

# Mini-Lesson: No Trump Opening Leads

More information: <https://bridge.careytutor.com>

# Objective for Mini-Lesson

- Main objectives:
  - Learn how to evaluate your hand for defense
  - Learn the options available for no trump opening leads
  - Understand why 4<sup>th</sup> best in a long suit is useful
- Secondary objectives:
  - Rule of 11 details

# Defensive Hand Evaluation

- Determine opponents' points based on contract level
  - 3 NT: about 26 high card points
  - 2 NT: about 23 high card points
  - 1 NT: about 20 high card points
- Determine partner's points
  - Add your high card points plus opponents' points and subtract from 40
- Base your lead on helping the stronger hand

# Defensive Goals In a No Trump Contract

- Find a way to get your tricks before they get their tricks
  - Set up a **long suit** if you have one
  - Set up your **high cards**
  - Attack their **weakest suit** (if you can determine which suit that is)
- So, first determine **which suit** to lead; then determine **which card** in that suit to lead

# No Trump Opening Lead Options

- Lead partner's suit
  - Lead the top of touching honors, low from 3 cards, high from 2 cards
- Lead 4<sup>th</sup> best from a long, unbid suit (or 4<sup>th</sup> best in partner's bid suit)
  - Rule of 11
  - With a long suit and a top sequence (KQJ, QJT, etc.), lead the top of the sequence
- Lead the top of a sequence (KQJ, QJT, etc.)
- Lead an unbid suit (especially if it's hearts/spades)

# Rule of 11

- Subtract the value of the led card from 11
  - There are that number of cards higher than the led card outside the leader's hand

- Why does it work?

$$11 - 4 = 7$$

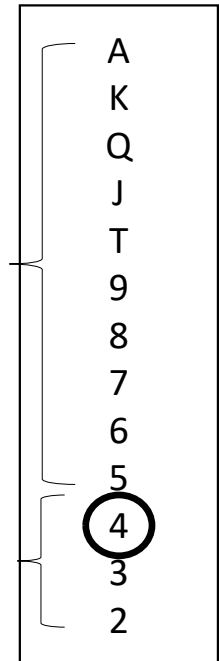
- Example: 4 led by partner

**But 3 of them are held by partner**

10 cards

**So, there are 7 cards outside of the leader's hand that are higher than 4.**

3 cards



# Rule of 11 Example

**3NT contract - West**

♠T54 ♥952 ♦Q4 ♣AJ863

West

North  
leads ♣6  
South plays  
♣T

East  
plays ♣7

♠ Q63  
♥ 763  
♦ K852  
♣ Q97

♠J87 ♥K874 ♦973 ♣KT2

# No Trump Opening Lead Examples

♠ T54 ♥ 952 ♦ **QJT4** ♣ A86

♠ J54 ♥ K52 ♦ **QJ543** ♣ J8

♠ **K4** ♥ 9532 ♦ 842 ♣ AT83

♠ 42 ♥ **9532** ♦ 42 ♣ J7653

3NT contract, no partner bid

2NT contract, no partner bid

2NT contract, partner bid spades

3NT contract, no partner bid

# Summary

- **Defensive Hand Evaluation**
  - Determine opponents' points based on contract level
  - Determine partner's points by subtracting from 40
- **No trump opening lead options**
  - Partner's suit
  - 4<sup>th</sup> best from long suit
  - Top of sequence
  - Unbid suit
- **Rule of 11**
  - Subtract partner's led card from 11: that is the number of cards higher than partner's lead
  - Play the appropriate card to knock out opponents' high cards