

Fifth Chair



WHICH SUIT TO LEAD

The most important consideration in choosing an opening lead is choosing which suit to lead. After that choose which card to lead. The rules listed below are in the order of priority. This priority is normally the best. They are not iron clad rules. Any of these choices may be proper under certain circumstances. The opening leader must choose between several unattractive choices. This list is not necessarily complete.

Which Suit to Lead Against a Suit Contract.

- 1) Partners suit
- 2) Your own suit
- 3) An unbid suit
- 4) A singleton only if you have enough trumps and reason to believe you will be able to use them. For example: you have the Axx in trumps.
- 5) Trumps
- 6) Dummy's suit
- 7) Top on of a worthless 2 or 3 card suit. Lead of a doubleton is usually NOT a very good lead.
- 8) The second suit bid by declarer. (Very rare)

Which Suit to Lead Against a NT Contract.

- 1) Partners suit
- 2) Your own suit
- 3) An unbid major suit
- 4) An unbid minor suit

The main tool in playing a NT contract is to try to set up a long suit that you can run. This is true on defense as well as offense. Therefore, priority should be given to finding a long suit, either yours or your partners. The standard lead against NT is 4th highest from the longest and strongest. However, normally you should NOT lead 4th highest if your suit is weak, AND you have no outside aces or kings to get back into your hand to run your long suit once you get it set up.

In leading against NT, keep in mind the results of the bidding, especially if Stayman or Jacoby transfers have been used by the opponents. If responder bids Stayman, that means that he has at least one 4 card major. If he bid Stayman and then bids another suit, he has 5+ cards in that suit. If he bids jacoby, he should not have a four card major, but he probably does have a 5 card major. If the opener rebids 2 diamonds after his partners Stayman bid, then he does not have a 4 card major.

Card to Lead Against a Suit Contract Once You Have Chosen a Suit

- 1) When leading partners you should lead The ace if you have it, the top of a doubleton, the top of 3 or 4 worthless cards, the top of touching honors, and lead low if you have 3+ cards to the king or queen.
- 2) From the top of a sequence of honors (e.g. Kqj)
- 3) From the top of a broken sequence (e.g. Qj9 or Kq10)
- 4) From the top of an interior sequence (e.g. kJ109) lead the jack.
- 5) 4th highest from suit of 4 or 5 cards (yes, even including a king, but you shouldn't under lead an ace except against a NT contract).
- 6) The king from aKx (ace, king, and one or more other cards in the suit)
Most advanced players lead the A first from this holding, but K first is standard for SAYC.
- 7) The A from a doubleton AK (The A followed by the K shows partner that you have a doubleton)
- 8) The top of touching honors (Qjx)