



Leads versus Suit Contracts



What Suit to Lead:

- Rule 1: Lead partner's bid suit (It keeps partner happy)
- If the opponents bid 3 suits and aren't playing in No Trump, lead the unbid suit
- Same if they bid 2 suits. Lead an unbid suit.

Passive or Active Lead?

- When they've bid weakly or have struggled and stopped in a low-level contract, make a passive lead, such as:
 - A trump, or
 - A worthless suit, or
 - Top of a sequence
- When they've bid briskly to a game, make an active or aggressive lead, such as:
 - A suit holding that includes the Ace, King or Queen
 - Get you tricks early before they get away
- When they are in a suit slam, lead an ace.
- When they are in 6 NT or 7 NT, make as safe a lead as possible.

When to Lead a Trump:

- If they bid Suit A, then Suit B, and finally settle on Suit C as the trump suit, lead Suit C. The idea is that they are each short in each other's first suit and may be planning some cross-ruffing.
- If they bid Suit A, then 1 NT, then Suit B and Pass, lead a trump.
- If they are sacrificing, that is, bidding at a high level to prevent you from playing in your game, lead a trump.

Which Card to Lead (recommended card in italics):

1. **Top of touching honors:**
 - **Ace from *A K x x*** (This lead is a must.)
 - **King from *K Q x x***
 - **Queen from *Q J x x***
 - **Etc.**
 2. **Top of a 3-card sequence**
 - Ex.: **Jack from *J 10 9 x x***
 - Ex.: **Nine from *9 8 7 x***
 3. **A singleton. This may work out well if partner is able to gain the lead to give you a ruff. The weaker you are, the more likely this will work well.**
 4. **Bottom Of Something:**
 - **With a single honor (other than the ace), lead low**
 - **Ex.: Low from *Q 9 5 2***
 - **Ex.: Low from *K 8 4***
 5. **Top Of Nothing:**
 - **Ex.: Top of *9 5 3***
 - **Ex.: Top of *6 3 2***
- The acronym for this method is BOSTON. (Thx, Barbara Seagram)**
6. **Top of a doubleton:**
 - **Ex.: Queen from *Q 5***
 - **Ex.: Five from *5 4***
 7. **A trump:**
 - **(See page one for instances of when to lead a trump)**
 8. **Caution: Don't lead an unsupported Ace, that is, an Ace without the King:**
 - **"The Elvis Play": Lead an unsupported Ace and . . .
"The King Lives!"**
 9. **Caution: Don't lead away from an Ace against a suit contract**
 - **From *A 8 3 2*. don't lead low.**

Conclusion to be drawn from #8 and #9: With an unsupported Ace, lead a different suit.

Deal 1 Declarer Plays

Board 1

♠ 9 8
 South Deals ♥ K 5 2
 None Vul ♦ K J 4
 ♣ Q J 9 4 2

♠ A Q 4 3 ♠ J 10 7 5 2
 ♥ 9 4 ♥ Q 7 3
 ♦ 9 8 5 ♦ Q 10 7 3 2
 ♣ A 10 6 5 ♣ —



♠ K 6
 ♥ A J 10 8 6
 ♦ A 6
 ♣ K 8 7 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	2 ♣ ¹	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Playing 2/1 would use 1NT forcing. Defense has to think harder

4 ♥ by South

<i>Trick</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1. W	♣ A ¹	-	-	-

1. Killer lead. Bidding and your holding suggest partner has at most a singleton. Be sure your second Club tells partner what to return after ruff.

Deal 1 Opening Leader Plays

Board 1a ♠ J 10 7 5 2
 East Deals ♥ Q 7 3
 None Vul ♦ Q 10 7 3 2
 ♣ —

♠ 9 8	N W E S	♠ K 6
♥ K 5 2		♥ A J 10 8 6
♦ K J 4		♦ A 6
♣ Q J 9 4 2		♣ K 8 7 3

♠ A Q 4 3
 ♥ 9 4
 ♦ 9 8 5
 ♣ A 10 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	Pass
2 ♣ ¹	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Playing 2/1 would use 1NT forcing. Defense has to think harder

4 ♥ by East

<i>Trick</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1. S	♣ A ¹	-	-	-

1. Killer lead. Bidding and your holding suggest partner has at most a singleton. Be sure your second Club tells partner what to return after ruff.

Deal 2 Declarer Play

Board 2

East Deals ♠ 3
♥ Q 9 8 3
N-S Vul ♦ A 9 5

♣ J 6 4 3 2

♠ A Q J 10

♥ 7 4 2

♦ Q 7 4

♣ 10 9 7



♠ 7 4 2

♥ A 5

♦ J 10 6 2

♣ K Q 8 5

♠ K 9 8 6 5

♥ K J 10 6

♦ K 8 3

♣ A

West *North* *East* *South*

Pass 1 NT¹ Pass 1 ♠

Pass Pass Pass 2 ♥

Pass Pass Pass

1. Applies whether 1NT Forcing or not.

2 ♥ by South

Trick *West* *North* *East* *South*

1. W ♥ 7¹ - - -

1. Trump lead mandatory unless trump holding is special. Any trump will do

Deal 2 Opening Leader Play

Board 2a

♠ 7 4 2
 North Deals ♥ A 5
 E-W Vul ♦ J 10 6 2
 ♣ K Q 8 5

♠ 3
 ♥ Q 9 8 3
 ♦ A 9 5
 ♣ J 6 4 3 2



♠ K 9 8 6 5
 ♥ K J 10 6
 ♦ K 8 3
 ♣ A

♠ A Q J 10
 ♥ 7 4 2
 ♦ Q 7 4
 ♣ 10 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT ¹	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- 1. Applies whether 1NT Forcing or not.
- 2 ♥ by East

<i>Trick</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1. S	♥ 7 ¹	-	-	-

- 1. Trump lead mandatory unless trump holding is special. Any trump will do