

## Leads Against Suit Contracts

Some of the principles discussed about leads against No Trump will not apply here. At No Trump we are concerned primarily with building up tricks out of small cards. A five card suit is therefore a better weapon than a 4 card suit.

However against a suit contract you should be keeping your eye only on the first two or three rounds of the suit.

Holding AKQJ against No Trump you know you can take four tricks. Against a suit contract you are reasonably sure you can take two tricks, maybe three, but almost surely you will not take four.

Holding K Q 6 4 2 against No Trump the correct lead is the 4, but against a suit contract you should lead the King to make sure you build up at least one trick.

Holding A K 6 4 2 against No Trump, the correct lead is the 4, hoping you will take tricks with the remaining cards. Against a suit contract that lead would be absurd. The correct lead is the King. You do not hope to take more than two tricks.

You may have heard, incorrectly, about never leading away from a King against a suit contract.

Forget it.

The same principle applies here as against No Trump. Of course it is unattractive to lead away from an honour when you don't hold a sequence, but often that is the best chance of setting up tricks, even against a suit contract.

However, there is one difference. At No Trump it is quite proper to lead away from an Ace. At a suit contract, to lead away from an Ace is unorthodox, and for beginners should be avoided at all costs.

If that suit must be led, lead the Ace, not a small card.

The reason is at No Trump you cannot lose your Ace; at a suit contract, if you lead away from it, it may be trumped the next time.

Leading partner's suit against a suit contract.

There is a popular belief that one should always lead your highest. This is not true. If you have two cards of the suit, yes, you should lead the higher.

If you hold three worthless cards you lead the highest. This is a matter of agreement, some people play the middle card to try and avoid ambiguity about it being maybe the top of a doubleton. If you have supported partner, it is always right to play the top of three worthless cards, as they will know you have not supported with a doubleton.

If you have a sequence in partner's suit you also lead the highest.

If you hold four small cards in their suit you lead the lowest so that partner has a count on how many cards are outstanding.

But now we come to the far more critical situation, when you hold three cards to an honour, either the King, or the Queen.

Example, you hold K 5 4.

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If Declarer holds Q 3 2, the lead of the K will allow them to make the Q, but if you lead away from the K, the Q will be trapped.

Example, you hold Q 5 4.

If Declarer holds K J 2, the lead of the Q will allow them to take two tricks, but leading away from the Q will ensure they can only take one trick.

These two examples are extremely important, and beginners take a long time to absorb them. Study them until you understand them.