

Opening Leads Against Suit Contracts

OUT OF HAND

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Make Opening leads
face down

Choosing The Suit to Lead

- We covered this completely when we discussed opening leads against no trump.
- What are your choices.
 - Lead a suit partner has bid
 - Lead a short suit.
 - Lead trump.

When Would You Not Lead Partner's Suit?

- When you have no cards in that suit.
- When you have a short suit and hope to get a ruff.
- When you have a clear idea that leading another suit will lead to defeating the contract.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1 ♣	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	all pass

You

♠ 7 5

♥ K 7 4

♦ K 9 8 4

♣ 10 9 4 2

Partner

♠ 8 6 2

♥ A J 10 5 3

♦ Q 2

♣ K 7 5

Leading a Short Suit

- Do not lead a short suit when your hand is strong and partner's is weak.
 - In this case, it is highly unlikely that partner will be able to get the lead.
- Do not lead a short suit if getting a ruff will cause you to lose a natural trump trick.

Leading a Short Suit

- When you lead a short suit, you hope to get a ruff.
- If you lead an unbid short suit, and you don't get a ruff, then you have probably helped the declarer.
- This means that partner must be able to get the lead and lead the suit for you to ruff, before the declarer pulls your trump.

Don't Lead a Short Suit When Your Trump Holding Is:

- J 9 7 3
- Q J 7
- Q 7 5 2
- K Q 4 2

Lead a Short Suit When Your Trump Holding Is:

A 3

K 4 2

8 4 3

As long as you think you can find a way to put partner in the lead.

Selecting the Card: Your Suit or an Unbid Suit

- Don't lead away from an ace. (A very strong guideline, but not absolute).
- If you can avoid it, don't lead suits the opponents have bid.

Selecting the Card to Lead

- Never lead an ace against a suit contract unless:
 - The ace is a singleton
 - You have the king and you want partner to guide you on how to continue.
 - Partner has bid the suit or you have reason to think that your side has length and strength.
 - The ace is in the only unbid suit against a high contract.
 - You have a 7 or 8-card suit
 - The opponent have bid at the six level.

Leading Trump

- There are times when leading the opponent's trump is the best opening lead.
 - When the opponents are taking a sacrifice and your side has a preponderance of high-card strength.

North	East	South	West
3 ♥	dbler	pass	4 ♠
pass	pass	5 ♥	pass
pass	dbler	all pass	

Lead Trump

- When Declarer has bid two suits and you have some strength in the one that is not trump.

North	East	South	West
1♠	pass	2♣	pass
2♥	pass	2♠	pass
4♠	all pass		

- A good time to lead trump, especially if you have values in hearts.

Lead Trump

- When you know partner is weak and you have most of the high cards for your side.

	Opener	Responder
♠ 7 5 2		
♥ A Q 10	1 ♠	3 ♠
♦ K Q 8 4	4 ♠	
♣ Q 4 2		

Lead Trump

- When the opponents seem to have a misfit.

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♣	pass	3 ♣	all pass

- Hands like this are often made on a cross-ruff.

North	East	South	West
1 ♣	pass	1 ♦	pass
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	pass

West Hand

♠ 7 5 2

♥ Q 10 9

♦ K 10 8 4

♣ K 7 2

Avoid Leading Trump When

- You have a dangerous trump holding like:
 - Q 6 3
 - J 4 2
 - A J
 - K J 4
 - J 7 3 2
 - 7 5 4 2
- You have a singleton trump.
- If you think dummy has a useful long suit.

North East South West
1 ♥ pass 3 ♥ pass
4 ♥ All pass

East Hand

♠ 7 5 2

♥ J 9 4

♦ 4

♣ Q 9 7 6 4 2

East Hand

♠ Q J 9

♥ J 9 4 2

♦ 4

♣ A K Q J 9

What Card Do You Play When Partner Leads 4th Best.

- If declarer wins the trick in dummy, your job is to tell partner what you think of the lead.
- If dummy plays a low card, your job is to do what you can to force a high card from declarer.
- If you can win the trick, your job is to win the trick and lead it back.

Partner Leads 4th Best 1

♦ 7 5 2

♦ 3

♦ Q J 6

Partner Leads 4th Best 2

♦ Q 5 2

♦ 3

♦ A J 6

Partner Leads 4th Best 3

♦ Q 5 2

♦ 3

♦ A 10 6

Returning Partner's Suit.

- Partner has led her own suit. You win the trick or get into the lead at a later point, you should return partner's suit, if you can.
- If you started with 3 cards, return what was your middle card.
- If you started with 4 or more cards, return what was your original 4th best.
- There are some exceptions to these rules.

Returning Partner's Suit 1

♦ Q 5 2

♦ 3

♦ A 10 6

♦ K

Returning Partner's Suit 2

♦ 8 5 2

♦ 3

♦ A 10 6

Returning Partner's Suit 3

♦ 8 5 2

♦ 3

♦ A 10 6 4