

Vic's Tips

By Baloney Bill

LEADS AGAINST NO TRUMP CONTRACTS

Suggested leads against no trump contracts are pretty much the same as against suit contracts. But let's just focus today on no trump leads. Your choice of lead should always consider the bidding; pay attention! Choice of leads must consider the **suit** as well as the **card**.

So which suit?

- If your partner competed in the bidding, e.g. 1NT – 1H (partner) – 3NT – PPP, it's probably best to lead her suit (a heart). If you have only 2 cards in her suit, lead the top card.
- If your RHO opened a major suit and ends up playing a NT contract, do not lead the suit he bid.
- If RHO opened 1NT, her partner employs Stayman, and opener responds 2D, what does that reveal about her holdings in the major suits? _____. So, lead a card from one of your majors. If you have a 5-card major, for sure lead it, unless it's headed by a jack or ten and you have no aces, kings or queens that might provide an entry to your hand; in that case, lead your shorter major – odds are partner just might like that suit.
- If RHO opens 1NT and LHO jumps to 3NT, consider leading a major. LHO has points, but no 4-card major.
- If opponents bid 3 different suits and end up in a NT contract, lead the unbid suit.

OK, so these are suggestions, not hard and fast rules. You must also consider the cards you have in your hand and **which card you will select lead**.

- The safest lead is the top card of a 3-card sequence. The bidding is less important in this case.
 - What if you have a 4-card sequence?
- Top of a 2-card sequence is usually OK, but sometimes it benefits the no trump declarer.
- If you have no sequences, consider BOSTON leads, which means _____
or _____.
 - When my partner leads a 2, 3 or 4, she typically means that she has an Ace, King or Queen (she has led the bottom of something). If I can take the trick, I lead it back! Do not be afraid to underlead an ace against no trump contracts (this is one key difference when considering leads against suit contracts).
 - When my partner leads a 7, 8, 9 or 10, she typically means that she has nothing higher than the card she led. If I can take the trick, I find another suit to lead. If I can't take the trick (e.g. I have the king, and I suspect declarer has the ace), I play low, keeping my king hidden. Oftentimes declarer does not ask questions about leads, so he won't know who holds the king.
 - When my partner leads a 5 or a 6, she tells me that she holds the jack (no other honors).
 - BOSTON often highly influences the suit which you lead, if you don't want to confuse partner.
- Some players lead the 4th best card from their longest and strongest suit. Why? What information does that provide partner (and the declarer)?
 - Subtracting the "value" of the card led (e.g. a 5) from 11 (answer is 6), reveals the number of higher cards in the other three hands. So. if dummy has the 8, 9 and jack in the suit led, and you have the K and 7, then declarer only has one card higher than the 5.
 - If you think you might like this system, then ALWAYS use it; otherwise you will confuse your partner when leading cards with a value of, say, eight and lower.