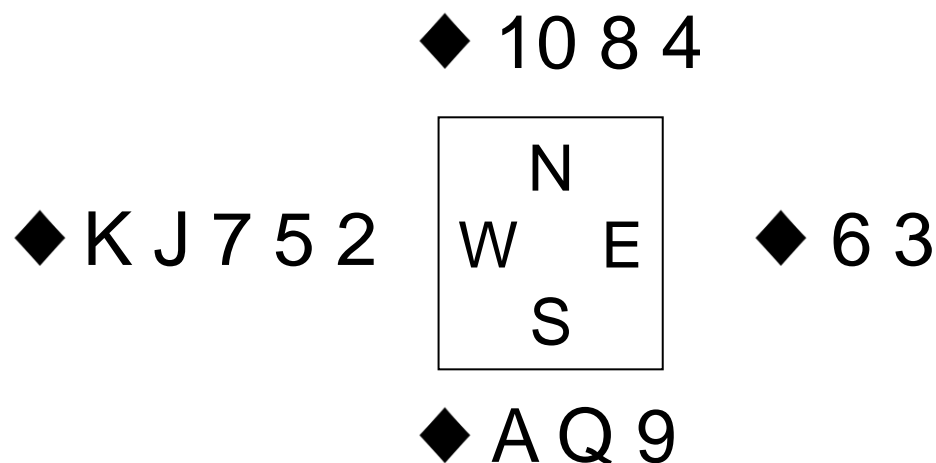
- Consider the following suit layout:



- Which card should you lead?
- How many tricks will your side win?

Example #2

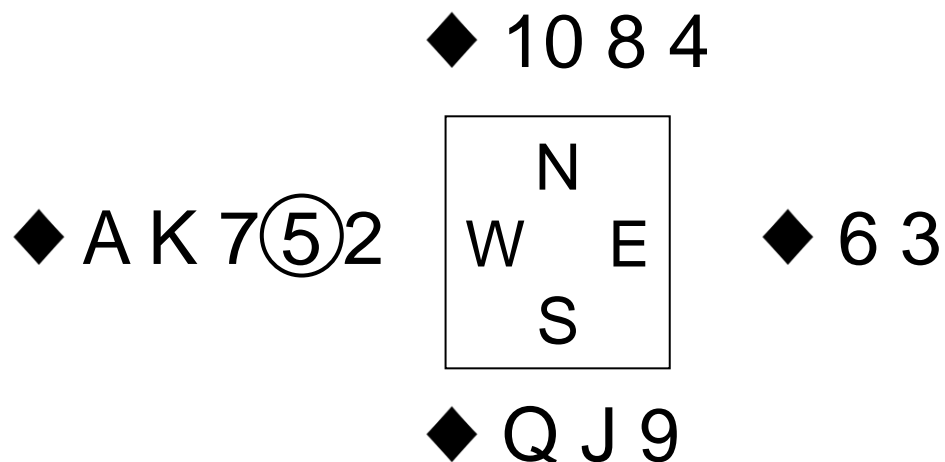
- A variation:



- Now the lead of a ◆ loses a trick. Is there an upside?

Example #3

- Another variation:



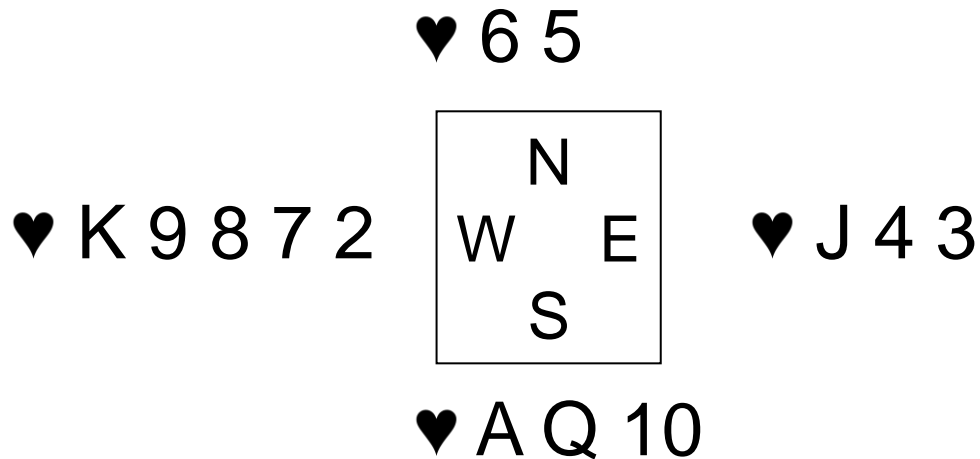
- What's the best lead here? Why?

Quick Quiz

- You are leading your own suit against a NT contract
- Which card do you lead?

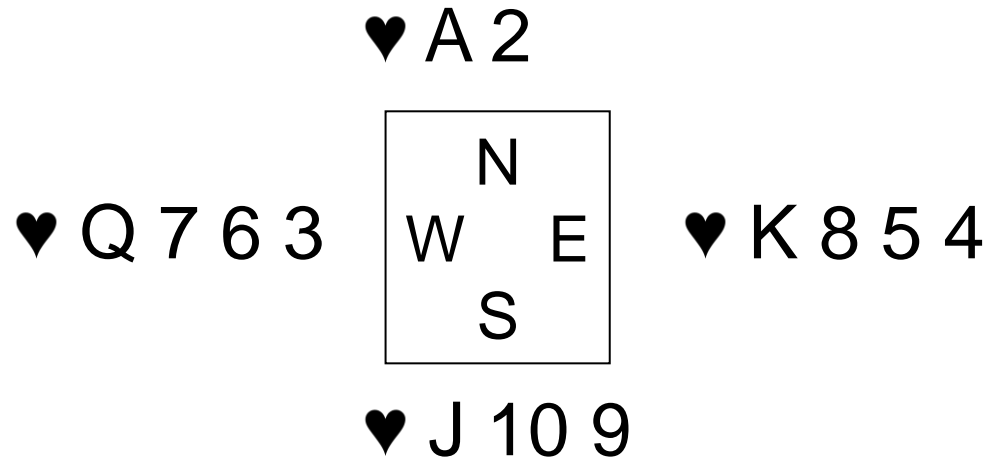
1. ♥ K 9 8⑦2
2. ♥ Q 7 6③
3. ♥ A Q 4③2

The suit in #1 could be:



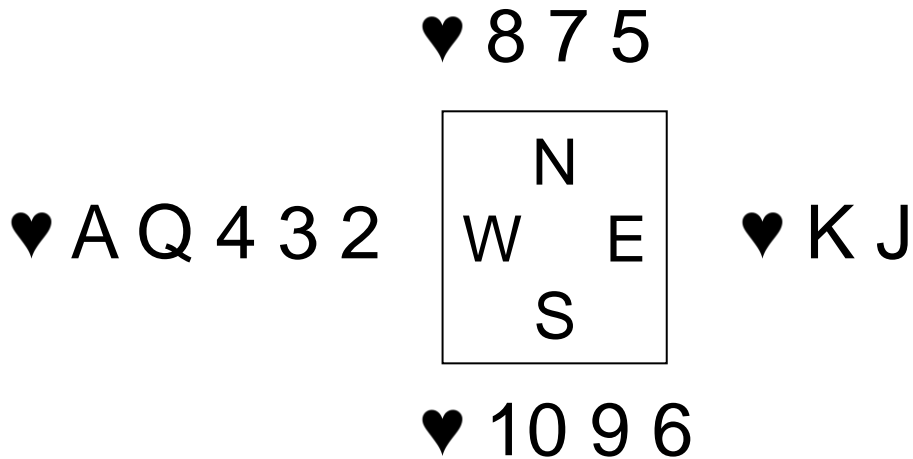
- How many tricks should your side take?

The suit in #2 could be:



- How many tricks should your side take?

The suit in #3 could be:



- How many tricks should your side take?

Conclusions

In leading your own suit or an unbid suit:

- Lead low (fourth best) unless:
 - You have a 3-card sequence OR
 - You have a broken sequence OR
 - You have an interior sequence

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Putting it Together

- RHO (right-hand opponent) bids 1NT and all pass.
- Which card do you lead?

♠	A K
♥	Q 10 8 ④3
♦	J 9 5
♣	7 4 2

♠	J 9 6 3
♥	Q 4
♦	①Q J 10 5
♣	K 8 3

♠	A J 8 ⑥5 2
♥	K 8 3
♦	8 4
♣	9 2

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Listening to the Bidding

- Opponents give you information as they bid
- Listen to them!!! (and remember)
- They'll often help you to find a good opening lead (or avoid a bad one)

Some More Examples

You're on lead to 3 NT after this auction:

North (dummy)	East (partner)	South (declarer)	West (you)
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	

What's your lead on each of these hands?

♠ 7 4
♥ K Q 8 3
♦ K J 6 (2)
♣ 9 8 5

♠ Q 6 5 2
♥ Q 8 4
♦ (J) 10 9
♣ J 8 3

♠ 6 3
♥ J 9 4 2
♦ Q 8 3
♣ (K) Q J 10

Summary

In leading against NT:

- Pay attention to the bidding
- Avoid leading a suit bid by the opponents
- Lead your partner's suit, unless ...
- Consider the level
- Choose the right card
 - Top of a sequence, or broken, or interior
 - Otherwise fourth best