

Leads often set the tone for the whole defense and are intended to give the defense a head start on the declarer.

It is assumed that declarer has been pushed to the limit of his points, but regardless, defense wants to get every trick possible.

Standard Leads

- Ace from Ace-King
 - A partnership agreement may assign any of the following:
 - Ace for Attitude
 - King for Kount
 - Ace for suit preference
 - Doubleton Qx, Jx-The honour is not dropped under the ace or king
 - Dropping the Queen under the ace or king shows either a stiff or QJ
 - Doubleton AK, play the king then the ace and switch
- Ace in Notrump
 - Asks partner to unblock (drop an honour) or give count
- Top of a sequence
 - 3 cards touching against a notrump contract
 - KQJxx, KQ10xx, QJ9xx
 - 2 cards touching against a trump contract
 - KQxxx
 - QJxxx is risky
- fourth best from an honour
- top of nothing
- high-low from a doubleton
- top of interior sequence
 - KJ109x-lead the Jack
 - Does not apply to the 9 or lower
 - against notrump KJ109x
 - It may be best to avoid leading this side suit in a trump contract because declarer or dummy may be short.

Strategy

passive defense

The tricks will eventually come to the defense

declarer is in a tight contract

active defense

The defense must grab their tricks before declarer grabs his

Planning

- Count points
- Entries
- Exit Cards
- Quick tricks
- Slow tricks

Don't set up declarer's slow tricks before getting your slow and quick tricks.

It is a common declarer method to play the defender who leads his own suit for an outside entry.

Bath Coup

The king is led from KQ972 and declarer plays the 4. Should West continue?

	653	
KQ972		108
	AJ4	

East plays the 8 (his lowest) to say no

Note:

Leading from KQ972 against 3NT one leads the King with an outside entry and one leads fourth best with no outside entry.

Overcalls

Overcalls have the following purposes:

- to suggest opening points
- to compete
- to suggest a lead!!!

Overcalls may be 7 to 17 points in strength

With less than opening points, overcaller will always pass at his next chance unless partner cuebids.