

# IMPROVERS' LESSONS

## Week 4 Welcome

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# **Lesson Four**

## **Opening Leads and Declarer Play in Notrumps**



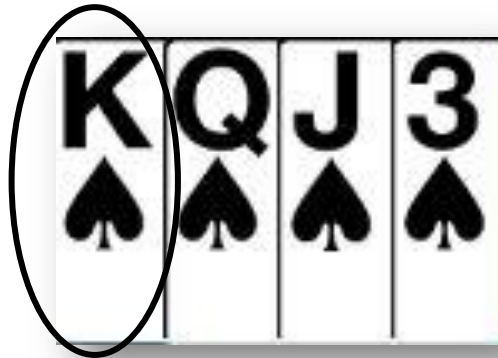
# Opening Leads against a No Trump Contract

## DO

- Lead partner's suit (if they have bid one)
- Lead your longest suit
- Lead an unbid suit (major before minor)



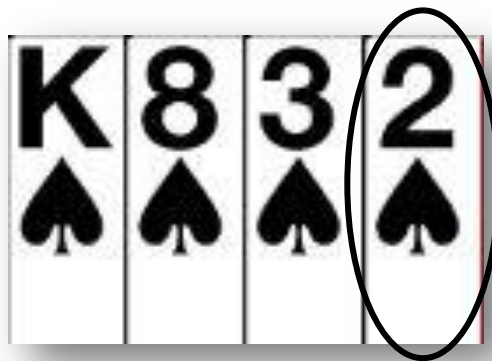
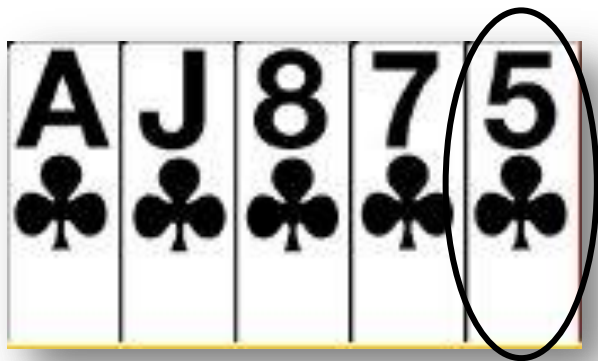
# WHICH CARD AGAINST NT?



Lead TOP of a sequence of 3 honours  
or broken sequence



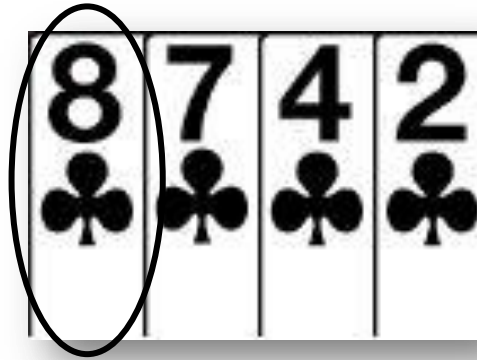
# WHICH CARD AGAINST NT?



Lead a LOW card – a low card promises an honour



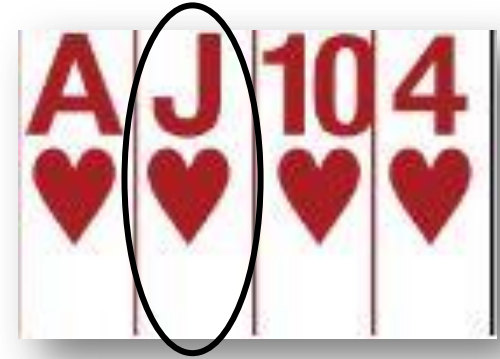
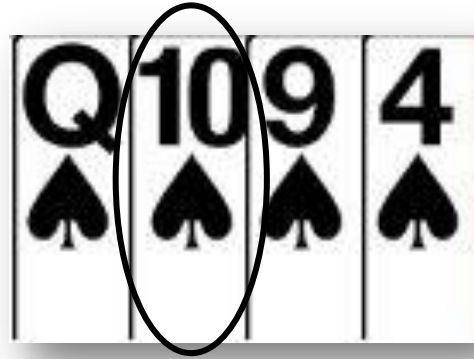
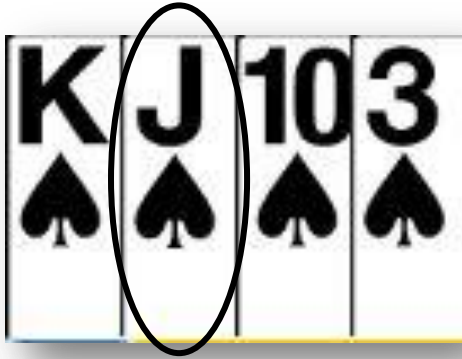
# WHICH CARD AGAINST NT?



Lead TOP of small cards – a high card denies an HONOUR



# WHICH CARD AGAINST NT?



Lead TOP of an interior sequence of two or more honours



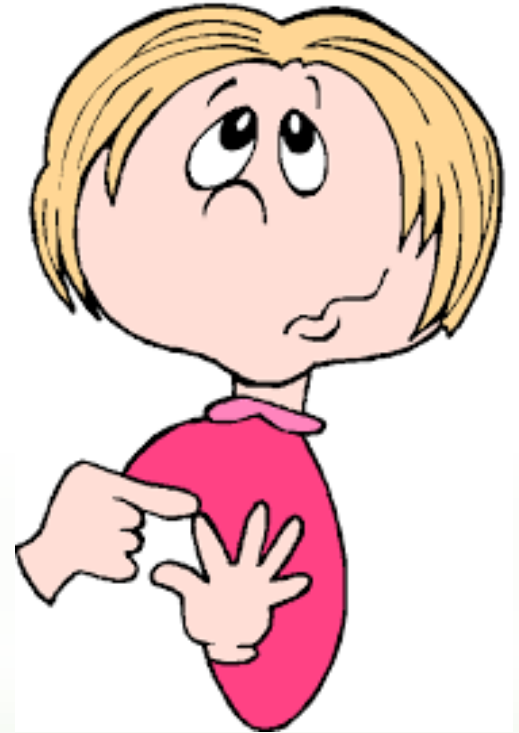
# Playing the No Trump Hand





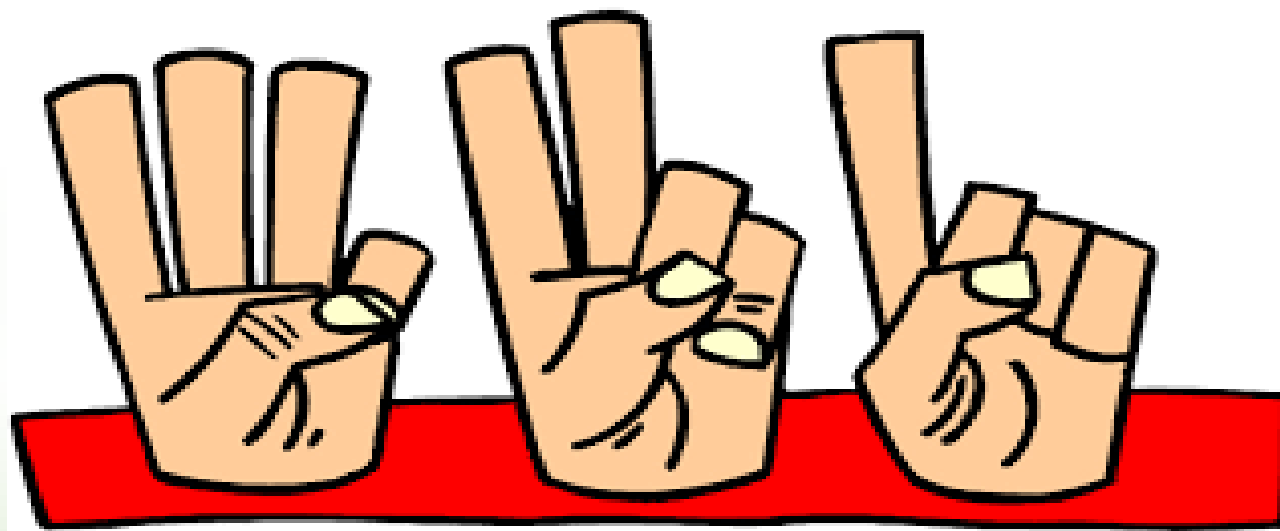
# MAKE A PLAN

- Count your certain winners
- Work out where you can get extra winners
- Don't cash all your Aces and Kings at the start



# COUNTING WINNERS

- Check each suit for immediate winners.



# COUNTING WINNERS



4

Winners



# COUNTING WINNERS



**1** Winner

or with a Heart lead



**2** Winners



# COUNTING WINNERS



3



Immediate /  
Certain Winners



# COUNTING WINNERS



0

Immediate  
Winners





**CONTRACT = 3NT ... need 9 tricks**



TOTAL WINNERS = 4 ♠, 1 ♥, 3 ♦, 0 ♣ = 8 in total

**How do you make more?**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... need 9 tricks**



With a ♥ lead you will win a trick with the ♥Q

**How do you make more?**



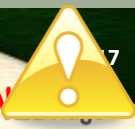


**CONTRACT = 3NT ... need 9 tricks**



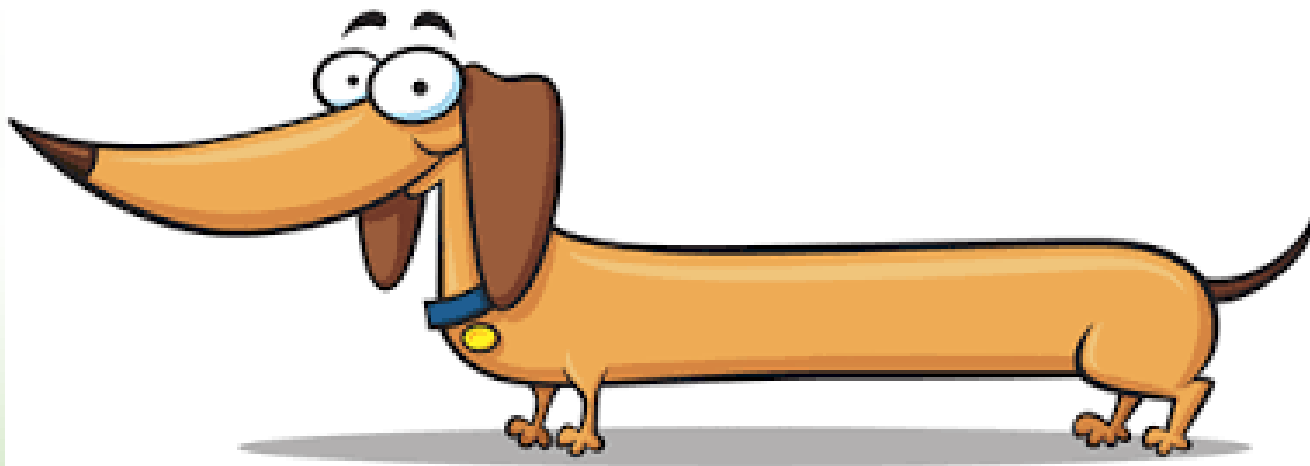
If the ♦'s split 3-3 that will give an additional trick

**How do you make more?**



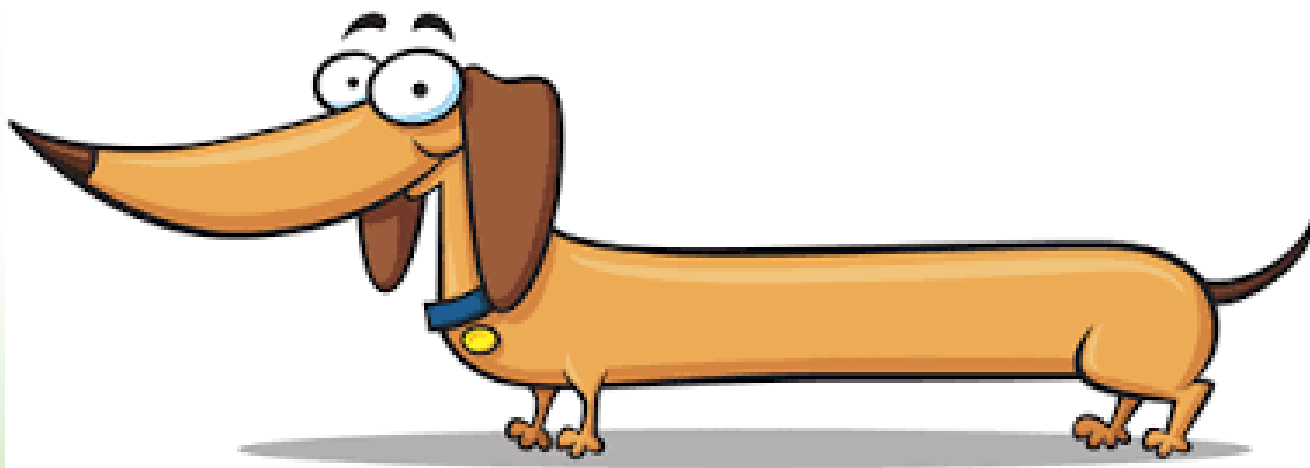
# Establishing a Long Suit

Establish the suit where you have the BEST fit. This suit will be your longest/strongest combination.



# Establishing a Long Suit

If there is a choice between 2 suits,  
choose the suit with good intermediate  
cards – 10s, 9s and 8s



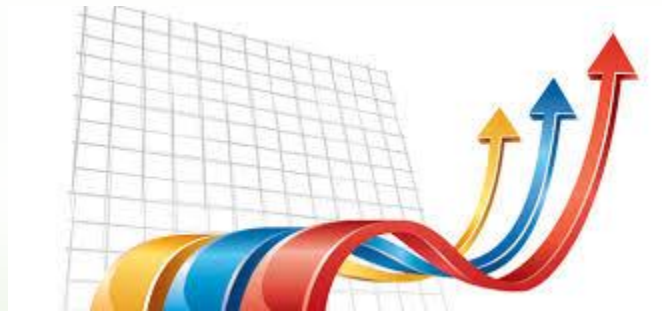
# Promoting Honours

You often need to **LOSE** a trick to establish other tricks



# Lead towards Honours

Play towards an Honour,  
hoping that the missing card  
is in **SECOND** player's hand



# Finesse

You hope that the missing honour is favourably placed





**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



Check each suit for immediate winners



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



**SPADES = 1 winner**





**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



**HEARTS = 3 winners**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



**DIAMONDS = 1 winner**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



**CLUBS = 1 winner**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2**



TOTAL WINNERS = 1 ♠, 3 ♥, 1 ♦, 1 ♣ = 6 in total

**How do you make more?**





# CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠2



The ♦ suit offers the best chance to make more tricks ...  
must play the ♦Q first to hoping we can finesse the ♦K

## How do you make more?



# DON'T KEEP CHANGING SUITS

- Play on the suit that is going to make you the most tricks
- Don't keep changing suits
- Let your opponents open up new suits



# DON'T KEEP CHANGING SUITS



YOU →



Don't open  
up this suit ...  
wait for your  
opponents ...  
you will then  
win a trick



# HOLD UP PLAY

- As part of your plan, you must decide whether you should win the first trick
- It might be safer to wait
- Timing can change the outcome of your contract



Hold Up!





# CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4



Check each suit for immediate winners



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4**



**SPADES = 1 winner**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4**



**HEARTS = 3 winners**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4**



**DIAMONDS = 0 winners**

**But there are 4 potential winners**





**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4**



**CLUBS = 1 winner**



**CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4**



TOTAL WINNERS = 1♠, 3♥, 0(4)♦, 1♣ = 5(9) in total

**BUT our SPADE suit is a problem**



# CONTRACT = 3NT ... lead ♠4



Hold up the ♠ suit until the third round HOPING that the defender with ♦A has no more spades to lead

**BUT our SPADE suit is a problem**



# CHOOSE THE CORRECT SUIT TO DEVELOP

- Don't be afraid to lose the lead early
- If suits are equal in potential winners, choose the suit with good intermediate cards





**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦4**



Check each suit for immediate winners



**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦ 4**



**SPADES = 0 winners**



**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦ 4**



**HEARTS = 1 winner**



**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦ 4**



**DIAMONDS = 2 winners**  
(because of the lead)





**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦4**



**CLUBS = 2 winners**



**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦4**



TOTAL WINNERS = 0♠, 1♥, 2♦, 2♣ = 5 in total

**How do you make more?**





**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦ 4**



We have two 7-card suits ... SPADES and HEARTS

**Which is best? Spades or Hearts**



**CONTRACT = 1NT ... lead ♦4**



Choose SPADES ... it has more intermediate values

**You are GUARANTEED 2 winners once you lose 2 rounds of Spades**



# SUMMARY

- COUNT your winners
- Work out where you can get your extra tricks



**Make a PLAN**



# IMPROVERS' LESSONS

Please contact me if you have any questions

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