

TRUMP LEADS

Avoid the abysmal leads from suits with one and two honours in it -Lead Passively.

Contract: 4♠ by S		Dummy	
		♠ KQ86	
		♥ A872	
You	♠ T52	♦ J82	East
	♥ J963	♣ T6	♠ 97
	♦ KQ7		♥ 54
	♣ K74	South	♦ 9543
		♠ AJ43	♣ J9832
		♥ KQT	
		♦ AT6	
		♣ AQ5	

Your thought processes with your opening lead are not about winning the first or second trick, but totally along the lines - **I DO NOT WANT TO GIVE DECLARER AN UNDESERVED TRICK.** Think along those lines and your opening leads will improve out of sight. You are West. Your opening lead requires great thought here. Lets look at each suit individually.

The Club Suit: Not attractive to lead away from K-x-x against a high level contract. If declarer has A and Q not just in their hand, but in either, you have usually lost a trick. Leading a club with the above hand will cost a trick, declarer will win the first trick with the Q and still has the A.

The Diamond Suite: Leading a short suit headed by K-Q-x is particularly unsound as you will often see declarer with the A and dummy with the J, so declarer wins the first trick with the A and can later play a small one towards the J promoting it.

The Heart Suit: Four card suits headed by the J are particularly bad. You are highly likely to give declarer an undeserved trick with this kind of lead. With the above hand, it will allow declarer to make four tricks in the suit, without the heart lead, declarer has 3 tricks only in the suit.

The Trump Suite This leaves the trump suit. 3 or 4 small cards in the trump suit makes an attractive lead as it usually cannot give declarer any trick that they weren't going to get anyway.

Note: If you are not leading trumps at least 35 % of the time you are not finding the correct lead as often.

Safe Trump Leads:

When you decide that you are going to lead a trump, it must be a suit that is not potentially fatal-

The following would not be sound trump leads:

K-x
Q-x
Q-x-x
x
Q-J-x
Q-T-x
J-T-x-x
J-9-x-x

The following would be sound trump leads:

K-x-x
A-x-x
A-x-x-x
x-x-x
x-x-x-x
J-T-x (lead low, not the J)
J-T-9
A-K-x

Dummy gives Suit Preference: Sometimes when you are declarer you do not draw trumps immediately because you may need to trump some losers in your hand, in dummy to gain extra tricks. They bid 1H: INT:2D:Pass. Your holding –

♠ J96
♥ AQT6
♦ 875
♣ K65

What do you lead? Before you lead, give some thought to what is going on. What will dummy have in diamonds and hearts? To pass 2♦ rather than give preference to 2♥ is a sure sign of dummy's holding more diamonds than hearts. What is declarer going to do with their 5 hearts? He is going to try and trump them in dummy. Therefore, destroy declarer's plans at trick 1; Lead a trump.

EXERCISES:

3 i) What would you lead from the following hands against a 1NT: 3NT contract?

a) ♠ A732	b) ♠ A865	c) ♠ QT86	d) ♠ T98	e) ♠ AT3
♥ 9874	♥ KJ74	♥ J765	♥ Q8543	♥ Q8652
♦ 3	♦ 3	♦ K83	♦ J52	♦ 32
♣ J854	♣ AJ54	♣ K5	♣ T4	♣ K63

ii) The bidding has gone 1S:3S:4S. What do you lead?

a) ♠ A732	b) ♠ A865	c) ♠ QJT6	d) ♠ Q6	e) ♠ AT32
♥ 874	♥ KJ74	♥ 765	♥ JT954	♥ KQ652
♦ 3	♦ 3	♦ 3	♦ AJ5	♦ 3
♣ J8542	♣ AJ54	♣ KJ653	♣ K5	♣ T63

ANSWERS:

i)

- a) 9♥. Club suit is very poor and dangerous. The auction also indicates a major should be led as responder did not use Stayman. Your heart suit although not strong is sequential, safer than the others and still has potential for promotion of tricks.
- b) 5♠. Partner has nothing. You have 13 HCP, opposition should have 26, doesn't leave partner with much. Leading away from broken honour sequences K-J or A-J is probably going to cost you a trick. Sit back, be patient and wait for the tricks to come to you. Leading from a Ace is safe if partner has nothing. Singleton leads in no-trumps are a no-no.
- c) 6♠. Every suit has one honour. Either pick one that also has the T, or lead from a K, not a J or Q.
- d) T♠. No point leading a heart. When establishing your suit, you should have an outside entry. You don't.
- e) 2♥. Try to establish your suit, as you have outside entries in the A♠ and possibly the K♣.

ii)

- a) 3♦. You have very few points, therefore, partner is marked with around 7-11 HCP. IE. Good likelihood of an entry so that you can get a diamond ruff. 2♣ also has merit, trump length lead your length.
- b) 5♠. You have a lot of trumps and you are not really interested in trumping with so many. You also have a lot of points (13), partner, therefore, is marked with very few, no entries to their hand. When you know partner has limited points you should not lead away from a suit that contains honours. Therefore, a club or heart lead would normally be a disaster.
- c) 6♥. A passive lead. Leading a trump here could cost you a trick. You do not need to get any ruffs as you have natural trump tricks. A club lead is not attractive as if partner does not have an honour you have probably cost a trick their. Be patient and let your K of clubs, your two natural spade tricks and hope that partner can supply the additional trick to defeat the contract. Leading a diamond may only set up declarer's second suit.
- d) J♥. If only all our leads were so easy.
- e) K♥. You have trump length. Follow the rule. "with trump length, lead your length", but only if it is a good suit. This results in declarer having to trump the heart suit and will, therefore, end up with less trumps than you, resulting in a loss of "Trump Control".