

Cardiff Bridge Tutors

How to Lead against Suit Contracts

Leads	
v. suit contracts	<p>A <u>K</u> <u>A</u> K x <u>K</u> Q 10 <u>K</u> Q x K <u>J</u> 10 K <u>10</u> 9 <u>Q</u> J 10</p> <p><u>Q</u> J x <u>J</u> 10 x 10 x <u>x</u> <u>10</u> 9 x 9 <u>8</u> 7 x 10 x x <u>x</u> H x <u>x</u></p> <p>H x x <u>x</u> H x x <u>x</u> x H x x <u>x</u> x x <u>x</u> x x <u>x</u> x x <u>x</u> x x</p>
v. NT contracts	<p><u>A</u> K x (<u>x</u>) <u>A</u> <u>J</u> 10 x <u>K</u> Q 10 <u>K</u> Q x K <u>J</u> 10 K <u>10</u> 9 <u>Q</u> J 10</p> <p><u>Q</u> J x <u>J</u> 10 x 10 x <u>x</u> <u>10</u> 9 x 9 <u>8</u> 7 x 10 x x <u>x</u> H x <u>x</u></p> <p>H x x <u>x</u> H x x <u>x</u> x H x x <u>x</u> x x <u>x</u> x <u>x</u> x x <u>x</u> x x x</p>

Two types of lead.

Leads are described as :-

- Active
 - When you try to win the trick or set up a winning trick
- Passive
 - You play a card that will lose anyway to gain more information (See what is in Dummy)

When leading against suit contracts it is usual to make a passive lead.

You use the lead to tell your partner something about the shape of the suit you have chosen to lead.

You may be able to indicate honours that you hold or that a suit is short (singleton or doubleton) but this doesn't become apparent until you lead again.

Partner needs to be alert in order to understand what your leads are showing.

Your first decision!

The first decision is to choose the suit from which you are going to lead.

You will need to look for clues from the bidding.

- Did your partner bid, a suit or a lead indicating double?
- Did the opposition make a preference bid
- Were there unbid suits?
- The shape of your hand

Partner bid.

If your partner bid, then lead from that suit if you can. Partner has indicated some strength by bidding.

Here are some examples

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

North over-called ♠, they must have at least two honours in ♠s so South should lead to North's suit.

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣	X
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

South's double of East's Stayman bid is directing your lead. South wants North to lead ♣s when they can.

The opposition make a preference bid.

Sometimes the opposition have to make a preference bid ie they cannot agree a suit and so one or other partner chooses the least disagreeable suit! This often happens when the points are fairly evenly spread.

Here are some examples of preference bids.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

East doesn't support West's opening or have an alternative to offer. West rebids their 5+ card suit. There is a possibility that East has only 2♠s

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣	All Pass

East prefers West's ♣ suit, they have 2 or 3 ♣s

When the opposition make a preference bid it is often wise to lead the trump suit.

This will remove trumps from the short hand and decrease the opportunity of ruffing for extra tricks.

Unbid Suits.

If the opposition did not bid a suit then it is probable that one or both partners are short in this suit. They may look for opportunities to ruff this suit. If you have winners then take them early. If not then consider another suit. Leading a trump may be good to decrease the chance of them making that ruff.

The Shape of your hand.

Long suits are bad and short suits may be good.
Short suits are good if you can void yourself in the suit AND Partner is strong enough to be able to take the lead and lead that suit back to you for a ruff.

Suit chosen – pick a card!

Here is the choice of card from best to worst-

1. Top of a sequence
2. NOT top of an internal sequence (or near sequence)
3. Doubleton
 - If partner bid it
4. Singleton
 - If your hand is weak otherwise choose another suit
5. Low from an honour
6. MUD

1. Some Good Leads

A K 7 4
3
K Q J 6
K Q 7 6
Q J 10 4
Q J 5 2

2. Average leads

8 3
8 5 2
Q 9 5 2

3. Poor leads

J 4
K 7 5 2
K J 5 3
A 10 7 4 ○ ○ ○

**Never
underlead
an ACE!**