Opening Leads

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Jane Youngberg



Today's Presentation

1. Rational

2.Suit Contracts

3.No Trump Contracts

Current Changes to Opening Leads Unique Books – focus on fact rather than opinion

"Winning Suit Contract Leads"
"Winning Notrump Leads"
By David Bird and Taf Anthias

- •Computer Simulations to analyze the best opening leads
- •Generated <u>5000</u> deals for the west hand that match the North South Bidding. For example 1S, P, 2S, P, 4S.
- •Determine which lead works best at both $\ensuremath{\mathsf{IMPs}}_{_4}$ and Match-points

Advantages of using the guidelines presented in the books

- 1. The guidelines are based on analytical data rather than opinion.
- 2. You will learn more about leads than would be possible in a lifetime of playing bridge 3+ times a week.
- 3. You will find your choice of opening leads easier as you will have a sound basis to draw upon.
- 4. Your partners will compliment you more often on your opening lead or criticize you less often

The Importance of Opening Leads

- 1. You are on defense 2/3 of the game. (not including being the dummy)
- 2. If you make the best opening lead, you will have an advantage of almost ¼ of a trick. This is a greater advantage than the difference between a world class player's defense compared to a club player.

Surprising Results

Opening Leads in a Suit Contract

E/W vulnerable

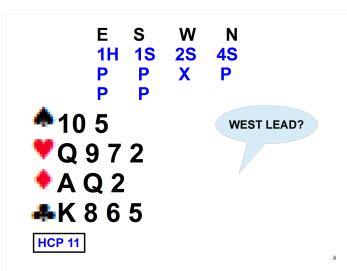
N/S not vul

E	S	W	N
1H	1S	2S	4S
P	P	X	P
P	P		

Lead	IMP Down 4	MP Average Tricks
5S	28.2%	5.72
2H	32.8%	5.87
AD	28.5%	5.71
5C	31.1%	5.80

"Bergen for the Defense" pg 80 "When the opponents sacrifice, always lead a trump, even if you have a singleton"

"Eddie Kantar teaches Modern Bridge Defense" pg 33 "Your side has the most points, yet they wind up playing the hand (the nerve!) Lead a trump."



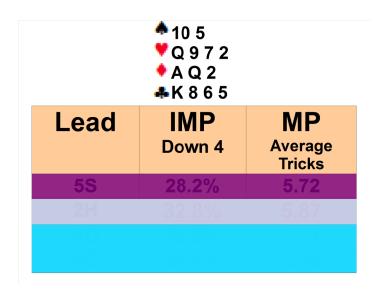
Bidding: 1S P 2S P P P Your Hand

* 8 2

* A 9 6 3

* 7 5

* K Q 8 5 4



Bidding: 1S P 2S P P	Your Hand P	
Lead	IMP	MP
KC	14.5%	4.40
7D	<u>19.2%</u>	<u>4.46</u>
AH	14.5%	4.30
2S	14.5%	4.31

Bidding:

1S P 3S P **4S** P

LEAD?

Your Hand

1064

6 2

K 10 7 6 3

Q J 6

Bidding:

1S P 2S P 4S P P

LEAD?

A 9 8 4

KQ93

Q 10 6 3

Bidding:

1S P 3S P 4S P

Your Hand

1064

6 2

K 10 7 6 3

🙇 QJ6

Lead	IMP	MP
48	8.3%	2.25
6H	<u>10.2%</u>	<u>2.31</u>
6D	7.4%	2.20
QC	9.8%	2.25

Bidding: 1S P 2S P

4S P P

Your Hand

A 9 8 4 KQ93

• 5

Q 10 6 3

Lead	IMP	MP
48	64.1%	3.88
KH	68.8%	4.0
5D	<u>73.0%</u>	<u>4.13</u>
3C	61.9%	3.84

Leading from a Doubleton

Leading from a doubleton is not such a bad lead, especially a worthless doubleton (without an honour).

General Conclusions

- 1. A singleton is a "gift from above"
- 2. Leads from doubletons are much more effective than most players think.
- 3. The lead of an unsupported Ace is sometimes the best lead.

- 4. When the opposition have stolen the bid, do not lead a trump. Generally, the same is true with splinter bids.
- 5. Often avoid leading from an honour and three small such as Q 9 7 2.
- 6. KJxx, or KJ10x. Try to find another lead.

Auction: 1NT 3NT	♣ K Q 5 2♥ J 9 5♦ A 10 7 4♣ 8 7	
Lead	IMP Beats Contract	MP Average Tricks
KS	27%	<u>3.72</u>
2S	21.8%	3.34
5H	23.1%	3.39
4D	16%	3.2
8C	20%	3.32

<u>More</u> Surprising Results

Opening Leads in a NT Contract

Leading from an honour sequence in NT

Old: Best to have a sequence of 3 honours

New: Leading from a sequence of 2 honours is a good lead in NT.

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E S W N 1NT P 3NT P P P



- KQ52
- ♥ J 9 5 HCP 10
- A 10 7 4
- **4** 8 7

★ 43 **♥** 54 **♦** 9642 **♣**KQ832

1NT – 3NT Auction

1.After an auction of 1NT - 3NT, the defenders

hold 7.2 cards between them in each of the majors. Declarer and dummy hold 5.8

2. Even when a minor suit holding is better, it

♣3 2.37 tricks **♠4** 2.68 tricks

is probably right to lead a major.

- 3. A passive lead from a major is better than leading from four cards to an honor in a minor
- 4.Leading from KQ... or QJ... in a major is an okay lead!

How many points does your partner have?

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Leading Against a 1 NT Auction 1NT P P P

- 1) Leading a major is not a such a priority as in a 1NT -3NT auction
- 2) Active leads from 4 card suits (Q 10 4 2) are more promising as you will often find partner with values
- 3)Leads from 5 card suits (A Q 9 7 2) are less attractive than in a 3NT auction as you may need 5 tricks in the suit to beat the contract

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Auction: 1NT 3NT	♠ K 10 5 ♥ A 2 ♦ 10 6 5 4 3 2 ♣ 8 4
	O -T

Lead	IMP Beats Contract	MP Average Tricks
5S	18.1%	3.34
AH	27.8%	<u>3.55</u>
4D	19.8%	3.44
8C	15.2%	3.28

Recurring Themes

- 1)Lead from a sequence of two honors. Previously, the understanding was to lead only from a sequence of 3 honours. KQJxx now KQxxx the K is a sound lead!!!!
- 2)When your hand is weak, try to find your partner's strengths.
- 3)Focus on the majors in certain auctions

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Which card is best from this holding? Auction: 1NT- 3NT

- KQ752 lead the K
- The top honor is best from AK xx then KQ xx then QJ xx,
- Although the top honor will occasionally save declarer a guess, this reduces marginally the benefit of such a lead
- Interior sequence: from K J 10 x, the benefit of leading an interior sequence has some advantage but not from K 10 9 x and even less from K 9 8 3

Conclusions

- 1)1NT-3NT or 2NT 3NT or 1NT 2C(stayman) 2D 3NT Generally try to lead a major.
- 2) Lead a short major when partner has points
- 3)KQxxx-lead the K

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