

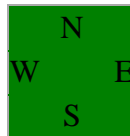
## BRIDGE ARTICLE 4

### MALENY CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB

This is the fourth bridge article for members of our club.

#### Solutions from last week

East Deals     ♠ 5 4  
None Vul     ♥ A 4 3  
                  ♦ K Q 5 4 2  
                  ♣ J 8 7



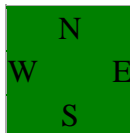
                  ♠ A 3  
                  ♥ K Q  
                  ♦ A 8  
                  ♣ K Q 10 9 5 4 3

South plays in 6 ♣ after he discovers his partner has club support, one ace and one king. West leads the K♠. What do you lead at trick 2 to give yourself the best chance of making the contract? How do you hope the play will go?

You have 7 top tricks (1 spade, 3 hearts, 3 diamonds). Of course, you can establish 6 club tricks by knocking out the ace. Does that mean we have 13 tricks? No. We need to lose the ace of trumps and if the opponents can get in, we have a spade loser as well. We can't lead trumps or the opponents will win and take their spade trick. The spade loser can be discarded on the A♥. This is the way we hope the play will go. It assumes both opponents have at least 3 hearts and at least two diamonds.

Lead the K♥ and Q♥ at tricks 2 and 3, lead a diamond to the K, play A♥ and discard a spade and now play trumps. Once the A♣ has been played we have only top trumps and A♦ left, and we will make a total of 12 tricks.

North Deals     ♠ Q J 6  
None Vul     ♥ 3  
                  ♦ A Q 8 4 3 2  
                  ♣ A 8 6



                  ♠ A K 10 9 7  
                  ♥ Q 7 6  
                  ♦ K 9 7  
                  ♣ J 2

South plays in 6 ♠ and West leads 5♦. East plays the 10. What suit do you play at trick 2 to give you the best chance of making your contract? How do you hope the play will go?

You have 12 top tricks (5 in spades, 6 in diamonds and 1 club). The diamond split can't be 4-0 since both opponents followed at trick 1. You draw trumps (in 5 rounds if necessary), take your 6 diamonds and A♣. Nothing can go wrong unless you block the diamonds.

### Opening Leads Against No Trump Contracts

Let's take a break from declarer play in a suit contract. Finding the right opening lead has often been described as the most difficult part of the game. The ability to strike the first blow is considered the one advantage the defence has over declarer and it's valuable to be able to use it to maximum effect.

#### *A primer*

Frequently, the opening leader has very little information to go on in selecting their lead. In this case, the opening leader should follow rules or maxims that have been developed in the past for guidance. The aim is to find the lead with the greatest probability of striking the blow.

You are North. What do you lead from this hand?

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

The normal advice is to lead your longest suit against no trump contracts unless you have some reason not to. The aim is to set up your long suit, so that later you may get the lead and and take sufficient tricks, possibly with small cards, to defeat the contract.

If you have an unbroken sequence of honours, you should lead the top one. Here the best lead, K♠, is clear cut and follows that advice. Here the advice was unnecessary because you can see the contract will fail unless West has the A♠ and can take the next eight tricks in the red suits. As soon as a club is led, you will take your ace and four spade tricks. (On this bidding, it is very unlikely that either opponent will have 5 spades.) Although this is your best lead and the one you should make, it could turn out to be wrong. The opponents may have A♠ and eight red suit tricks while your partner has KQ876 in clubs and you could have taken 5 club tricks on a club lead. This is very unlikely, but possible. The best of leads can come unstuck on occasions.

Let's change the hand slightly.

♠ K J 9 7 3  
♥ 8 6 5  
♦ 7 5  
♣ A 8 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Now you are less confident about defeating 3NT, but following the normal advice, you would lead a spade. Without a sequence or near sequence of three honour cards, you lead a small one. “Fourth highest of your longest and strongest” is a maxim that is older than contract bridge. Why fourth highest? An important component of good defence is communication between partners where some meaning is given to the play of a particular card from a set of equivalent cards. On some hands, our partner may get some useful information from the fact we lead the 7 rather than the 3. Is this going to be a good lead? We don’t know, but it is the lead most likely to be right. If our partner has the A♠ or Q♠, we will come to 4 spade tricks and a club trick to beat 3NT more often than not. On the other hand, if East has the A♠ and West the Q♠, the opponents will make 2 spade tricks if West plays a small spade from dummy. Without our lead, there would normally be no way for our opponents to make the second trick.

So, if you have no information from the bidding, your normal lead is in your longest suit. Lead the top of a 3-card sequence (e.g. Q from QJ10) or near sequence (e.g. Q from QJ9) or an interior sequence (e.g. 10 from Q109). Otherwise, lead your fourth best card.

*But it normally isn’t that simple!*

The normal lead is attacking where we are trying to set up our long suit before the opponents take their tricks. We may be happy to allow the opponents to win a trick they may otherwise not have been able to win if we can take more tricks later. However, there are hands where a passive lead (one that doesn’t give away any tricks) is needed. These are often hands where the opponents are struggling to make their quota of tricks and one trick given away can make all the difference. Unless we strongly suspect this to be the case, we would normally make the attacking lead.

Often you will have some information from the bidding or sometimes have a choice of leads or some special reason to make a different lead. (Even the sequence 1NT-3NT gives you some information. The opener has 15-17 HCP and no 5-card major and responder normally has at least 10 HCP with no 4 card or longer major suit or is possibly weaker with a long minor suit. This information makes an attack in a major suit more likely to be successful than a minor suit.)

Here are some examples.

♠ A Q 6 3  
♥ J 10 9 8  
♦ 9 7 6 3  
♣ 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

You have a choice of 3 four card suits. Spades are the strongest, but unless your partner happens to have the king, leading the 3♠ will often cost a trick and with only four, you don’t get many tricks if the suit is established. (With AQ632 in spades, the 3♠ is a much more attractive lead because of the extra trick you can take if the suit is established.) A diamond lead may work well if your partner has KQJ82, but is more likely to be helpful to the

opponents. Leading the J♥ is best as it is very unlikely to cost a trick and may establish just as many tricks as spades would.

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

In the above, you have a choice of 5 card suits to lead. On this bidding, the opponents are less likely to have length in a major suit than a minor suit, so spades should be preferred. In addition, your spades are stronger, and you need fewer high cards in your partner's hand to set up the suit. Lead the 6♠. Do not lead an honour without a sequence or near sequence of 3 or more. For instance, if your partner has a doubleton ace or king, it would be more difficult to set up the suit if you led the Q.

♠ 7 6 3  
♥ A 8 7  
♦ K J 10 9 3  
♣ 9 8

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

In the above, you have a five-card suit. Normally if the opponents had bid your long suit, you would lead something else. However, in this case, you have a near sequence of four high diamonds and East may not have a great suit for his 2♦ bid, so you should lead J♦, the top card in the interior sequence.

Here are some opening lead hands for you to try. Some you may have to think about a bit. See whether you agree with the discussion next week. In all hands you are North and on lead. The opponents bidding is normal for the club (1NT opening is 15-17 HCP, balanced with no 5-card major).

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

♠ 8 7 4  
 ♥ 8 7 6 5 4 3  
 ♦ K 5  
 ♣ K 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

♠ Q 9 3  
 ♥ K J 7  
 ♦ A J 9  
 ♣ 9 7 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

♠ K J 9 6 5  
 ♥ 5 3  
 ♦ Q 10 6 2  
 ♣ 6 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣(1)	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 NT	All pass

1. Stayman

♠ A Q 9 4 3  
 ♥ 4 2  
 ♦ J 9 8  
 ♣ 5 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♦	1 ♥
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

♠ 8 7 5  
 ♥ 7 6 2  
 ♦ 6 5 4 3 2  
 ♣ 4 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣(1)	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 NT	All pass

1. Stayman

♠ 6 4 3 2  
 ♥ 8 4 2  
 ♦ 8 7 5  
 ♣ Q 4 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All pass		

♠ A K 7 3 2  
 ♥ A 8 5  
 ♦ 9 7  
 ♣ K J 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All pass		

♠ A K 7 3  
 ♥ A 8 5 4  
 ♦ 9 7  
 ♣ K J 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2♦(1)	Pass
3NT	All pass		

1. Weak, 6 card suit, 6-10 HCP

♠ K 8 6  
 ♥ 6 5 2  
 ♦ A 6  
 ♣ 8 7 4 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	Pass
3♦(1)	Pass	4♥(2)	Pass
4NT(3)	Pass	5♦(4)	Pass
6NT	All pass		

1. 16+ HCP, good 6+ card diamond suit
2. Good 6+ card heart suit
3. Blackwood, asking for aces

4. One ace

♠ K 8 6  
♥ 6 5 2  
♦ A 6  
♣ 8 7 4 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	4 NT(1)	Pass
6 NT	All pass		

1. Invitational to 6NT with a maximum.