

## Opening Leads

Opening lead are one of the most difficult areas of the game; it is the only time that that a card is played before dummy is seen. They provide an opportunity to give partner useful information and get the defence off on the right foot.

There are a number of widely-used standard opening leads

### Leading honour cards (A,K,Q,J)

The lead of an honour card is usually the top card from a *sequence of touching honours (known as overleading)*. These are honour cards that are next to each other in terms of rank.

For example (card to lead is underlined):

AK72      QJ10      J1094      KQJ6      KJ108

If we lead an honour card partner knows that we (a) have the card immediately below the card that was led, and (b) we do not have the card immediately above the card that was led. For example, the lead of the queen shows the jack but denies the king – if we had KQJ then we should lead the king.

### Leading from suits containing non-touching honour cards

Typically, the *fourth highest* card in the suit is led.

For example:

K764      Q10874      KJ53      A9762      AJ63

NOTE: Do not lead from Aces against suit contracts. If you must lead the suit, it is better to lead the Ace. However, it is usually preferable to lead another suit.

### Leading from suits containing no honour cards

When leading from a collection of small cards, the *second highest* card in the suit is the conventional lead

For example:

9764      87532      10852      763

## Doubletons

If leading from a doubleton though, you should always lead the *higher* of your two cards in the suit. This is the only occasion you may lead an honour card without the card beneath it.

For example:

82            Q3            104            J5

## Singletons

A singleton in a non-trump suit can be a good choice of lead against a suit contract. Partner may hold the ace, in which case they can win the trick and return the suit for you to trump.

### WHAT IS THE BEST CHOICE OF LEAD?

There is no magic formula for finding the best opening lead on any given hand. Any one of the four suits could be correct on any given hand. As a general principle though, against **No-Trump** contracts it is best to lead the *longest* suit you hold that has not been bid by the opponents in the auction. Against **suit** contracts, it is generally best to lead from a suit where you hold *strength*, preferably a sequence of touching honours. Again, it is generally best to stay away from suits bid by the opponents unless you hold great strength there (e.g. KQJ10).

Above all, however:

***If partner has bid a suit in the auction, you should lead that suit unless you have VERY good reason to do otherwise.***

This is especially true if they have overcalled, as they should have a good quality suit.