

Defense II: Leads vs Suit Contracts

Making an effective lead against suit contracts has the same major issues as with NT contracts and made more complicated by the presence of a trump suit. Again recall that the emphasis here is on matchpoint duplicate, where the difficulty is increased because it is not clear at the outset whether your objective is to beat the contract or minimize overtricks.

Before you select a lead, review the bidding. Suggestion: If the bidding is not competitive, try to picture the opponent's hands during the auction, which suit and card you'll lead if RHO becomes declarer.

Suggested Lead Priority vs Suit Contracts

- Suit headed by AKx(x)
- Singleton if trying for a ruff: x
- Safe honor sequence: KQJ(x), QJT(x)
- Worthless doubleton: xx
- Near safe honor sequence: KQTx(x), QJ9x(x), JT8x(x)
- Long suit (4th best): xxx(x)
- Safe trump lead: xx, x(x)x, xxx(x), A(x)x, K(x)x
- Ace (non-trump): Axx(x)
- Small from Kxx(x)
- Small from xxx(x)

AKx(x)

If you are fortunate enough to be dealt a non-trump suit headed by the AK, lead the Ace to view dummy and get a signal from partner.

Singleton Leads

Lead a small singleton from a suit not bid by the opponents when you have a realistic chance to obtain a ruff. If you have your own suit with an honor sequence and four trump, consider trying to run Declarer out of trumps, especially if by trumping you are giving up a natural trump trick. Leading a singleton honor, K, Q, J or T, usually gives away the suit and should be avoided.

Doubleton Leads

Leads from a worthless doubleton are more effective than once thought. Similar to a singleton lead, your hand should provide a reasonable chance for a ruff, e.g. you have more than one trump.

Quiz 14

Assume RHO is the Declarer, Hearts are trump and no other suit was bid. Select your lead.

	Your Hand	Your Lead		Your Hand	Your Lead
1.	♠ AK6 ♥ 954 ♦ T72 ♣ 9872		2.	♠ AT32 ♥ K64 ♦ QJT3 ♣ 52	
3.	♠ J5 ♥ Q4 ♦ J97652 ♣ K82		4.	♠ 64 ♥ T873 ♦ 85 ♣ KQJ42	
5.	♠ AT7 ♥ KJ9 ♦ 852 ♣ AQ72		6.	♠ QT5 ♥ AQ5 ♦ 86532 ♣ 84	
7.	♠ Q53 ♥ 964 ♦ 5 ♣ AJ9742		8.	♠ J94 ♥ Q4 ♦ J976 ♣ A542	