

Improvers' Lesson 6: Opening Leads

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 3	♥ K Q 2	♦ K J 7 4	♣ Q 9 7 5
♠ Q 9 7 6 2	♥ 10 9 6	♦ 8 6	♣ A 10 4
♠ A 5 4	♥ J 8 4 3	♦ 9 3 2	♣ J 6 2
♠ K J 10	♥ A 7 5	♦ A Q 10 5	♣ K 8 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	1 ♦
All pass		Pass	3 NT

Lead: small spade

The small card lead promises an honour. East wins and returns the suit. South plays the ♠ J losing to the ♠ Q. West must continue with a third round, then keep spades and the ♣ A while declarer takes their diamond tricks.

When declarer tries to get a club trick, West must take ♣ A and the remaining two spade winners.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q J 7 3	♥ K 2	♦ K Q J 8 4	♣ A 4
♠ A 10 9 6 2	♥ A 8 6	♦ A 10 5	♣ J 10
♠ K 8 4	♥ 10 9 7 3	♦ 9 3	♣ 9 8 7 6
♠ 5	♥ Q J 5 4	♦ 7 6 2	♣ K Q 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	1 NT	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 NT	Pass	2 NT
		All pass	

Lead : ♠ 4

East leads partner's suit. With three cards and an honour, East leads a small card. If East leads ♠ K at trick one, declarer will make 9 tricks.

On a low spade lead, the defence takes four spades and two aces.

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q 10 7 5 4	♥ 7 6	♦ Q 10	♣ A 9 6 2
♠ J 6	♥ J 10 8 2	♦ A 9 7 5	♣ K J 10
♠ A 9	♥ A Q 9 5 3	♦ K 6 3 2	♣ Q 5
♠ K 8 3 2	♥ K 4	♦ J 8 4	♣ 8 7 4 3

West	North	East	South
3 ♥	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
		4 ♥	All pass

Lead: small spade

South attacks with a small spade promising an honour. East wins and crosses to ♦ A to take a losing trump finesse. The defence can now take a trick in each suit to defeat the contract. If South had led a club at trick one, the spade loser would have been discarded on the third club.

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 10 8	♥ K 5 2	♦ J 7	♣ A 9 5 4 3 2
♠ Q J 7 5	♥ Q J 7	♦ 6 5 4	♣ K Q 8
♠ A K 9 3 2	♥ A 6 3	♦ A 9	♣ J 10 7
♠ 6 4	♥ 10 9 8 4	♦ K Q 10 8 3 2	♣ 6

West	North	East	South
3 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
		4 ♠	All pass

Lead: ♣ 6

South must choose between ♦ K and a singleton club. It is preferable to lead a club hoping to get a ruff.

There is a greater chance of beating the contract by getting the ruff first and hopefully the ♦ K later.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q 8 7 6	♥ K Q 6	♦ K	♣ A Q 8 7 3
♠ A 4	♥ J 10 8 7 5	♦ A J 6 3	♣ 10 6
♠ 5 3 2	♥ 4	♦ 10 9 8 5 2	♣ K 9 4 2
♠ K J 10 9	♥ A 9 3 2	♦ Q 7 4	♣ J 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

Lead: ♥ 4 singleton

East leads the heart, hoping to get a ruff. North wins and plays a spade to the king. West wins and returns a heart for East to ruff. East should play a diamond as clubs were bid by North.

This defence now defeats the contract. If East had not led a heart at trick one, the contract would have made.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A Q 10 5	♥ 9 6	♦ A J 2	♣ J 10 5 4
♠ 9 8 3	♥ Q J 5	♦ Q 8 4 3	♣ Q 9 7
♠ K J 7 2	♥ 8 7 4	♦ K 10 6 5	♣ 8 3
♠ 6 4	♥ A K 10 3 2	♦ 9 7	♣ A K 6 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	2 ♣
All pass			3 NT

Lead ♦ 5

It is better to lead the unbid suit rather than declarer's suit.

When declarer attacks clubs or hearts, then West will return a diamond when in with the ♣ Q or ♥ Q.

When East gets in, they must not play a spade which was declarer's first bid suit.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ Q J 6 2	♥ 5 4 3	♦ J 6 5	♣ 8 5 3
♠ 10 5	♥ Q J 10 9 8 2	♦ A 2	♣ A K Q
♠ K 9 3	♥ 7 6	♦ K Q 8 4 3	♣ 10 9 6
♠ A 8 7 4	♥ A K	♦ 10 9 7	♣ J 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

Lead: ♠ Q

North leads the top of a sequence enabling the defence to take two tricks in that suit. If any other lead is made, declarer can discard a losing spade on the third round of diamonds. A low spade lead would not beat the contract as declarer can play low from dummy.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ A J 10 3 2	♥ K J 5	♦ J 9 3	♣ 9 4
♠ K 9 8	♥ A Q 8 7 4	♦ 8	♣ K 8 6 5
♠ 7 6 5	♥ 9	♦ A Q 7 2	♣ A J 10 3 2
♠ Q 4	♥ 10 6 3 2	♦ K 10 6 5 4	♣ Q 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	All pass		

Lead: ♠ Q

South leads partner's suit. With a doubleton, lead the higher card (with more than 2 of partners suit, lead low)

If you lead a diamond, declarer will discard a spade from dummy and will now lose only 2 spade tricks.