

**TEST YOUR OPENING LEADS**  
**from 25 Ways to be a Better Defender**  
**by Barbara Seagram & David Bird**

1. a)

S K1032  
H 1083  
D K1064  
C 94

b)

S 10985  
H 7  
D KQ1083  
C A92

c)

S 105  
H J104  
D 10872  
C 9762

**AUCTION:**

S N  
1NT 3NT

on 1 a) b) and c)

You are West. What will you lead?

2 a)

S J73  
H 108  
D KJ642  
C J104

2 b)

S 864  
H 10982  
D QJ5  
C 853

2 c)

S Q1053  
H 763  
D Q2  
C K1074

**AUCTION:**

S N  
1D 1H  
1NT 3NT

You are West on 2 a) b) & c)  
What will you lead?

3 a)

S 754  
H Q76  
D Q10973  
C 63

3 b)

Q Q82  
H Q6  
D Q985  
C J732

3 c)

S 94  
H KJ62  
D J83  
C 9762

**AUCTION:**

S N  
1NT 6NT

You are West on 3 a) b) & c)  
What will you lead?

## ANSWERS

- 1 (a) S 2. Prefer a major suit to a minor suit.  
(b) D K. Lead the top of a broken sequence.

You are more likely to score the five tricks you need after a diamond lead than a spade lead.

(c) H J. A minor-suit lead, when your hand is so weak, would rarely be productive. A tripleton lead is a better prospect than a doubleton lead, particular when the tripleton contains two honors.

2 (a) C J. It would be a poor idea to lead a diamond because South has bid the suit. The C J is more constructive than a low spade because you have two honors in the suit.

(b) C 8. You hold only 3 points yourself and must hope that partner holds a fair hand in order to beat the contract. Since he could have overcalled at the one-level if he held five spades, it is more likely that you will find him with a good club suit.

(c) S 3. One or other defender might have looked for a spade fit if they held four cards in the suit. It is therefore more promising to lead a spade than a club.

NOTE that we try not to lead suits the opponents have bid, unless we have a solid sequence in that suit.

3 (a) S 7. To lead from either of your queens would be a serious mistake — very likely indeed to give a trick away. A tripleton lead is more likely to be safe than a doubleton lead.

(b) C 2. You don't want to lead away from an honor but you will have to! The safest lead is a low club. That's because you have four cards in the suit and declarer may have correspondingly short holdings, something like C A-Q-x opposite C K-x-x. A diamond lead might give declarer an undeserved trick with the D J. A lead of either major suit would be incredibly risky.

(c) C 7. A club lead is safest.

When you have 10842, lead the 8 instead of 4th best. Lead low and partner knows you have something of merit in the suit. Lead a high spot card and she knows it is top of nothing. Lead the 8 and it looks like top of nothing but you are not wasting the 10. Same with 9762. Lead the 7. Looks like top of nothing but you are not wasting the 9, which may prove to be a valuable card.

Remember to do the Rule of 40 before ever making an opening lead. Count how many HCP you expect your opponents to have. Add yours to that number. That now tells you how many points your partner can possibly have. If opponents get to 6NT, or 6 of anything, we try not to lead away from an honour card, which could give declarer her 12th or 13th trick.