

Leads To Avoid

By Henry Jackson

Based on Bridge Bulletin Article by Lynn Berg

Some Opening Leads Are Easy

- With KQJTx leading the top of the honor sequence is one of our better choices.
- Even with QJ9xx leading the top of a broken sequence is usually OK.
- The back of your convention card has a list of typical effective leads.
- But much of the time we don't have an easy choice.
- Then we must choose the least bad lead.
- Lynn Berg's article provides a list of leads to avoid.

Leading an Unsupported Ace Against a Suit Contract

- An ace is supported if you also hold the king or if partner has bid the suit. Otherwise, it is unsupported.
- Declarer may undeservedly score his king when your ace was behind it.
- You may set up his side suit.
- Sometimes you will need to cash your unsupported ace against a slam or not get it.

Leading Away From an Ace

- We often underlead an ace against a notrump contract.
- Leading away from an ace at a suit contract can be dangerous.
- You may allow declarer to score a singleton king and take no tricks in the suit.
- You may confuse partner who assumes that declarer must have the king if you led the suit.

Leading the Highest Card You Have in Partner's Suit

- Some believe that this helps partner by showing him where the cards are.
- This is NOT good defense!
- Only when you have exactly two cards in partner's suit or the exceptional case when you have an honor sequence in his suit should you lead from the top.
- Most of the time with honor third or better in his suit, you should lead low.

Leading the “Idiot Doubleton”

- Some players lead an unbid doubleton thinking that they may be able to trump (if partner has the ace and king”).
- You are far more likely to finesse partner.
- One expert player has commented that you should lead an unmentioned doubleton only if you really have three cards in the suit.

Leading a Short Suit When You Have No Extra Trumps

- Example, leading a singleton when you have Kx in trumps.
- If you get your ruff, you may not get your king.

Leading a Short Suit When Holding Four or More Trumps

- You often are better off leading a long suit to make declarer ruff and later lose control of the hand.

Breaking a New Suit for Declarer

- We should all know to avoid giving a ruff-sluff by leading a suit knowing he is void in both hands.
- We should make declarer do the work of breaking new suits instead of leading new ones without a bridge reason like partner signaled for the lead.
- Remember to lead through strength and up to weakness.