

# SVEN'S CARD PLAYING STRATEGIES

# FOR DEFENDERS

Your opponents have just declared the contract. It's time to plan how you are going to defeat it. Carefully consider the opening lead. Where are their weak points? Which suit should you attack now or later? Take your time (without overdoing it). My strategies are illustrated below by way of examples.

## My Strategies

### Opening Lead:

- **The opening lead makes a difference.** Many contracts are won by the opponents just because you played the wrong card to the very first trick. Take your time to pick the best card for the opening lead.
- **Take a good look at the bidding.** You can often derive a fair amount of information about partner's and declarer's holdings to help you choose the best opening lead.
- **Against a No Trump contract** the idea is to lead a card that facilitates the establishment of your partnership's longest and strongest suit. Which suit is that? Hold on to your high cards. Don't blow them early in the game. Wait until they have run out of stoppers.
- **Against a Suit contract** the idea is to lead a card that facilitates the ability now or later to take tricks either by high cards or by trumping.

### Popular opening leads are:

1. Partner's suit (if indicated through the bidding).
2. Top of a sequence (e.g. AK73).
3. Top of a broken sequence (e.g. KQ9).
4. Highest card in a Doubleton (e.g. 95).
5. Singleton
6. Fourth card in a long suit (e.g. AT732).

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## Examples of how to do it

### Example 1 (3NT):

♠ A65  
♥ Q9643  
♦ K743  
♣ 5

If partner did not show a suit through the bidding, lead your own long suit, e.g. lead 4♥ to show that you have three higher Hearts.

### Example 2 (3NT):

♠ KJ86  
♥ QJT9  
♦ 643  
♣ 42

If partner did not show a suit through the bidding, lead the suit with a sequence, i.e. lead Q♥ to show that you also have the Jack.

### Example 3 (3NT):

♠ QJT82  
♥ K43  
♦ A5  
♣ T54

If partner did not show a suit through the bidding, lead Q♠ working towards establishing your ♠ suit for later.

### Example 4 (3NT):

♠ AK8  
♥ 854  
♦ 75  
♣ KJ542

Save your good spades for later. Lead 4♣ to show that you have three higher Clubs.

### Example 5 (4S):

♠ 752  
♥ J9643  
♦ Q743  
♣ 7

Lead singleton 7♣ to enable early trumping.

### Example 6 (4S):

♠ 8742  
♥ A9  
♦ K35  
♣ J642

Lead A♥. Partner may guess that you have a doubleton rather than the King.

### Example 7 (4S):

♠ 632  
♥ 942  
♦ KQJ7  
♣ A43

Lead K♦ to show that you also have the Queen.

### Example 8 (4S):

♠ Q6  
♥ Q92  
♦ KT4  
♣ J6543

Lead 4♣ to show that you have three higher Clubs.