

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DEFENCE

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Although these general guidelines are useful, each hand is different and you do have to THINK!

OPENING LEADS

- If partner has bid a suit during the auction, lead it.**
With two cards in partner's suit, lead hi-lo e.g. 63 or Q3
With three or four cards in partner's to an honour, lead low e.g. Q83 or Q873.
With three rags, cards in partner's lead MUD e.g. 874 or 982 (Middle Up Down)
- Long suits against NO TRUMP contracts.**
Lead Top of Sequence (BEST) e.g. J1094, or KQJ4. Top of near sequence is also good e.g. KQ104
Lead 4th highest ONLY if no sequence is held. A 10763

- Short suits against suit contracts.** (Looking for a ruff)

Lead singletons or doubletons (hi-lo) e.g. Lead ♠8 to ♠Q.

When east returns ♠A play ♠2. The hi-lo tells partner you can ruff the next round

DO NOT lead hi-lo from a doubleton honour. e.g. Q6

	Dummy	
	♠ K743	
♠ 82	4♥	♠ <u>AQ95</u>
♥ 1052		♥ 96
♦ 9876		♦ 1053
♣ Q106		♣ KJ52
	♠ J106	

PLAYING 2ND IN HAND

- Usually play low. Be prepared for what declarer might lead.
- Against suit contracts, split your honours and play high, if you hold KQx and dummy has AJx.
- Usually cover an honour with an honour, particularly when led from the closed hand.

PLAYING 3RD IN HAND

- Usually play high to try and win the trick.
- Try to win - using the lower or lowest of touching high cards. e.g. with KQx - play the queen
- If partner leads top of a sequence and you have only Ax or Kx, unblock the honour and return.

PLAYING 4TH IN HAND

- Usually play to win if you can using the lowest card necessary
- Do not win if declarer is trying to force out your ace to establish winners in the dummy hand.

RECOGNIZE WHAT PARTNER'S LEAD MEANS

- An honour card lead, shows the card beneath the lead and denies the card above. e.g. QJ92
- A low card lead shows an honour in the suit. e.g. K92
- A high card (not an honour) is likely to be showing two cards and an interest in ruffing. e.g. 84
- Usually, it is correct to return your partner's suit if you get on lead.

LEADS IN MID GAME

- Usually return partner's suit! (*Unless looking at dummy tells you otherwise*).
- Lead UP to weakness in dummy, when dummy is on your right. (*Last to play*.)
- Lead through dummy's tenaces e.g. AQx or KJx if dummy is on your left. (*Next to play*.)

ASK YOURSELF WHY DECLARER IS PLAYING A PARTICULAR SUIT.

- If declarer in NTs is trying to establish a suit, it is often correct to duck. e.g. 983 - 54 - **KQJ108** - 762
- If declarer in 4♠ is going to ruff losers, lead trumps whenever you can. e.g. 983 - **6** - AJ1085 - K752

OPENING LEADS FOR THE DEFENCE

We have looked at play techniques for the declarer, but the hardest part of this game is defending. Opening leads often give declarer a trick because he has the advantage of playing the last card. To avoid this, defenders are constantly trying to find *safe leads*.

Leads against NT contracts:

Top of a sequence. e.g. QJ105
4th highest of your longest suit.

Avoid

Leading the opponent's suits.
Short suits.

Leads against suit contracts:

A K combinations (*to have a look at dummy*) e.g. AK32
Leads which set up a trick e.g. QJ109, J1098.
A singleton (*looking for a ruff*).
A trump (*to stop declarer ruffing your tricks in dummy*.)

Avoid

Leading opponent's suits, particularly if shown on your right
Leading a suit in which you hold an ace. e.g. A872
Leading from '*tenace*' combinations, e.g. AJ9, KJ5.

Which CARD to lead from your chosen suit?

Top of a sequence

The safest lead is the top card from a sequence, headed by an honour card.
These top of a sequence leads guarantee that you have the card below the card led.
They deny holding the card immediately above the card led. The card to lead is underlined.

1. 2. 3.
QJ1063 KQJ84 KJ1093

In hand 3 the jack is still top of a sequence even though there is a card higher than the one led.

The hand shows how it is often a race between declarer and defenders to **ESTABLISH** winners.

Other standard leads include

Top of doubletons against suit contracts.

Playing your cards hi-lo from two, shows an interest in ruffing the 3rd round. (*Best from weak hands*)
e.g. 83 95 42 but **NOT** from honours please! (*With K2, Q7 or J6, lead a different suit*)

4th highest of a suit against NT contracts

Counted from the top with no touching honour combinations. (These are standard leads against NT contracts.)

e.g. K J 6 3 Q 8 7 4 2 J 6 5 2 K J 9 7 4 2

Low from an honour

Called *attitude leads*. The lower the card I lead, the more I want the suit returned.

e.g. K 7 2 Q 8 3 J 6 2 K 10 4

M.U.D. Middle, Up, Down from three rag cards. (*No honours*)

It is easy to remember the opening lead but remember to play the high card next e.g.
With 952 lead the 5, then follow with the 9, then play the 2. *The top card is never an honour card (AKQJ or 10)*

NOTE - It is usually a good idea to return your partner's suit if you win a trick.

OPENING LEADS AGAINST NTS

♠ 743
 ♥ 95
 ♦ 105
 ♣ AK10742

♠ A52
 ♥ QJ72
 ♦ AK73
 ♣ 96

♠ KJ96
 ♥ 108643
 ♦ 96
 ♣ Q5

♠ Q108
 ♥ AK
 ♦ QJ842
 ♣ J83

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2C	P
2D	P	3NT	

C7 LEAD

If you lead the CA, you can no longer set the contract because you have no outside entries to make the rest of your clubs!

H7 LEAD

4th highest is correct here. - H4 - HQ - HK. (Advanced play by declarer would be to duck the HQ).

♠ 8642
 ♥ Q63
 ♦ J862
 ♣ A8

♠ AQJ3
 ♥ 84
 ♦ Q73
 ♣ KJ106

♠ K75
 ♥ A10975
 ♦ 1095
 ♣ 52

♠ 109
 ♥ KJ2
 ♦ AK4
 ♣ Q9743

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2C	P
2D	P	3NT	

♠ J3
 ♥ 862
 ♦ 10873
 ♣ J975

♠ 76
 ♥ J975
 ♦ AK64
 ♣ AQ2

♠ AQ10852
 ♥ KQ3
 ♦ J9
 ♣ 106

♠ K94
 ♥ A104
 ♦ Q52
 ♣ K843

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2C	2S
P	P	3NT	

SJ LEAD

Top from two of partner's suit. If east plays low on a heart lead from dummy, nine tricks are there

SK LEAD

If you lead the S7 (4th highest), declarer makes! He can afford to lose the HA because he still has the spade suit stopped.

♠ 86
 ♥ 852
 ♦ J976
 ♣ J943

♠ 953
 ♥ KQ764
 ♦ K10
 ♣ AQ2

♠ KQJ72
 ♥ A93
 ♦ 84
 ♣ 875

♠ A104
 ♥ J10
 ♦ AQ532
 ♣ K106

S	W	N	E
1NT	2S	3H	P
3NT			

♠ QJ1075
 ♥ QJ7
 ♦ QJ6
 ♣ 108

♠ K42
 ♥ K102
 ♦ 875
 ♣ AK76

♠ A86
 ♥ 863
 ♦ 1093
 ♣ J943

♠ 93
 ♥ A954
 ♦ AK42
 ♣ Q52

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	

SQ LEAD

If you lead the S7 (4th highest) east will be forced to play SA to win. When diamonds break 3-3 declarer has his 9 tricks.

S7 LEAD

Partner, east cannot have any pts. and leading from your honours is likely to cost. Make a safe MUD lead and let declarer find the honours.

♠ 10864
 ♥ J82
 ♦ 643
 ♣ J64

♠ AQ2
 ♥ 965
 ♦ J1085
 ♣ A98

♠ 973
 ♥ AQ4
 ♦ KQ2
 ♣ K752

♠ KJ5
 ♥ K1073
 ♦ A97
 ♣ Q103

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT			

♠ 6542
 ♥ 92
 ♦ 832
 ♣ J843

♠ K93
 ♥ K85
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ Q652

♠ Q107
 ♥ AQ1063
 ♦ 764
 ♣ A9

♠ AJ8
 ♥ J74
 ♦ KJ109
 ♣ K107

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P

H9 LEAD

With NO pts you should play for your partner who must have pts. With no interest in majors from N/S where are the hearts. Partner knows it cannot be 4th highest!

HQ LEAD

If you lead the H9 (4th highest) you can no longer set the contract. HQ is top of a near internal sequence.

♠ J742
 ♥ 743
 ♦ 1085
 ♣ K108

♠ A3
 ♥ K105
 ♦ K96
 ♣ Q9762

♠ 986
 ♥ AQJ92
 ♦ J32
 ♣ 53

♠ KQ105
 ♥ 86
 ♦ AQ74
 ♣ AJ4

S	W	N	E
1S	P	2C	P
1NT	P	3NT	

OPENING LEADS

**LEAD SQ
TOP OF
SEQUENCE**

♠ K93
♥ K7
♦ A432
♣ J853

♠ A64
♥ J10854
♦ 1085
♣ 74

♠ 85
♥ A93
♦ QJ96
♣ AKQ10

♠ QJ1072
♥ Q62
♦ K7
♣ 962

Notice how leading 4th highest would be wrong! If dummy plays low and SA wins declarer still has the SK

S	W	N	E
1C	P	1D	P
1NT	P	3NT	

**LEAD C7
MUD**

♠ AQ984
♥ QJ
♦ 1064
♣ K105

♠ 62
♥ 10854
♦ 8732
♣ AQ4

♠ J7
♥ 7632
♦ AQ95
♣ 972

♠ K1053
♥ AK9
♦ KJ
♣ J863

East wins CQ and cashes CA on which west plays C9. Knowing that west cannot ruff, east switches to a diamond. (Dummy's weakness).

S	W	N	E
1S	P	4S	

**LEAD C9
SHORT SUIT
LEAD**

♠ AK94
♥ 108
♦ Q643
♣ K105

♠ 6
♥ J7532
♦ 872
♣ AQ74

♠ 1087
♥ Q64
♦ AJ1095
♣ 92

♠ QJ532
♥ AK9
♦ K
♣ J863

Partner must SEE your HI-LO and play another club to get a ruff

S	W	N	E
1S	P	4S	

**LEAD HK
LEADING
PARTNER'S
SUIT.**

♠ Q1053
♥ 1054
♦ A
♣ AQ1054

♠ 72
♥ K7
♦ 1098542
♣ 972

♠ J6
♥ AQJ98
♦ J76
♣ K63

♠ AK984
♥ 632
♦ KQ3
♣ J8

With 2 cards lead HI-LO East cashes three heart tricks and sits back until declarer tries the doomed club finesse!

N	E	S	W
1C	1H	1S	P
2S	P	4S	

**LEAD H5
LEADING
PARTNER'S
SUIT.**

♠ QJ654
♥ 42
♦ K6
♣ AJ97

♠ 73
♥ AJ1096
♦ AQJ3
♣ 84

♠ 10
♥ K75
♦ 10875
♣ 106532

♠ AK982
♥ Q83
♦ 942
♣ KQ

Low from an honour. (holding 3 or 4) Not highest of partner's suit!

Diamond switch sets the contract.

S	W	N	E
1S	P	3S	1H
4S			P

**LEAD H5
YOU'RE ON
YOUR OWN!**

♠ J764
♥ KJ63
♦ J32
♣ AJ

♠ AQ82
♥ 1075
♦ AQ95
♣ 92

♠ 1093
♥ 4
♦ 10764
♣ Q7543

♠ K5
♥ AQ982
♦ K8
♣ K1086

With 12 HCPs, partner cannot have anything. So playing for ruffs is a nonsense. Lead a trump and let declarer do the work!

S	W	N	E
1H	P	3H	P
4H			

**LEAD D6
4TH HIGHEST**

♠ Q 10 2
♥ J 8
♦ A 7
♣ K J 10 9 7 3

♠ 8 6 5
♥ 10 7 6
♦ 10 5 4
♣ Q 6 5 2

♠ K 9 7 3
♥ K 4 2
♦ K J 9 6 3
♣ 6

♠ AJ 4
♥ A Q 9 5 3
♦ Q 8 2
♣ A 8

Although the lead gives declarer a trick, you are nearer to establishing your long suit.

S	W	N	E
1H	P	2C	P
2NT	P	3NT	

**S9 LEAD
HI-LO**

♠ K52
♥ QJ96
♦ AK4
♣ 943

♠ 94
♥ 52
♦ 9762
♣ K10762

♠ AJ1083
♥ A7
♦ J853
♣ 85

♠ Q76
♥ K10843
♦ Q10
♣ AQJ

East wins SA and returns. If South tries to draw trumps. East wins and plays a 3rd spade which you ruff! Declarer must throw a spade on winning diamond

S	W	N	E
1H	P	4H	P