



First Steps in Defence

The Opening Lead

The first card played to the first trick is called the Opening Lead

In no-trump contracts it is good for both declarer and defence to set up length tricks.

The defence has the advantage that it makes the first lead to the first trick.

When defending a no-trump contract lead your longest suit.

Which card should we lead? A little card, or an Honour?

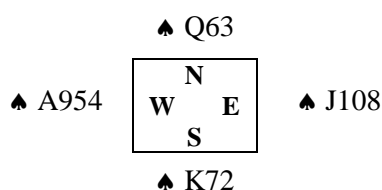
1. ♠ AKQ72 When we have both ace and king of a suit we lead the ace. We lead *ace from ace-king*
2. ♥ KQJ83 When we have a *sequence of touching honours* we lead the highest
 ♣ QJ1064 From king, queen, jack, eight, three we lead the king
 From queen, jack, ten, six, four we lead the queen.
We lead *top of a sequence*.
3. ♦ Q73 When we have one or two honours in a suit, but not a sequence, we lead the 4th highest card
 ♠ KJ62 From queen, seven, three we lead the three (third highest from 3)
 From king, jack, six, two we lead the two.
We lead *low from an honour*.
4. ♥ 9732 It follows logically that if we lead a middle card (6,7,8 or 9) we have no honour in the suit
 ♠ 8643 From nine, seven, two we lead the 7, never the 2.
 From 8643 we lead the 6, never the 3.
We lead *a middle card* from a suit with no honours.

Rules for Leading:

Top of an honour sequence (and from AK)

A low card promises an honour, a middle card denies an honour

‘Aces Are for Killing Kings’



South is declarer and **West** is on lead. This is the spade suit
 If **West** leads ♠A, **North** plays ♠3 and **South** ♠2,
 Later **South** makes one trick with ♠Q (♠7 to ♠Q)
 and one with ♠K (♠6 to ♠K), two spade tricks altogether.
 But if **West** leads another suit, hanging on to his ♠A, then
 declarer can make only one spade trick, since ♠A will beat ♠K

The lead of ♠A is not good because it helps declarer rather than the defending side.

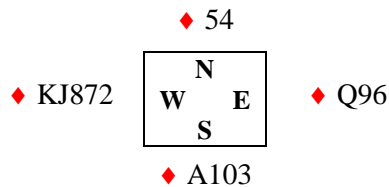
“Don’t waste an ace”



First Steps in Defence

The Third Hand

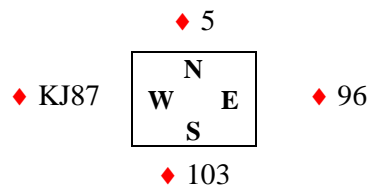
After partner has led, dummy goes down. Declarer plays a card from dummy and it is the turn of Third Hand



Following our earlier advice West leads ♦7, (4th highest of his longest suit) against a no-trump contract

On ♦7 North plays ♦4.

Suppose that East plays ♦Q and South wins the trick with ♦A
That leaves:



Now that ♦A is out of the game, ♦K and ♦J are the highest remaining cards. They will make tricks later when one of the defenders wins a trick in another suit and leads a diamond.

Later, when ♦K and ♦J have won the second and third tricks in diamonds only West has diamonds left, so ♦8 and ♦7 make two more tricks. (They cannot be trumped at no-trump.)

The queen that East played to the first trick played a vital part in taking four diamond tricks.

If East had played a small diamond to the first trick South could win with ♦10, keeping his ace.

Third Hand, East in the example, should play his *highest card* to the first trick.

We call this technique *Third Hand High*

When partner leads a low card, and we have a card higher than the card dummy plays, we play our highest card.

“Third Hand Does What It Can”