

## §28. Opening Leads Against Suit Contracts.

### Notes on the basic principles to be taught in this section.

- This is a tricky topic, with some subtle points to be made. The basic idea is to get learners to understand that there are four types of lead (*shortage*, *sequence*, *passive* and *attacking*). Which to choose may be dictated by the type of hand dealt to the player on lead and also, maybe crucially, the opposition bidding. There are copious examples in the student notes and two Quizzes.
- It is important to emphasise that opening leads are difficult and many contracts slip through because the wrong (or an unlucky) opening lead is chosen. That's part of the game.
- As in §26. *Opening Leads Against No-trump Contracts* the *Auction Slips* display the recommended opening lead in an unconventional format (it's at the bottom right-hand corner). Teachers may wish to cut these leads off, giving no guidance, or force students to make a lead face downwards before getting one of the other players to reveal what they should have led.

Four hands need setting up (overleaf); all are complete deals.

**Hand 1** (Hand 1 in the student notes, rotated 180° so that North is declarer in both 3NT and 4♥).

The focus is on East. What should he lead against (a) 3NT and (b) 4♥?

Firstly, against 3NT, East leads his fourth-highest Spade. That wins his side the race to get the Spades set up before North can get his Hearts going. It's a classic *tempo hand*.

Secondly, against 4♥, a Spade lead into the ♠A Q gives away a trick with no gain of tempo. Here, it's best is to lead a red card, either cashing the top trumps or passively leading a Diamond. It's important for learners to get the idea that getting off lead and allowing declarer to make all the running is no bad thing.

(The East cards appear in the student notes as Example 12 in **3. Passive Leads**).

**Hand 2** (Hand 2 in the student notes, rotated 90° so that East is declarer in 4♠).

The focus is on South. What should he lead?

In this example and the next one (Hand 3) the bidding plays an important role. Here it is (East first) 1♠ – 3♠ – 4♠. With no evidence of long suits around and with nothing attractive to lead it may well be best to lead a trump. Note that a Heart lead and a Diamond lead give away tricks (any Diamond lead gives away a trick, note) and a Club lead opens up a **frozen suit**. This last term may need explaining, but it is important. After a trump lead declarer will probably end up losing a Heart, a Diamond and two Clubs.

**Hand 3** (Hand 3 in the student notes, played in 4♠ by South).

The focus is on West. What should he lead?

The identical cards are on lead as in Hand 2. However, the bidding has been different: (South first) 1♠ – 2♥ – 2♠ – 4♠. Here, there is strong evidence of a long side-suit in dummy on which declarer will dump losers. Accordingly, West should try and grab some tricks before the rats get at them. An attacking low Club lead works here. The ♦A is a poor shot and a low Diamond a very poor shot.

**Hand 4** (Does not appear in the notes, but the North cards form Example 1 in **1. Short Suit Leads**).

This is a simple example of a shortage lead – North leads his singleton Spade after East-West have bid (West first): 1♥ – 2♦ – 2♥ – 4♥. South must co-operate by taking the ♠A and returning the suit. Now comes a Club to the ♣A and a second Spade ruff. Note the truism here that: *The weaker your hand is, the more effective a short-suit lead is*. It's not that surprising that South has two Aces when North has a blizzard, is it?

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hand 1</b></p> <p>North plays in 3NT and also in 4♥; ♠5 and ♦7 leads.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ A Q ♥ Q J 10 6 5 ♦ K J 9 ♣ K 7 4</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding-right: 10px;">♠ 10 9 8 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ 6 4 2 ♣ Q J 6 3</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W                  E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> </td> <td style="text-align: center; padding-left: 10px;">♠ K J 7 5 4 ♥ A K ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ 9 2</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ 6 3 2 ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ A Q 10 ♣ A 10 8 5</p>	♠ 10 9 8 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ 6 4 2 ♣ Q J 6 3	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W                  E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W                  E	S	♠ K J 7 5 4 ♥ A K ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ 9 2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hand 2</b></p> <p>East plays in 4♠; ♠4 lead.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ None ♥ J 9 8 7 6 3 ♦ J 7 5 2 ♣ Q 8 7</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding-right: 10px;">♠ A Q J 6 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ J 3 2</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W                  E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> </td> <td style="text-align: center; padding-left: 10px;">♠ K 10 9 8 3 2 ♥ A Q ♦ Q 9 ♣ A 10 6</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ 7 5 4 ♥ K 2 ♦ A 10 6 3 ♣ K 9 5 4</p>	♠ A Q J 6 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ J 3 2	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W                  E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W                  E	S	♠ K 10 9 8 3 2 ♥ A Q ♦ Q 9 ♣ A 10 6
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