

Deal 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 6 5
♥ K Q J 9 7
♦ 8 6 2
♣ K 3

11
9 3
17

♠ K Q 4
♥ 6 4 2
♦ A 3
♣ Q T 8 7 4



♠ A J 3
♥ A 8 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ A J 6 5

♠ T 9 7 2
♥ T 5
♦ Q J T 9 5
♣ 9 2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3NT by North

Baker O'Leary Lead 1

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Leading an honor sequence is always good strategy against a notrump contract. It is attacking, threatening to set up several winners for you, and there is little risk that you will give away a trick.

South will probably hold up, at least once. If he does, you should continue the suit by next playing the ♥J. This is standard technique; if your first card holds the trick and you want to continue the suit, play the lowest card in the sequence and partner will know that you have all the ones in between.

South only has 7 winners unless he can establish the ♣ suit, and when you win your ♣K you will also be able to win enough ♥s to set the contract.

Deal 2

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 6 5
♥ 2
♦ J 8 6 4 3
♣ J T 5 2

20
6 7
7

♠ Q J 8 4
♥ A J 6
♦ A K
♣ K Q 9 8



♠ K T 9 7 2
♥ Q T 8 4
♦ Q 9 7
♣ 3

♠ 3
♥ K 9 7 5 3
♦ T 5 2
♣ A 7 6 4

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All Pass	

4 ♠ by North

you to ruff. Down 1.

Baker OLead 2

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4 ♠ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Against confident bidding an attacking lead is probably called for and having the Ace of trumps makes a singleton lead a particularly good choice.

If declarer plays low in dummy partner will win the ♥K and give you an immediate ruff. You play a ♣ back to partner and get another ruff for down 2.

Declarer would be better off to go up with the ♥A at the first trick and try to pull trumps. This would still not be good enough. You win your ♠A, and lead a ♣ to partner's hand. He can then win his ♥K and lead a third ♥ for

Deal 3

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 9 4 3
♥ 6 5 3
♦ 8 2
♣ T 6 2

13
4 6
17

♠ 8 7 2
♥ K 8 7
♦ K Q J
♣ A 8 5 4



♠ Q T 6
♥ A Q 9
♦ A T 7
♣ K Q 7 3

♠ A 5
♥ J T 4 2
♦ 9 6 5 4 3
♣ J 9

West	North	East	South
3NT	Pass	Pass	1NT
3NT by West			

Baker O'Leary 3

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

The only suit you have worth attacking with is your ♠s. Leading fourth down is standard with this type of holding, but it does have some risk. You are hoping to find partner with the ♠Q or, even better, the ♠A.

This time he comes through with the ♠A and your side wins the first 5 tricks for a 1-trick set.

If you had led any card other than a low ♠ declarer would take T tricks.

Deal 4

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K Q 7 3
♥ K J 9
♦ T 8 4
♣ 9 5 2

14
9 4
13

♠ 9 8 2
♥ A 6 5
♦ K 3
♣ A Q J T 4



♠ A J 5
♥ Q T 8 4 3 2
♦ A Q
♣ 7 3

♠ T 6 4
♥ 7
♦ J 9 7 6 5 2
♣ K 8 6

Baker O'Leary Lead 4

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4♥ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Against a suit contract you want to try to set up a quick winner in the suit.

Notice that with any other lead declarer would have been able to discard a ♠ loser (maybe both of them) on dummy's ♣s.

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

4♥ by North

Deal 5

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 9 6 3
♥ A 6 4
♦ 8 6 3
♣ 8 2

11
7 7
15

♠ A 8 2
♥ 8 7 3
♦ K 9 2
♣ A T 5 4



♠ K T 4
♥ K Q 9
♦ A T 7
♣ Q J 9 7

♠ 7 5
♥ J T 5 2
♦ Q J 5 4
♣ K 6 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT Pass

3NT by North

Baker O'Leary

Lead 5
The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

The top of a solid 3-card honor sequence is best, but as you can see, a broken 3-card sequence may work out just as good.

South will likely try the ♣ finesse, and when East wins the ♣K he will return a ♠ through South's ♠T.

Deal 6

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 4 3
♥ 9 6 4
♦ A Q T 8
♣ 9 8 3

12
6 9
13

♠ K J 7 2
♥ K J T 3 2
♦ 7
♣ A 7 4



♠ A Q T 6
♥ 7
♦ K J 9 6 2
♣ K 6 5

♠ 8 5
♥ A Q 8 5
♦ 5 4 3
♣ Q J T 2

West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All Pass	

4 ♠ by North

Baker O'Leary Lead 6

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4 ♠ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

You have ♦ winners, but dummy will surely be short since he has at least 8 cards in the Major suits.

Partner has whatever ♥ strength your side possesses.

It is very likely that declarer will want to do some cross-trumping. To try to cut that down your best lead is a trump.

Just imagine that declarer wins the first ♠ in his hand and plays a ♥ to dummy's honors. East will win and play another trump. Whenever you win your first ♦ you will play your last trump.

As you can imagine, declarer will be in a whole lot of trouble.

Deal 7

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 9 4 3
♥ 6 5 3
♦ 8 2
♣ T 6 2

13
4 2
21

♠ 8 7 2
♥ K 8 7
♦ K Q J
♣ A 8 5 4



♠ A Q 6
♥ A Q 9
♦ A T 7
♣ K Q 7 3

♠ T 5
♥ J T 4 2
♦ 9 6 5 4 3
♣ J 9

West	North	East	South
Pass	6NT	All Pass	2NT

6NT by North

Declarer has 11 winners sitting there; if you had led a low ♠ you would have handed him his 12 trick on a platter.

Baker O'Lead 7

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 6NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

You held this identical hand in Deal 3. The declarer was playing 3NT and the best lead was the ♠4, fourth down.

It's different when the contract is 6NT. Against 6NT you should make a passive lead, which means don't underlead any honors. Against 6NT you have little chance of establishing a suit to win four or five tricks. Instead, you just want to try to not give declarer an undeserved trick.

So any passive lead would be OK, you pick the ♥ just because they are less likely to have an unbid 4-card Major in either hand.

Deal 8

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 8 5 4
♥ 8 6 5 2
♦ K 6 2
♣ T 2

17
6 2
15

♠ A 2
♥ A 9 7
♦ T 5 3
♣ A K Q 7 6

♠ Q 9 7 6 3
♥ T 4 3
♦ 4
♣ 9 8 4 3

♠ J T
♥ K Q J
♦ A Q J 9 8 7
♣ J 5



West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	6♦	All Pass	5♦

6♦ by North

sailing.

Baker OLead 8

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 6♦ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Against a notrump slam it is best to make a passive lead so you don't give declarer an undeserved winner.

Against a suit slam the situation is very different. Against strong dummy bidding like this you are pretty sure that if you don't establish a winner early declarer will find something in dummy to discard losers on. In this hand it is dummy's ♣ suit.

Your most promising suit is ♠s. Obviously partner has a very weak hand, but if he has the ♠Q you can set up your ♠K before your King of trumps is dislodged.

Without a ♠ lead declarer will have smooth

Deal 9

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J T 8
♥ Q T 5 4 2
♦ 7 3
♣ A 3

10
9 6
15

♠ 9 7 5
♥ J 7
♦ K Q 8
♣ K J 9 8 2



♠ A 4 3
♥ A 9 8
♦ A J T 6
♣ Q T 4

♠ K 6 2
♥ K 6 3
♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ 7 6 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

3NT by North

Baker O'Leary 9

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

This is a close call. The top of your ♠ honor sequence is very tempting, but even when you find partner with the ♠K you can still only establish three ♠ winners to go with your ♣A. Unfortunately, that's not enough to defeat the contract.

Leading a ♥ from your 5-card suit is riskier, but it has the potential of setting up an additional winner. In this hand, as you see, the ♥ lead gets you 4 ♥ winners to go with your ♣A.

Deal 10

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 4
♥ 9 8 2
♦ A T 5 3
♣ A J 6 2

11
9 7
13

♠ K J 7 5
♥ A K 6 5
♦ 8 7 4 2
♣ 5



♠ A 9 3
♥ Q J 7 4 3
♦ K
♣ K 8 7 4

♠ Q T 6 2
♥ T
♦ Q J 9 6
♣ Q T 9 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	2 ♣

4 ♥ by North

Baker OLead 10

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4 ♥ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

A careful look at this hand shows just how bad it can turn out.

And leading from a doubleton in a suit the opponents have bid is almost as bad.

So by process of elimination you lead a trump, probably the ♥9.

And when South plays ♣s, (preparing to ruff in dummy), you will win and play another trump. Even if South guesses the ♠s correctly he will not be able to make the contract.

Deal 11

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 6
♥ Q J T 7 3
♦ T 5 3
♣ 8 6 2

13
3 10
14

♠ 8 5 2
♥ A 6 5
♦ K J
♣ K Q T 9 4



♠ A T 4
♥ K 9 8
♦ A Q 8 4
♣ J 7 3

♠ K Q J 9 3
♥ 4 2
♦ 9 7 6 2
♣ A 5

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	1 ♠	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3NT by North

Baker O'Lead 11

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

If partner had not overcalled, the ♥Q would be the perfect lead against 3NT. But partner DID overcall, perhaps to give you a hint on what to lead if South became declarer.

As you see, a ♠ lead will defeat the contract this time while the ♥Q would let declarer make 11 tricks.

Consider this: even if partner has a high ♥ to help you establish the suit it is not very likely that you would be able to get the lead with your entryless hand.

There is another, more subtle, reason for leading partner's suit. If the lead turns out wrong, and the ♥Q lead would have beaten the contract, partner will not blame you in the least. But if you lead the ♥Q and it turns out that a ♠ lead would have let you set the contract, well, that would not be too good for partnership harmony.

Deal 12

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q T 8 4
♥ A Q T 7
♦ K Q 9 8
♣ 5

4
13 10
13

♠ 6 5 2
♥ 9 5 3 2
♦ A 6 4
♣ 9 4 2



♠ A J 9 3
♥ K J
♦ T 5 3
♣ A 7 6 3

♠ K 7
♥ 8 6 4
♦ J 7 2
♣ K Q J T 8

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Dbl	All Pass		

1 ♣X by South

Baker OLead 12

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is
1 ♣ doubled and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

There is only one reason partner would pass
your takeout double - he has a great ♣ suit and
he expects to inflict a large penalty.

What he wants do do is pull South's trumps so
your high card winners don't get ruffed by
South. The way you can help him do that is to
start with a trump lead.

With the trump lead South might not make
more than three tricks.

Deal 13

North Deals
None Vul

♠ J 6
♥ 9 8 5 2
♦ 9 7 5
♣ A Q 9 8

13
7 7
13

♠ K Q 9
♥ K 6 4
♦ K Q T 3
♣ 7 4 2



♠ A T 2
♥ A J 7
♦ J 8 6 2
♣ K 6 5

♠ 8 7 5 4 3
♥ Q T 3
♦ A 4
♣ J T 3

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Baker O'Leary Lead 13

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Your ♣s are so good that all your instincts tell you to lead the ♣8, and perhaps set up 3 winners.

If you had one more small ♣s your instincts would be right, but with only a 4-card suit you should think a little longer. Three tricks won't set this contract, so you must depend on partner winning something. And if partner is going to win something perhaps he will lead a ♣ and you might make FOUR tricks in the suit.

So lead the ♥9. You lead a high card so partner won't be tempted to return the suit

3NT by North

when he gets the lead. Note that although this lead finesses partner's ♥Q, it didn't do anything that declarer wouldn't have done on his own.

Declarer must play ♦s to get some winners, and when East takes the ♦A he will surely switch to the ♣J. Down goes declarer.

Deal 14

East Deals

None Vul

♠ A 4 3
♥ J T 2
♦ Q J T 9 8
♣ A J

7
13 13
7

♠ K T 8
♥ 7
♦ A 7 5 3 2
♣ 8 5 3 2



♠ Q J 9 7 6 2
♥ A 8 5 4
♦ 4
♣ 7 4

♠ 5
♥ K Q 9 6 3
♦ K 6
♣ K Q T 9 6

West	North	East	South
3♦	3♠	1♥	2♠
4♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
Dbl	All Pass	Pass	4♠

4♠X by South

Declarer will still be able to ruff one ♥ in dummy, but will be left with two losing ♥s and will be down 2. Without the two trump plays he could have ruffed all three of his ♥ losers and actually made the contract.

Baker O'Leary 14

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4♠ doubled and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

South's 2♠ bid is a Weak-jump Overcall, based on a 6-card ♠ suit and a weak hand.

Either the ♦Q or ♥J would normally be good leads.

But on this deal North/South have clearly sacrificed against your almost certain ♥ game. Since they don't have enough high-card strength to make this contract declarer is hoping to get some ruffs.

The way to cut down the number of ruffs he can make is to lead a trump at every opportunity.

So take the ♠A and then play another ♠.

Deal 15

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 8 7 3
♥ Q T 7 3
♦ 7 5
♣ 6 3 2

11
5 9
15

♠ T 6 4
♥ 6 4 2
♦ K 9 4 2
♣ A K J



♠ A J 5
♥ A J 9
♦ Q J T 3
♣ Q 8 4

♠ Q 9 2
♥ K 8 5
♦ A 8 6
♣ T 9 7 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

3NT by North

devices, he cannot establish the ♠ winner.

Baker O'Leary 15

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Sometimes it comes down to just this kind of choice. Do you lead fourth down from ♠ K 8 7 3 or from ♥ Q T 7 3.

The presence of the ♥T bolsters the ♥ suit enough to give it the edge.

The suits could be arranged something like shown at left. With a ♠ lead the presence of the ♠T in dummy allows declarer to make a second ♠ trick, which happens to be declarer's ninth trick.

But when you lead the ♥3 it does not promote a ♥ winner for declarer, and left to his own

Deal 16

North Deals

None Vul

♠ 6 3
♥ K 6 3
♦ A 7 4
♣ T 9 8 7 4

16
7 2
15

♠ A T
♥ 9 4
♦ K Q J 9 8 3
♣ K Q J



♠ K Q J 9 5 4
♥ A J T
♦ 6
♣ A 5 2

♠ 8 7 2
♥ Q 8 7 5 2
♦ T 5 2
♣ 6 3

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

6♠ by South

Baker O'Leary 16

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 6♠ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

The ♣T would probably be a very safe lead. But you don't want "safe", you want "attack".

Dummy has advertised a long, strong ♦ suit which declarer will no doubt establish for discards.

It is important for your side to create a winner before your ♦A is forced out. The most likely looking winner is your ♥K. So lead the small ♥ and hope partner has the Queen.

Deal 17

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 4
♥ T 9 8 4
♦ 8 6 3 2
♣ K 8 7 2

14
3 10
13

♠ A 9 7 6 2
♥ A 6 3
♦ K 4
♣ Q J 5



♠ 5 3
♥ K Q J
♦ Q J T 9 7
♣ A T 4

♠ K Q J T 8
♥ 7 5 2
♦ A 5
♣ 9 6 3

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Dbl	All Pass

3NTX by North

Baker OLead 17

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

If partner had not doubled the contract you would probably have started with the ♥T, or possibly the ♣2.

But partner DID double, and most good players play that doubling 3NT is lead-directing as follows: If you have bid a suit, lead it. If doubler has bid a suit, lead it. If neither of you has bid, lead dummy's first bid suit.

So lead a ♠, certainly not a lead you would have made without the double. Partner immediately establishes 4 ♠ winners and he has the ♦A for an entry.

With any other lead declarer will make the contract.

Deal 18

South Deals
None Vul

♠ J T 9 3
♥ 4 2
♦ J T 9 6 3
♣ 8 5

12
2 11
15

♠ A 8 6 4
♥ A J 6 5
♦ Q 7
♣ J 6 3



♠ K Q 7
♥ K T 9 8
♦ A K 5
♣ T 9 2

♠ 5 2
♥ Q 7 3
♦ 8 4 2
♣ A K Q 7 4

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Dbl	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

4♥ by North

Baker O'Leary 18

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4♥ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

If partner had not doubled North's Stayman 2♣ bid you would probably have started with one of your Jacks.

But partner DID double, and the double of a conventional bid clearly means that the doubler would like you to lead that suit.

So lead a ♣, and partner will take three ♣ tricks. With any other lead declarer would quickly discard a ♣ from dummy on a high ♦, easily making the contract.

Declarer may still make the contract if he guesses the ♥Q correctly, but maybe not.

Deal 19

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 7 2
♥ Q J T 6
♦ T 7 6 2
♣ 7 3

20
3 2
15

♠ A J 5
♥ A 9 8 5 3
♦ K Q
♣ A Q 5



♠ K Q 3
♥ K 4
♦ A 8 5 4
♣ K 6 4 2

♠ T 8 6 4
♥ 7 2
♦ J 9 3
♣ J T 9 8

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

6NT by North

Baker OLead 19

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 6NT and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Admittedly the ♥Q looks very tempting, but resist the temptation.

Since dummy bid ♥s, don't help declarer by leading the suit. Declarer has 11 tricks, and will hope to pick up one more in ♣s, but that won't happen.

But if you start with the ♥Q, he will win with his ♥K and can then establish an extra ♥ winner by leading through your ♥J T into dummy's ♥A 9.

With any lead other than a ♥ honor he cannot come to 12 tricks.

Deal 20

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A
♥ Q J T 3
♦ 8 7 5 3
♣ A 7 4 2

13
11 3
13

♠ Q T 8 5
♥ K 5 4
♦ A T
♣ K J 9 6



♠ K J 9 6 3
♥ A 6
♦ K 9
♣ Q T 8 5

♠ 7 4 2
♥ 9 8 7 2
♦ Q J 6 4 2
♣ 3

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

4 ♠ X by North

That's why you doubled.

Baker O'Lead 20

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 4 ♠ and it is your lead.

When you have made your choice

Did you choose the ♥Q? I was afraid you would. That is wrong, but because this is the last Deal I'm going to give you another chance.

Look at the bidding carefully, then ask yourself why you doubled.

Now pick the opening lead that will set the contract, then

North/South apparently have 8 or more ♣s between them, which leaves partner with a singleton at most.

Partner will ruff the second ♣, and when you get into the lead with the Ace of trumps you will play a third ♣ which he will again ruff.