

BRIDGE TIP BY EDDIE KANTAR

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As declarer, play cards you are known to hold if it cannot cost you a trick. For example, if a queen is led on your left and you are declarer, dummy has small cards, you have KJ doubleton and the ace is played on your right, play the king. NOT the jack.

Third hand knows you have the king from the lead of the queen, and the opening leader knows you have the king from partner's play of the ace. Since the king and jack are equals, and since they both know you have the king, PLAY IT! PLAY IT!

Ed. Note: Remember that when you are defending, you win with the cheapest of equal cards. If W leads the D 2 and dummy has 543 and you, third hand, have QJ7, you must play the J. This says: "I might have the Q." But if instead you play the Q, it says: "I do not have the J." This will greatly affect the defence.

Remember to win from the bottom and lead from the top!

Eddie's tip (above) however, is about what Declarer should play when winning a trick.

Remember what hat you are wearing!

COUNTING THE HAND

86
AKQJ106
K86
A6

AK
985
AQ107
J842

S W N E
 4S P
P 5H P 6H
All pass

You are West and the contract is 6H. Dummy comes down and you count one club loser ONLY. Looks like a piece of cake.

WARNING: Whenever it looks this easy, stop and ask yourself..."What could possibly go wrong??"

You find out very quickly. South trumps the first round of Spades. You still have that pesky C loser so what on earth will you do about this. Hmm, well maybe the Diamonds will divide happily 3-3 and you can throw away your losing C on the long D in dummy.

The play proceeds with S leading The C King at trick two. You win the C Ace and North plays a Spade. i.e. He does NOT ruff.

Declarer's conclusions.

N has NINE Spades (S ruffed trick one, remember?)

N has NO Hearts (or he would have ruffed the Club).

N MUST perforce have FOUR Diamonds.
Therefore, S has only TWO Diamonds.

Declarer must draw trump and now play small D to Ace in dummy. Small D back to West hand's K and now KNOWING THAT SOUTH CANNOT HAVE ANY MORE D, finesses N for the D Jack. On the D Q, West discards his losing C.

See full hand below.

	QJ10975432	

	J932	

86		AK
AKQJ106		985
K86		AQ107
A6		J842

	7432	
	54	
	KQ109753	

When trying to decide how to play a problem suit, postpone playing this until later. This particular hand was easier to count than most. Counting is always somewhat arduous but take the time and effort and you will reap the rewards.

When counting, do not try to count BOTH opponents' hands, just count the one with the known LONG suit. MUCH easier that way.

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On some hands, a trump lead can actually be your strongest attack because it shortens declarer's or dummy's trump length. The types of auctions that will give you the strongest clues about this possibility include those where:

Declarer has shown a two-suited hand, especially if you have strength in declarer's non-trump suit. Many players consider it virtually mandatory to lead a trump to an auction such as:

West	East
	1D
1H	2C
2D	Pass

If you're South holding

1098
KQJ
643
AJ96

lead the diamond 3. There's a strong possibility that dummy will be relatively short in declarer's second suit (clubs), and you expect declarer will try to use dummy's diamonds to trump his club losers. Both opponents have shown minimum values, so they may not have enough in high-card power alone to make their contract.

A trump lead can also be an effective attack in other situations where the weaker hand shows limited trump support. These include auctions where responder takes a preference after opener makes a two-suited bid (e.g. Flannery 2D, for example, showing 5 Hearts & 4 Spades)

The same principle applies to two-suited overcalls:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO	
1S	2NT*	Dbl	3D	* = both minors
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All pass	

You don't even need to see your hand to know that a trump lead must be right. Partner's first double showed values (around 10 or more high-card points) and his second double showed a desire to defend. Even if you don't have a strong holding in the other minor, it's likely that partner does, so you want to prevent the short-trump hand (declarer) from using his diamonds to trump dummy's club losers.

The short-trump hand (usually dummy) is marked with shortness in another suit. You can almost see dummy's singleton club after this auction:

West	East
1D	1H
1S	1N
2H	4H

Opener's sequence here typically shows some extra values with 3-card heart support. Since opener pulled out of 1NT, he should have an unbalanced pattern -- probably 4-3-5-1.

If you hold

109
865
QJ76
AK82

resist the temptation to cash a high club, which may give declarer the tempo to eventually trump two club losers in dummy. You want to lead trumps as many times as possible, so start with the H 5. If declarer wants to set up ruffs in dummy, he'll have to lead clubs himself, and you'll be in again for a second trump lead.

You have a clear advantage in overall power. This may be especially important if you've doubled the contract.

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1NT	Pass	2C	2S
Pass	Pass	DbI	All pass

After this auction, a trump lead is a good idea, even if you have an unattractive holding such as

Q84
QJ10
KQ102
AJ6

Although partner should have moderate spade length and strength, his double may be partially based on knowledge that your side owns significantly more than half the high card strength. In this case, declarer's only prayer may be to score tricks with a few of dummy's trumps. Every trump lead you can make could cost him a trick.

You have a clear advantage in trump length and strength.

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1D	DbI	All pass	

QJ102
KJ76
8
AK63

lead the D 8.

Partner rates to have better trumps than declarer, so start attacking declarer's suit. Partner may even be able to draw all of declarer's and dummy's trumps. This is one of the rare exceptions to the "rule" about never leading a singleton trump.

Ed. note: Whenever partner passes your takeout double, it shows at least 3 trump tricks and an outside Ace, always lead a trump.

Passive trump leads:

"When in doubt, lead a trump" is an old guideline that tends to be invoked too often. Ideally, you'll have a good reason and a clear strategy when you choose a trump lead. Sometimes, however, the good reason will be that no other lead is safe. After a 1S-2S auction by your opponents, you have an unappealing choice of leads from

754

A1082

KJ32

J4

There are dangerous honor holdings in all the unbid suits, so try the spade 4. You don't necessarily expect this to hurt declarer, but you hope it won't help. Since partner has only one or two trumps, probably the worst that can happen is that you'll locate his doubleton queen -- and that's something declarer may have found for himself anyway.

A few caveats: You should avoid leading a trump when:

- Declarer has shown a long suit and dummy hasn't raised. A trump lead into a one-suited hand isn't likely to be an effective attack (trumps is probably dummy's shortest suit) and it's not always safe.
- It's a singleton. Your trump shortness is a clue that partner has length, and this lead will often pick up his honors. It's better to lead a long suit and try to force declarer to trump himself down to the same or shorter length than your partner.
- You have a dangerous honor holding such as

Jxx, Jx, K10x, A10x or Ax. Leads from these trump suits will be safe only if partner holds no trump honors. If he has the jack or queen, a lead from one of these combinations can make one of your natural trump tricks disappear immediately. Or, more likely, it may give declarer a finessing position that picks up your honor on the next lead.