

Top of Nothing

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Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

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BOSTON

Stands for Bottom Of Something and Top Of Nothing. If you lead a small card, it is fourth best and it suggests you have an honour. If you lead a high card, it is top of nothing and partner will not continue the suit if he can see the majority of the honours are held by the declarer.

Top of Nothing

Leading top of nothing from a four or five-card suit can be effective against 3NT because it alerts partner to the location of the honours in the suit, asks partner to shift if he can see a better attack and is unlikely to setup a lot of tricks for the declarer.

Example

The cards are dealt as follows:

North: ♠109753 ♥K6 ♦42 ♣KJ103
West: ♠K8 ♥Q10832 ♦K63 ♣Q94 East: ♠QJ64 ♥J97 ♦AQ7 ♣A85
South: ♠A2 ♥A54 ♦J10985 ♣762

The Bidding was:

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

North is on lead against 3NT. I led 10♠. Partner won the ace and returned a spade. Declarer won the trick and attacked hearts. South for a lack of a better lead made the safe return of a heart. Very reasonable, but can an alternate defense be taken?

Lesson here:

1. I led a high card, the ten, meaning I probably have nothing in the suit. It could be from Q109x but dummy had the queen.
2. Do not cooperate with declarer. He attacked hearts so win your ace, but never return a heart.

Therefore, win a♠ on the opening lead, look at dummy, realize I led my top card and play a club. Win the A♥ and play another club for at least down one.

Another reason against returning a spade. You have only two spades and cannot return a spade when you get in with the ace of hearts.

Leading a suit bid by dummy is often not a good lead, but here it is. A club lead gives up a trick. Leads from tenaces are usually not ideal.