

The lead card at trick 1 at suit contracts

It is assumed you know how to lead a suit viz.,

- the lead of a small spot card means partner is leading from an honour (A, K, Q or J but not the 10) and does **NOT** have two touching honours
- partner **NEVER** underleads an Ace in a suit contract
- the lead of a high spot card denies holding any honour card (but may hold the 10)

Failure to lead properly means

- partner cannot make inferences about the location of honour cards,
- the pair of you will never improve your defending results,
- and play is much more important than bidding.

The 3rd card at trick 1 at suit contracts

If Dummy has played a card which you **cannot** beat, your most important duty is to **tell partner whether or not to continue the suit when next on lead**

- by playing a high card to encourage a continuation
- or a low card to tell partner to switch

If Dummy has played a card which you **can** beat, **you must try to win the trick**

Which card to play

West on lead



- dummy plays the J
- who has the king?
- partner has it because they led a small card
- play the Q
- continue the suit with the 10♠ (play honors from the short holding first)

Which card to play

West on lead



- dummy plays the 5
- who has the king?
- partner has it because they led a small card
- play the 10
- continue the suit with the Q♠ (play honors from the short holding first)

Which card to play

West on lead



- dummy plays the 10
- who has the king and who has the J?
- partner has one or both
- play the Q
- if it wins, continue the suit with the 9♠ to show original odd number
(or present even number).

Which card to play

West on lead



- dummy plays the 5
- who has the ace and who has the J?
- partner has the J, declarer has the A
- play the 10
- partner knows either
 - declarer has AQ and the suit is safe to play even if we have no more tricks
 - you have the Q and the suit is safe to play as we have QJ10 between us and we will develop a trick on the third round.

Which card to play

West on lead



- what happens if we play the Q instead of the 10
- partner does not know who has the 10♠ and the situation might be as above
 - if declarer has A10 and partner **cannot** continue the suit without losing a trick
 - but if you have the 10, as in the previous slide, and the suit is safe to continue since we have QJ10
 - poor partner does not know what to do!
 - the Q and 10 are equals since we know partner has the J
 - the simple rule is to always play the lower of equals when defending
 - so playing the Q denies holding the 10

Which card to play on a high spot lead

West on lead



- partner leads the 7 suggesting no honour is held.
- Remember to play the lower of equals when defending
- what happens if we play the Q and declarer wins with the ace?
- partner knows we do not have the J (else play lower of equals)
- so declarer started with AJx and the defence has no tricks.
- the Q is a silly card and partner will definitely err and switch but it is your fault.

Which card to play

West on lead



- what happens if we play the J and declarer wins with the ace?
- partner knows we do not have the 10 but we might have the Q
- if declarer had AQ10 then we have no tricks in the suit and it is safe to play but develops no tricks.
- if declarer had A92 then we have a trick if partner can lead the suit again.
- how can partner tell to continue or to switch?

Which card to play

West on lead



- what happens if we play the 10 and declarer wins with the ace?
- does partner know who has the Q and J
 - if declarer had AJx then he would win the first trick with the J not the A!
 - if declarer had AQ2 then we have no tricks in the suit
 - if declarer had AQJ then we have no tricks in the suit
 - if declarer had Axx then we can develop a trick in the suit
 - how can partner tell to continue or to switch?

How do we get partner to continue?

West on lead



- we cannot signal with the card at trick one since we are trying to win the trick.
- when declarer wins at trick 1, they will draw trumps.
- it is not sensible to help declarer by signalling in trumps
- so I suggest that you
 - play high-low with your trump spots to say you want the opening suit continued
 - play low-high with your trump spots to say you do not want a continuation
 - if you hold Qx in trumps you just can't signal - unlucky
 - but with Qxx play the two xx cards in the correct order even if you have to win the Q in between them

Summary

- when you are defending, play the lower of equals, if you need to play one of them, since it makes information available to partner
- when you are declarer play the higher of equals, if you need to play one of them, since it hides information from the defenders.
- if you haven't made an attitude signal because you were trying to win the trick,
use the trump suit to signal your attitude
 - hi-lo implies you want a continuation of the opening lead suit
 - lo-hi implies you want a switch to another suit
 - this is called Smith Peter