OPENING LEADS IN SUIT CONTRACTS

A Few Tips & Suggestions Bob Morris

I. Best leads

A. Honor sequences

AKQ	QJ10	These leads are both safe and attacking.
AKJ	Q19	
KQJ	J109	
KQ10	J108	

- B. Singletons (not trump) will often result in a ruff or two!
- C. Partner's bid suit especially if it was an overcall
- D. Small doubleton can lead to a ruff

II. When to lead trumps

A. When dummy has taken a preference to declarer's 2nd suit

Example:	1♠(P)1NT(P)
	2♥ All Pass

Lead a heart!

- B. If the opponents have taken a sacrifice and your side has a majority of the high cards, trump leads may limit the number of ruffs for the declarer.
- C. Part score auctions where you have xxx or xxxx and dummy can score ruffs

Example: 1 (P) 2 All Pass

III. When to lead "passive"

- A. Low level contracts
- B. "Thin" games

Example:	1NT	2*	1♥	2♥
	2	3♠	3♣	3♦
	4		3♥	4♥

C. Very weak dummy and very strong declarer

Example:	2*	2♦	2NT	3♥*
	2NT	3*	3♠	Pass
	3♥	Pass		

D. You are "stuck" with a dangerous holding in three different suits

IV. When to lead "aggressive"

- A. <u>Confidently</u> bid games and slams.
- B. Very likely a strong running suit in the dummy

Example:	1♦	1♠
	3♦	3♠
	4 🛦	Pass

- C. Opening preempt "happily" raised to game
- D. When you can tell that the layout of the hand is very favorable for the declarer
 - i. trumps are splitting
 - ii. finesses are working for declarer
 - iii. side suits can be set up easily

V. Additional Tips and Ideas

- A. Be aware of *negative inferences* from the auction:
 - i. no double of a control bid by partner
 - ii. a skipped suit in a control-showing auction
 - iii. no negative double or support double can help define the distribution
 - iv. "dancing around 3NT" and ending in 5 of a minor the suit that no one can stop is the one to lead
- B. Occasionally it will be right to lead out the Ace from Axxx(x)(x) and hope to give partner a ruff.
- C. Rarely (it may be spectacular!) you can underlead your Ace when dummy is strong and the declarer is weak.

Example:	1♦	1♠	Usually the dummy has no shortness, so underleading
	4 🛦	Pass	Axx in a side suit may elicit a misguess from KJ in the
			dummy.

D. With no attractive lead, trying dummy's first bid suit will often be the best lead:

Example:	1♦	1 🛦	Your hand:	♠1098	
	3♦	Pass		♥ Kxxx	Try the ♠10
				♦Qx	
				♣ Qxxx	

E. If you have to lead away from a King or Queen, choose the <u>shorter</u> suit for your opening lead.

Example:	1♦	1♥	Your hand:	♦ Kxx	
	3♦	Pass		♥Jxx	Here a heart doesn't
				♦Qx	look attractive, so
				♣ Kxxxx	choose a spade
					rather than a club.