

Opening Leads

Look at the auction before you make the opening lead

The following are the most commonly used guidelines for the defence

1. Leads versus a Notrump Contract

The defenders aim to establish their longest or strongest combined suit

Which suit?

1. Lead partner's bid suit (if they have bid one)
2. Lead your longest or strongest suit (the suit that gives the best opportunity to win tricks)
3. Lead an unbid suit (a major before a minor)

Which card?

The lead is underlined

1. Lead top of a sequence of 3 honours or broken sequence
KQJ3 KQ109 QJ97
2. Lead a low card - **a low card promises an honour(s)**
AJ875 K932 Q64
3. Lead top from small cards - **a high card denies an honour**
974 8742 83
4. Lead top of an interior sequence of 2 or more honours
KJ103 Q1094 AJ104

2. Leads vs a Suit Contract

The defenders aim to win quick tricks or to use their trumps for ruffing

Which suit?

1. Lead partner's bid suit (if they have bid one)
2. Lead top of a sequence of 2 or more honours
3. Lead a singleton (or top of a doubleton) - you may be able to get a ruff
4. Lead low from your longest or strongest suit
5. Lead an unbid suit

NB: Do Not lead low from a suit headed by the ace

Which card?

1. Lead top of a sequence of 2 or more honours
KQ73 QJ98
2. Lead a low card - **a low card promises an honour**
K932 Q642
3. Lead top from small cards - **a high card denies an honour**
974 8742
4. Lead top of an interior sequence of 2 or more honours
KJ103 Q1094 K1093

Summary

- If there is an unbid suit and you do not have an obvious lead, lead that suit
- If you lead a **low card** you **promise an honour in that suit**
- If you lead a **high card** you **deny an honour in that suit**
- If you lead an honour card, **it should at least show the honour below**
- **DON'T** lead away from an Ace in a **suit contract** - you may lose to a singleton King

These principles apply throughout the defence