

Deal 1	♠ A 10 4		
South Deals	♥ K 9 8		
None Vul	♦ A Q 8 4		
	♣ J 7 3		
♠ K Q J 9 3	♠ 7 6		
♥ 4 2	♥ Q J 10 7 3		
♦ 9 7 6 2	♦ 10 5 3		
♣ A 5	♣ 8 6 2		
14 10 3 13	♠ 8 5 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ K J ♣ K Q 10 9 4		
West	North	East	South
1 ♠	2 NT	Pass	1 ♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 NT
3 NT by North			
Lead: ♠ 7			

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

When you have made your choice

If partner had not overcalled, the ♥ Q would be the perfect lead against 3 NT. But partner DID overcall, perhaps to give you a hint on what to lead if North 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 2

South Deals

None Vul

♠ Q 10 8 4

♥ A Q 10 7

♦ K Q 9 8

♣ 5

4
13 10
13

♠ 6 5 2

♥ 9 5 3 2

♦ A 6 4

♣ 9 4 2

N
W E
S♠ K 7
♥ 8 6 4
♦ J 7 2
♣ K Q J 10 8♠ A J 9 3
♥ K J
♦ 10 5 3
♣ A 7 6 3

West

North

East

South

1♣

Dbl Pass

Pass

Pass

1♣×× by South

Lead: ♣ 5

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 3

South Deals	♠ A 10 2
None Vul	♥ AJ 7
	♦ J 8 6 2
	♣ K 6 5

♠ 8 7 5 4 3	♠ J 6
♥ Q 10 3	♥ 9 8 5 2
♦ A 4	♦ 9 7 5
♣ J 10 3	♣ A Q 9 8

W	N
S	E

13	♠ K Q 9
7 7	♥ K 6 4
13	♦ K Q 10 3
	♣ 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3 NT by North			
Lead: ♥ 9			

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3 NT 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 when he gets the lead. Note that although this lead finesse 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 West takes the ♦ A he will surely switch to the ♣ J. Down goes declarer.

Deal 4

East Deals	♠ K 10 8
None Vul	♥ 7
	♦ A 7 5 3 2
	♣ 8 5 3 2
♠ A 4 3	♠ 5
♥ J 10 2	♥ K Q 9 6 3
♦ Q J 10 9 8	♦ K 6
♣ A J	♣ K Q 10 9 6

7	♠ Q J 9 7 6 2
13 13	♥ A 8 5 4
7	♦ 4
	♣ 7 4

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

4 ♠×× by South
Lead: ♠ A



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 ♠.

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.

Deal 5

North Deals

None Vul

♠ Q 9 2
♥ K 8 5
♦ A 8 6
♣ 10 9 7 5

¹⁵
9 5
¹¹

♠ A J 5
♥ A J 9
♦ Q J 10 3
♣ Q 8 4

N
W E
S

♠ K 8 7 3
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 7 5
♣ 6 3 2

♠ 10 6 4
♥ 6 4 2
♦ K 9 4 2
♣ A K J

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

3 NT by North
Lead: ♥ 3

The bidding has been as shown. The contract is 3 NT 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 devices, he cannot establish the ♠ winner.