

Opening Leads

There is a plethora of material in print and online concerning the Opening Lead in a Bridge Hand. It is not the intention here, in fact it would be impossible, to canvas all the strategies used to select which opening lead to make.

As the ABF states (link below): *“A big advantage for the defenders is that they get to play the first card by making the opening lead. The only negative about this is that they can’t see dummy first! It’s often difficult to find the right lead to beat a contract, but here are some guidelines if you’re wondering what to lead. Decide first, which **suit** to lead, and then which **card** of that suit seems right. Nobody makes the lead right all the time, but thinking about the bidding and imagining what dummy might look like will help.”*

Two online references I found useful may be a starting point for you

- <https://www.abf.com.au/education/opening-leads/> some good reading here
- A search online also led me to a neat set of **YouTube** videos (about 25 in all) that included two relevant here- *Opening Leads 1 against No-Trump Contracts and Opening leads 2 against Suit Contracts* – check these out from the link below.



Learn Bridge 1.39K subscribers

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbSg3BxFvJ2O_k-kv6xYw5A

NOW Try out all of the following exercises and your partner may be amazed at the improvement in your opening leads!

Deal A – Board 12 from Tuesday night 28/1/20

BOARD 12			
BD: 12 ♠KT		Dlr: W	
♥AKJT64		Vul: N-S	
♦T97			
♣72			
♠7		♠A865432	
♥873		♥9	
♦Q32		♦8654	
♣AT8653		♣4	
	♠QJ9		
	♥Q52		
	♦AKJ		
	♣KQJ9		

The lovely Margaret Moulston (E) and I (W) were playing this night.

The bidding went

West – 3 ♠ South – X

East – P North – 4 ♥

West is on lead.

Question – As West, what would you lead? And why? (no peeking)

Read below for the actual lead and its consequences

W led 4♣ - normally I would never lead a singleton but this night some inner voice made me do it. **E** won with the A♣ and (clever girl!) led me back a ♠ which I won with the A♠. I led back a ♠ which **E** trumped. (3 tricks). Then, **the piece de resistance!** Margaret led another ♣ which I trumped. Contract defeated! OOO YEAH – go Margaret!! Top board for us 😊 😊

At the other 3 tables, 3NT made 11 tricks (3 ♣ led), 4 ♥ made 10 (2 ♠ led), 4 ♥ made (5 ♠ led).

Deal B– Board 18 from Friday Morning 31/1/20

BOARD 18	
BD: 18 ♠J875	Dir: E
♥8762	Vul: N-S
♦Q54	
♣K2	
♠93	♠AQT642
♥AQJT3	♥94
♦J7	♦AK9
♣QJT9	♣64
	♠K
	♥K5
	♦T8632
	♣A8753

If Deal A saw my best lead of that week, here is my worst!

The contract was 4♠ by East, with South on lead.

Question: What would you as S lead? Why? What do you think would have been the worst opening lead? Why? (no peaking!)

Well! In an unforgivably cavalier manner I blythely plonked down the K ♠. My partner would have been entirely justified in giving me the boot! (phew! She forgave me).

As East later explained – “I thought that lead was indicative of a singleton which told me which hand (N) had all the other trumps and I was able to play the hand accordingly” – making 12 tricks and a top board.

... and finally

Try yourself out on this **Opening Leads Competition** provided by Greg and Gaye of the Finesse Bridge Club

<http://www.finessebridge.com.au/holidays.html>

Many thanks to you both from Newcastle Bridge Club.



Opening Leads Competition

Please indicate your choice of lead, together with your reason, for each of these questions. There is a detailed analysis for all 5 questions below. (don't peak!)

In each case you are South. What is your lead?

Q1

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

♠ Q6
♥ KQ102
♦ J10 95
♣ 876

Q2

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

♠ 8
♥ 9643
♦ A87
♣ Q7632

Q3

E	S	W	N
1H	P	2C	P
3C	P	3H	P
4H	P	P	P

♠ J1096
♥ A3
♦ 862
♣ A752

Q4

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

♠ 8
♥ AJ97
♦ A87
♣ 109832

Q5

E	S	W	N
1NT	P	P	P

♠ AQ74
♥ Q62
♦ KJ7
♣ 965

ANSWERS

1: 8 ♣

Responder says this can't be played in NT's so wipe out the trumps each time you are on lead.

2: 2 ♣

Partner is marked with 4 trumps, don't kill them by leading trumps. When you or partner are marked with a lot of trumps, lead your longest suit, declarer is marked with shortage here and may have to start ruffing this suit, causing him to lose trump control.

3. A ♣

The opposition are marked with an 8-card club fit or at worst 7 cards. Therefore, lead the A and follow up with another. On the first round of trumps hop up with the A and lead another club for partner to ruff.

4. 7 ♦

RHO has strength and length in hearts, and LHO has shown shortage, so what is declarer going to do with all those losing hearts if you don't lead trumps. Lead the 7 and when you win the first heart, lead the A of trumps, followed by the 8.

5. 6 ♣

All 3 top suits have dangerous holdings. Lead your weak suit but only lead the highest if it is 8 or lower, otherwise lead the 2nd highest.