

## Reading The Opening Lead

Whether you are Declarer or Defender-Not-On-Lead, you should always spend a moment at trick one when Dummy is laid out to try and deduce what holding the Opening Lead is from. It can often be very revealing as to where the defence see their tricks coming from and can often provide information about how the various suits are distributed around the table.

### What are our Lead Conventions

Recall, we have agreed that (once we have chosen which suit to lead) we will always lead as follows from these various different holdings:

<u>If you hold</u>	<u>You should lead</u>	<u>Example (best lead is underlined)</u>			
A sequence of honours	Top of the sequence	<u>K</u> QT85	<u>A</u> K43	<u>J</u> T98	<u>Q</u> J654
A doubleton	Top of the doubleton	<u>A</u> 2	<u>9</u> 6	<u>Q</u> 2	<u>T</u> 9
Four plus with an honour*	Fourth highest	K87 <u>3</u> 2	Q76 <u>3</u>	J98 <u>7</u> 3	KJ9 <u>3</u>
Three with an honour*	Third highest	K <u>8</u> 3	Q <u>6</u> 2	J <u>8</u> 5	K <u>9</u> 8
Three small cards	Middle-Up-Down (MUD)	<u>T</u> 84	<u>6</u> 42	<u>8</u> 53	<u>T</u> 93
Four small cards	Second-then-Third	<u>9</u> 754	<u>8</u> 652	<u>5</u> 432	<u>T</u> 875
An interior sequence	Top of the interior sequence	K <u>J</u> T9	A <u>Q</u> JT3	K <u>T</u> 984	A <u>J</u> T92
A trump	When leading trumps, whatever your holding, lead the lowest.				
*If the Honour is an Ace	This is often a poor choice when defending against a suit contract. If you do choose to lead this against a suit contract, lead the Ace.				

### Using The Information

Consider the following dummies with the auction shown underneath (Everyone is vulnerable and Declarer is the first bid each time, we are fourth to bid – our hand is shown to the right). What can we deduce about the opening lead? sometimes we will not know very much, but sometimes they can be very revealing with a little imagination.

Dummy		Dummy	
♠ KT4		♠ AKJ8	
♥ QJT3		♥ 4	
♦ Q8732	Our Hand	♦ KQJ83	Our Hand
♣ 5	♠ Q3	♣ AK5	♠ 932
	♥ K872		♥ A6
Lead: Queen of Clubs	♦ K965	Lead: Two of Diamonds	♦ A96
	♣ A72		♣ T9864
1S: Pass : 3S : Pass		Pass : 3H : Double : Pass	
4S: Pass : Pass : Pass		3S : Pass : 4S : Pass	
		Pass : Pass	

### The Importance of Following The Rules

All of the above is only possible if we both agree to adopt a consistent set of leading conventions *and to always stick to them!* If we lead cards at random, our partner will never be able to reliably deduce what we are leading from. If you follow the leading rules above, you will improve your partner's defence. She can't do it on her own!