

# OPENING LEADS VS SUITS

## *A Few Tips & Suggestions*

Bob Morris

### I. Best Leads

- a) Honor sequences

AKQ	QJ10	These leads are both safe and attacking.
AKJ	QJ9	
KQJ	J109	
KQ10	J108	

- b) Singleton (not trump) will often result in a ruff (or 2)  
c) Partner's bid suit – especially if it was an overcall  
d) Small doubleton – can lead to a ruff

### II. When to Lead Trump

- a) When dummy has taken a preference to declarer's 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.  
c) Part-score auctions where you have xxx or xxxx trumps and dummy may score ruffs

Example: 1♠ (P) 2♠ All Pass

### III. When to Lead "Passive"

- a) Low level contracts  
b) "Thin" games

Examples: 1NT 2♣           1♥ 2♥  
          2♠ 3♠           3♣ 3♦  
          4♠               3♥ 4♥

- c) Very weak dummy and very strong declarer

Examples: 2♣ 2♦ 2NT 3♥\*  
          2NT 3♣ 3♠ P  
          3♥ P \*Spades

- d) You are “stuck” with a dangerous holding in three different suits

#### IV. When to Lead “Aggressive”

- a) Confidently bid games and slams  
b) Very likely a strong running suit in the dummy

Example: 1♦ 1♠  
          3♦ 3♠  
          4♠

- 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 the dummy is strong and the declarer is weak

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

This is not without risk – you need an understanding partner!

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

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

- e. If you have to lead away from a King or Queen, choose the shorter suit for your opening lead

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