

Opening Leads vs. No Trump

General Approach:

Listen to the bidding.

- Usually, lead partner's bid suit.
- Tend to avoid suits bid (or implied) by the opponents.
- Against slam, make a low-risk lead

With a five-card or longer suit

- Lead fourth best OR
- Top of a sequence or an interior sequence

With a four-card suit be cautious

- Leads from a sequence are good. J 10 9 4
- Lead from A Q 4 3 or J 6 5 2 are generally unattractive.

If all other leads are risky then lead a short suit (usually 3-card)

- Top of nothing
- Lowest card if 3-card suit has an honor

Examples:

Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ A Q 7 3 2 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ J 10 9 8 ♣ 7

The three of spades is an ideal lead against a notrump contract. If the opponents have bid spades, however, you should change your plans and lead the jack of diamonds.

Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ A Q 4 3 ♥ J 10 9 8 ♦ 6 5 3 2 ♣ 10

Here, a spade lead is much less likely to be successful in establishing length winners because you have only a four-card suit, and the risk of giving declarer an undeserved trick with the king does not stand to gain enough to be worthwhile. Lead the jack of hearts.

Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ 6 5 3 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ K J 10 9 6 ♣ 8 2

Lead the jack of diamonds (top of an interior sequence) even if the opponents have bid the suit.

Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ Q J 10 8 4 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ A 6 ♣ K Q J

Lead the queen of spades. A club lead would establish two tricks more quickly, but your goal is to build up length winners.

Contract: 1 NT

You hold: ♠ K J 7 4 3 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ Q 7

Lead the four of spades.

Quiz: What is your lead?

1. Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ Q J 10 ♥ 8 7 ♦ K 10 7 6 5 ♣ K 4 3

2. Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ A Q 4 2 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ Q 9 8 6 2

3. Contract: 3 NT (the opponents have bid hearts)

You hold: ♠ Q 10 8 5 ♥ Q 10 8 6 3 ♦ A 7 ♣ 3 2

4. Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ Q J 10 9 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ 2 ♣ J 8 7 5 3

5. Contract: 2 NT

You hold: ♠ A K Q ♥ A Q 7 6 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 6 3 2

6. Contract: 6 NT

You hold: ♠ K 10 9 8 7 ♥ J 10 9 ♦ 10 8 ♣ J 7 5

7. Contract: 3 NT (partner has bid diamonds)

You hold: ♠ 10 8 7 6 4 3 2 ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ J

8. Contract: 3 NT

You hold: ♠ A Q 4 3 ♥ J 10 9 8 ♦ 6 5 3 2 ♣ 10