

The Hold-Up Play



Usually, this is a technique for NOTRUMP, but let's first look at suit contracts:

In general, if the opponents lead a suit in which you will have to lose a trick (no matter what) it is best to lose it early.

West leads the ♥Q. You are in a spade contract.

	<u>Dummy</u>	
	♥76	
<u>West</u>	□	<u>East</u>
♥QJ109		♥K843

You
♥A52

Full deals:

♠2 ♥76 ♦KQJ10 ♣A76543	♠6543 ♥K843 ♦A3 ♣QJ10	♠A1098 ♥76 ♦KQJ107 ♣54	♠4 ♥K8543 ♦932 ♣QJ103
♠107 ♥QJ109 ♦9876 ♣K98	♠532 ♥QJ109 ♦A86 ♣A98	♠AKQJ98 ♥A52 ♦542 ♣2	♠KQJ76 ♥A2 ♦54 ♣K762

In 4♠, South ducks the ♥Q lead. In 4♣, South ducks the ♥Q lead.

For Notrump, there is a “Rule of 7,” but I prefer the rule of thinking.
 Rule of 7: Subtract the number of cards you have in the suit led from seven and hold up that number of times. For example, with Axx opposite xx, hold up twice (7-5). With Axx opposite xxx, hold up only one time (7-6).

♠ 753 ♥ K6 ♦ J4 ♣ AKJ1087	♠ 862 ♥ Q7 ♦ KQ853 ♣ Q94	♠ 984 ♥ 764 ♦ AQ1098 ♣ A4	♠ K1032 ♥ 985 ♦ 54 ♣ 9765
♠ KQ109 ♥ J1043 ♦ 10976 ♣ 3			♠ QJ5 ♥ KQJ10 ♦ K32 ♣ 1083
♠ AJ4 ♥ A9852 ♦ A2 ♣ 652		♠ A76 ♥ A32 ♦ J76 ♣ KQJ2	

West leads the ♠K against 3NT. West leads the ♠2 to East’s Jack (3NT).

West has opened 1♥ and leads a heart against 3NT. Dummy has three low hearts and you have Axx. What are your thoughts?

East opens 2♥ and West leads the ♥3. Dummy has ♥765 and you have ♥A42. What are your thoughts?

East opens 2♥ and West leads the ♥K. Dummy has ♥76 and you have ♥A52. What are your thoughts?

With AKx opposite xxx, the Queen is led. What are your thoughts?

Sometimes, you will hold up a card lower than the ace.