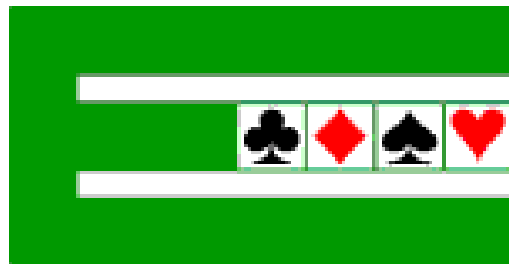


# Bridge lecture – intermediate



## Opening leads

by Milan Macura

July 18, 2016

# Opening lead is the most important card played by defense

Opening lead can be both: advantage or disadvantage



- ♠ Clarifying the situation in the suit for the defense – therefore also gives an estimation of the distribution of the declarer
- ♠ Defense has the tempo to set up tricks sooner than declarer
- ♠ Leading through the honors of dummy
- ♠ Leading short suits to prepare for ruffs
- ♠ Extra entry for the leader – important in case he is weak



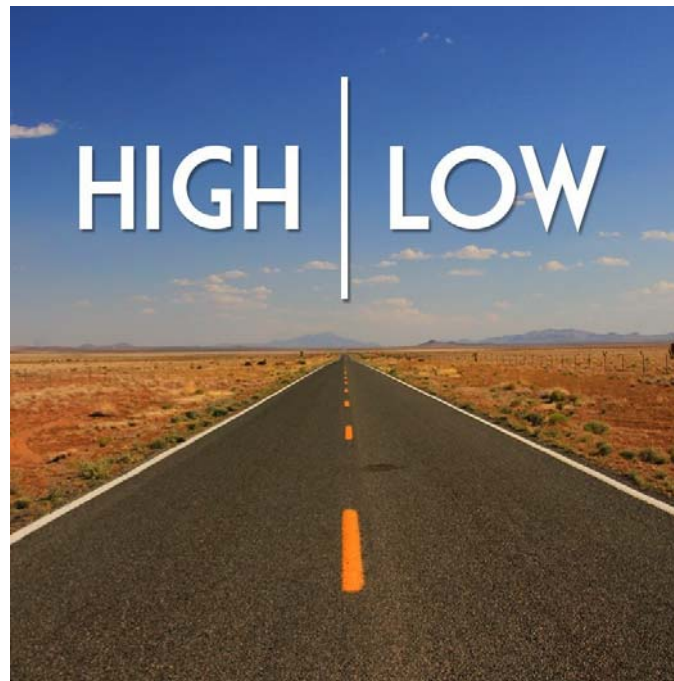
- ♠ Leading towards the declarer who follows to the trick as last
- ♠ Under leading honors in case the leader is strong
- ♠ Leading blind without seeing the dummy cards
- ♠ Stress element
- ♠ Misguiding partner in case of the wrong card chosen



# Opening lead should clarify the situation in the suit led and should help counting the rest of the distribution

Opening lead comes together with the signal by partner

- I don't have an honor in this suit
- Return another suit
- I am short – give me ruff



- I have an honor
- Yes, return this suit
- I have 4+ cards



## Partners should have rules for the opening lead

Good defense works only if partners understand each other and work together

The leader gives  
an information to  
partner



Partner has to read  
the message from  
the lead and act  
accordingly



## Opening lead should show both the quality and the quantity of the suit led

# Standard leads: 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> best

Lead	Card combinations
<b>Ace</b>	AKx(x), AKQx (A asks for encouraging signal)
<b>King</b>	AKJx, KQ10x, KQJx (K asks to unblock), KQx
<b>Queen</b>	QJ10x, QJ9x, AQJxx (Q denies K, promise J)
<b>Jack</b>	J109x, J10x, HJ10x (J denies Q, promise 10)
<b>10</b>	109xx, H109x (10 denies J)
<b>High card 9, 8, 7 (6, 5)</b>	Hxx, 10xxx, xXx, xXxx, Xx (from 2 small only in partners suit)
<b>Low card 2, 3, 4, (5, 6)</b>	HxxX, HxxXx, xxxXx

Lead	Card combinations
<b>Ace</b>	AKx(x), AKQx, Axx, Ax (A asks for encouraging signal)
<b>King</b>	KQJx, KQ10x, KQx, AK (K promises Q)
<b>Queen</b>	QJ10x, QJ9x, Qx (Q denies K)
<b>Jack</b>	J109x, J10x, HJ10x, Jx (J denies Q)
<b>10</b>	109xx, H109x, 10x (10 denies J)
<b>High card 9, 8, 7 (6, 5)</b>	Xx, 10xxx, xXx, xXxx
<b>Low card 2, 3, 4 (5, 6)</b>	HxxX, HxxXx, HxX (small promise honor)



If we are leading 4<sup>th</sup> best, we can apply the RULE OF 11

**11 – (card led) =**  
**number of higher cards than the card led in**  
**all other 3 hands**



What has  
declarer?

Which card do  
we play?



# When to lead passive and when aggressive? Look at the bidding and your cards!

- Opponents reach game via invitation
- Suits breaks bad for the declarer
- Bad card combinations: KJx, AQx, Qxx in trumps



- Suits breaks well for declarer
- Opponents have enough HCP for the game
- Good positioning of honors for declarer



# Example: Play board nr. 1

**Deal: 1/4**  
**North/None**

High Card Points

16

5

9

10

♠ J 7 4  
 ♥ J 8 5  
 ♦ K T 8 5  
 ♣ T 7 3

**Makeable status**

4/4

Makeable contracts

	N	S	E	W
C	10	10	3	3
D	9	9	3	3
H	10	10	2	2
S	7	7	6	6
NT	8	8	4	4

♠ A 8 2  
 ♥ K Q 2  
 ♦ J 4 3  
 ♣ K Q J 9



♠ K Q T 6 3  
 ♥ T 6 4  
 ♦ 6 2  
 ♣ A 5 4

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

N	E	S	W
1NT	pass	2♣	pass
2♦	pass	3NT	pass
pass	pass		

**Lead**





# Example: Play board nr. 2

**Deal: 2/4**  
**East/NS**

High Card Points

	9	
11		14
	6	

♠ K Q 9 6 2  
 ♥ J 7 3  
 ♦ K 7 3  
 ♣ Q 7

**Makeable status**

4/4

Makeable contracts

	N	S	E	W
C	5	5	7	8
D	4	4	8	8
H	5	5	7	8
S	3	3	9	9
NT	4	4	8	8

♠ A 8 5  
 ♥ K 9 6  
 ♦ Q T 5 4  
 ♣ 8 6 5



♠ J 3  
 ♥ A 4 2  
 ♦ A J 8 6  
 ♣ K J 3 2

♠ T 7 4  
 ♥ Q T 8 5  
 ♦ 9 2  
 ♣ A T 9 4

N	E	S	W
	1♦	pass	1♠
pass	1NT	pass	2♣
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
pass	pass	pass	

**Lead**



# Example: Play board nr. 3

**Deal: 3/4**  
**South/EW**

High Card Points

	7	
14		7
	12	

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

**Makeable status**

4/4

Makeable contracts

	N	S	E	W
C	9	9	4	4
D	4	4	9	9
H	8	8	5	5
S	3	3	8	8
NT	6	6	7	7

♠ T 8  
 ♥ Q 6 2  
 ♦ A 8 6 4  
 ♣ J T 6 3



♠ Q 6 4  
 ♥ J T 7  
 ♦ K J T 7 5  
 ♣ 9 2

♠ K 7 3  
 ♥ A K 9 5 3  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ Q 8 5 4

N	E	S	W
		<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;">1♥</span>	<span style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px;">1♠</span>
<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;">2♥</span>	<span style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px;">2♠</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;">3♥</span>	<span style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px;">pass</span>
<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;">pass</span>	<span style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px;">pass</span>		

**Lead**



# Example: Play board nr. 4

**Deal: 4/4**  
**West/All**

High Card Points

14  
7            9  
10

♠ Q7 4 3  
♥ A 7 3  
♦ J T 9 5  
♣ 6 2

**Makeable status**  
4/4

Makeable contracts

	N	S	E	W
C	10	10	3	3
D	5	5	7	7
H	9	9	3	3
S	6	6	7	7
NT	8	8	5	5

♠ 8 6 2  
♥ Q9 4  
♦ AK 6  
♣ KQ5 4



♠ KT 9 5  
♥ T 2  
♦ Q4 3 2  
♣ A 8 3

♠ A J  
♥ KJ 8 6 5  
♦ 8 7  
♣ J T 9 7

**N**    **E**    **S**    **W**

			pass
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
1NT	pass	2♣	pass
3♥	pass	4♥	pass
pass	pass		

**Lead**



**Remember – bridge is a partnership game**

