

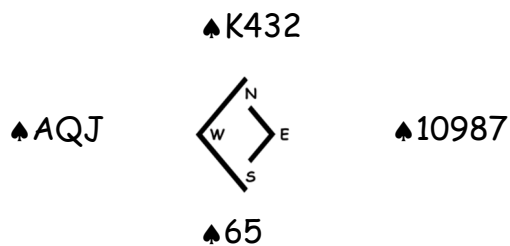
Directionality

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Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club
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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDefense/Directionality.pdf>

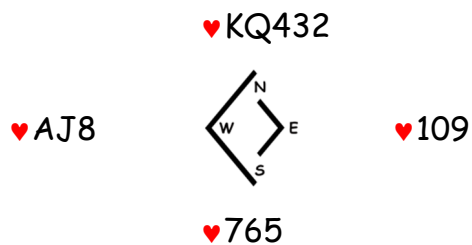
When one first starts to learn proper declarer play, one will be told to lead up to solitary honours that are not in a touching sequence.

Example 1



Start in the South hand and play the ♠5 to the King. Your King will win if West has the Ace. It is a 50% proposition if you cannot endplay East.

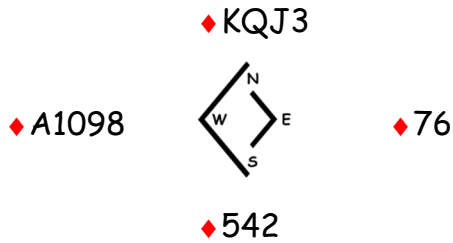
Example 2



From South, lead the ♥5 to the King and if it wins, go back to the South hand and lead the ♥6 to the Queen. You will have one loser not two playing this way if the Ace is onside (with West).

Even sometimes one has to lead up to three touching honours three times.

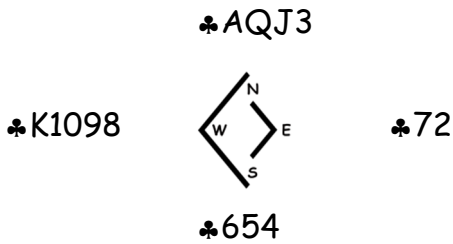
Example 3



From South, lead the ♦2 to the King and if it wins, go back to the South hand and lead the ♦4 to the Queen. If it wins, go back to the South hand and lead the ♦5 to the Jack. You will have one loser not two playing this way if the Ace is onside (with West).

The same applies to tenaces (broken honours).

Example 4



From South, play the ♣6 to the Queen. If it holds (wins), go back to South in a side suit and play the ♣5 to the Jack.

These first four examples illustrate how the cards sometimes must be played in one direction. Here from South to North.

This concept is equally important on defense. The defenders must realize three things:

- Some suits must be led by one defender.
- Some suits can be led by either defender.
- Some suits must be left alone and if not played by the declarer will cost the defense a trick.

Concepts:

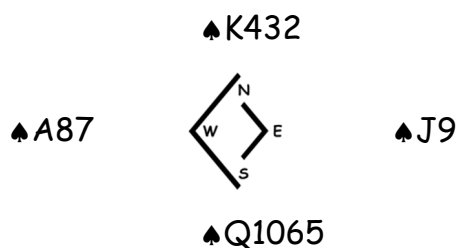
- Knowing what declaring is doing
- Capturing
- Exit Cards

Knowing what declaring is doing

In order to defend, one must realize what cards declarer has by the way he is playing them. That makes the opening lead the hardest lead.

Example 5

Solitary Honour opposite a Tenace



Lead the ♠5 to the King then lead the ♠2 to the tenace. Always lead to the tenace (broken honours) second. Here the Jack pops up and one's decision whether to finesse to the Ten becomes simple.

Capturing

In the above examples, the adverse (belonging to the opponents) honour could not capture a lower honour because that honour belonged to the LHO as long as declarer played the suit in the right direction.

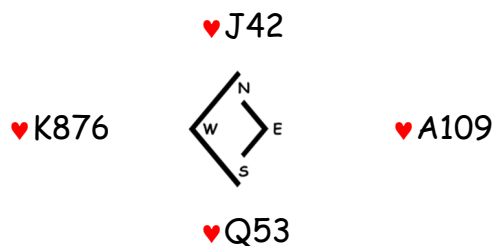
Therefore, an honour can only capture an honour in front of it or belonging to the RHO. Here is the kicker. It **must wait** for that honour. The defender with an honour waiting to capture a lower honour cannot lead that suit. He must find safe exit cards.

Exit Cards

An exit card is defined as any card that can be led without giving declarer an undeserved trick. Some suits, if led by the defense, will save declarer a trick and must be left alone. Using safe exit cards keeps one's defensive footprint low.

I love one level overcalls with good suits KJ109 or **better** because it gives the partner safe exit cards even on the opening lead. If the Ace and Queen are behind the King and Jack, you have given nothing that the declarer couldn't do himself, however, if the Queen is in front of the King and Jack, it is best for partner to lead the suit.

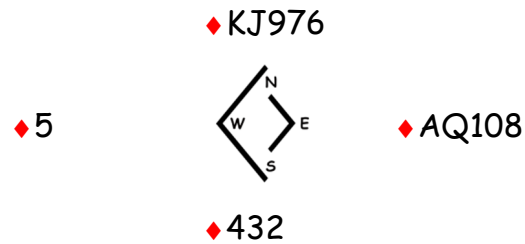
Example 6



If declarer has to open this suit and playing it himself, he will get no tricks. If the defense leads this suit first, declarer will always get one (undeserved) trick.

Example 7

Against a 4♠ contract by South, West makes an opening lead of his singleton ♦.



West leading the ♦ 5 shows the following:

- His hand is weak enough that partner will have entries.
- He does not have a natural trump trick that he will lose if he ruffs.
- He does not have four trump. He wants a forcing defense not ruffs.
- He thinks he is not making a lead that will bring home a suit for discards for the declarer.
- It is likely not a suit bid by the declarer (his RHO).
- The opponents are not in 7♠.
- If the opponents are in 6♠ and West has one Ace, it is pointless leading a singleton.

East wins the ♦ 8. Should he continue the suit?

Answer to Example 7:

This suit is highly directional. It should never be led by East even to give partner a ruff. East will get three tricks in ♦'s if he is patient.

The exception is:

- Declarer or dummy has a long side suit for discards.
 - Whenever dummy or declarer has a long side suit for discards, one must grab one's tricks right away.
 - One will cash an Ace in a defensive suit even if it means freeing a King held by the RHO. That Ace better not be in dummy or declarer's long suit ever.

Note:

Careful thought, having a logical reason for a play and patience are often rewarded.

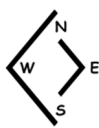
I hate doubleton leads.

Example 8

This was a hand that occurred at the Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club January 11, 2016.

Board 19

South Dealer East West Vulnerable

					♠ Q65	♥ KQ105	♦ Q10	♣ AQ87		
♠ J7	♥ 983	♦ J643	♣ K953		♠ 8	♥ AJ762	♦ K75	♣ J1064		
					♠ AK109432	♥ 4	♦ A982	♣ 2		

N	E	S	W	
		1♠	P	
2♣	P	4NT	P	
5♦	P	6♠	All Pass	0314

Opening Lead: ♥9, top of nothing, not a stiff (singleton)

Other leads were just completely wrong

- ♠7 could give declarer no losers if partner has ♠Qxx
- ♦3, Leading **from** honours that have sufficient but no extra guarding is often wrong.
 - These have sufficient but no extra guarding, Kx, Qxx, Jxxx, 10xxxx
 - I do not like leading from Jxxx, A tournament partner of mine (Tom McNie) avoids the lead like the plague.
- ♣3, this is a very active lead and is usually not a good idea against a slam where you can passively wait for your two tricks to come to you. One makes an active lead against a slam, if:
 - It is clear the opponents have a long side suit to discard losers
 - The opponents have jumped to slam without cuebidding or using Blackwood (keycard)

- The ♥9 was the only acceptable lead.

Traveller	N-S	E-W
6♠S=	980	(we were -980)
4♠S+1	450	(2x)
6♠S-1		50

The Play:

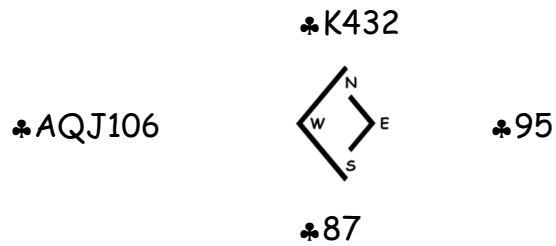
I led the ♥9, and partner won the Ace and returned a heart. Declarer pitched a ♦, drew trump, then took the ♣ hook and pitched the rest of his losing ♦'s making a very undeserved contract.

Further Notes:

When there is one singleton, there is a 68% chance of one more singleton and East sees the ♠ singleton in her hand and no singletons in dummy, so yes West could be leading a singleton if declarer, who bid a slam, has no singletons.

The only problem is Hearts cannot be led from East ever. East must just exit her singleton, the ♠9. Yes, a singleton trump is a very bad opening lead, but a lead at trick two is not the opening lead.

Example 9



The Ace has nothing to wait for. It cannot capture a King in LHO's hand. Perhaps it can capture a Queen in RHO's hand. No West has it. Pop up with it or just lead it. Do not wait until declarer has discards to make, and do not fall for Morton's Fork.

Morton's Fork.

Declarer plays to the King with the ♣8 and it wins because West ducks. He then pitches the ♣7 on a side suit winner.

Remember:

- *Please obey the directionality of a situation as declarer or defender.*
- Ducking and making declarer lead up to honours more than once often is the best defense.