

CASE FOR THE DEFENCE SESSION 2

MORE ABOUT OPENING LEADS – WHICH SUIT, WHICH CARD? THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NT and SUIT

Here's an example of a deal that can be played in Game for either No Trumps or a Major.

The bidding would go something like this:

S: 1S W: p N: 2D E: p
S: 2H W: p N: 4S or 3NT all pass

Of course South considered the vulnerability and his own losing trick count when opening 1 Spade.

Board: 3	♠ QJ9	
Dealer: S	♥ 82	
Vul.: EW	♦ KQJ109	
♠ K86	♣ KQ3	♠ 72
♥ 54		♥ AQJ96
♦ 742		♦ 85
♣ A9876		♣ J1054
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♠ A10543	14
N 3 4 2 4	♥ K1073	7 HCP 8
S 3 4 2 4	♦ A63	
E	♣ 2	11
W		

North has made a choice based on a number of factors – bidding 3NT shows a decent holding in Clubs, the unbid suit. It also leaves room for South to rebid Spades.

Bidding 3S straight off shows strong support for Spades and no interest in NT because of the weak Heart doubleton.

Now for the lead:

West leads into 4 Spades – what are the considerations? Hitting Partner's suit is the primary one. It's a toss up between Hearts and Clubs. What's your instinct here?

East leads to 3NT – thinking what? What does North's bidding tell you?

Next, take a long look at your own hand. What are your strengths? West – the AC and the KS.

East, what are yours? The Hearts – only the King is missing and you know where it is because South would be crazy to bid the suit without an honour.

These are the issues that you must consider – put your hand in context with the bidding and see where the strengths are. Then remember to LEAD THROUGH STRENGTH AND AWAY FROM WEAKNESS.

And remember the other one – WHICH SUIT(S) MUST I TRY TO ESTABLISH FOR LATER. OR FOR QUICK RUFFS?

Now that you can see all four hands, take a moment to work out where NS losers come from – which tricks are you certain to take – first in Spades, second in NT. REMEMBER THE CONSIDERATIONS ARE DIFFERENT FOR THE TWO TYPES OF CONTRACT.

OPENING LEADS – THE TABLE

I took this from a little book I bought second hand decades ago from my cousin's bookshop in Queensland. It's called Opening Leads and was written by Charles H Goren, a pioneer of what is now the Standard American bidding system. I've tweaked it to fit in with modern bidding styles, to some extent.

If you see something different from your system, let's talk about it. The table is based on common sense, putting your interests first and not giving anything away to Declarer. Whatever tricks he makes, try not to make it easier for him.

We'll talk through it, one side at a time, starting with suit contracts.

The thing to remember when you put these suggestions into practice is that you must keep other things in mind – your hand, your partner's supposed hand, and what the bidding tells you.

A prime factor is to lead your partner's suit if he has bid one, and the first suit if he has bid two suits. He's really trying to get your attention. Lead the top of low cards, the 4th best or lowest if you have an honour. Or if you're more comfortable doing it the other way, always lead the top of his suit.