

Defending No Trump Contracts – In Third Seat



What can we Learn from Partner's Lead?

If it is a low card	It is probably a long suit with at least one honour
If it is an honour	It is probably an honour sequence (perfect, near perfect or internal)
If it is a highish card	It is probably a short suit or a bad suit
If it is a suit you have bid	It is probably a short suit
If it is a nine or a ten	With journalist leads, it is probably an internal sequence

Third Hand Plays High

Partner leads a small card and dummy has only small cards.

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has	
♠ 2	♠ 8 6 3	♠ K J 4	Play the king.

Partner leads a small card. Dummy has an honour and small cards. Third hand has an honour that is smaller than dummy's.

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has	
♠ 2	♠ K 6 3	♠ Q T 7 4	If dummy plays low, play the queen. If dummy plays the king, play the seven.

Play Low from Equals

Equals are adjacent cards like KQ or JT. When third hand has a choice of playing one of the equal cards, the choice should **always** be the lowest.

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has	
♠ 2	♠ 8 6 3	♠ Q J 4	Play the jack.

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has	
♠ 4	♠ T 6 3	♠ J 9 8	If dummy plays low, play the eight.

Reading Partner's Cards

	Dummy	
West	♠ 8 5 4 <u>3</u>	East
♠ K 9 7 <u>6</u> 2	South	♠ <u>J</u>
	♠ <u>A</u>	

East led the ♠6, dummy played the three, partner the jack and declarer the ace.

What does west know?

Declarer must have the ten because east would play lower of equals.

East must have the queen. Otherwise, declarer would have won the trick with that card.

	Dummy	
West	♠ T 6 <u>5</u>	East
♠ Q 7 4 <u>3</u> 2	South	♠ <u>8</u>
	♠ <u>K</u>	

East led the ♠3, dummy played the five, partner the eight and declarer the king.

What does west know?

Declarer must have the ace because partner did not play it.
East must have the jack and the nine because declarer could have won with those cards.

	Dummy	
West	♠ T 6 <u>5</u>	East
♠ Q 7 4 <u>3</u> 2	South	♠ <u>9</u>
	♠ <u>K</u>	

East led the ♠3, dummy played the five, partner the nine and declarer the king.

What does west know?

Declarer must have the ace because partner did not play it.
East must have the jack because declarer could have won with that card.
Declarer must have the eight because east would have played the lower of equals.

	Dummy	
West	♠ T 6 <u>5</u>	East
♠ Q 7 4 <u>3</u> 2	South	♠ <u>9</u>
	♠ <u>J</u>	

East led the ♠3, dummy played the five, partner the nine and declarer the king.

What does west know?

Declarer must have the ace and king because partner did not play either of them.
Declarer must have the eight because east would have played the lower of equals.

When Dummy's Honour is Surrounded

- If:
- (1) Dummy has an honour but plays low
 - (2) Third hand has a higher honour
 - (3) Third hand also has a lower honour or a nine

Third hand should play the lower honour (or nine).

EXCEPTION: When the cards are ace and nine, play the ace.

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has
♠ 2	♠ Q 6 3	♠ K J 8

If dummy plays low, play the jack

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has
♠ 2	♠ Q 6 3	♠ K T 8

If dummy plays low, play the ten

The Lead is	Dummy has	Third Seat has
♠ 3	♠ K 6 5	♠ A T 7 2

If dummy plays low, play the ten

Deal 1

	North	
	♠ K T 9 8 ♥ A K ♦ J 9 4 ♣ K Q 7 2	
West		East
♠ Q J 7 3 ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ T 6 5 ♣ 6 4 3		♠ 5 4 2 ♥ Q 5 4 3 2 ♦ K Q 2 ♣ A T
	South	
	♠ A 6 ♥ J T 6 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ J 9 8 5	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East should lead the ♥3. "Fourth highest of longest and strongest."
Dummy plays ♥6 and West plays ♥7, the lowest of equals. East now knows:

- North has the ace and king because West didn't play them.
- West must have the eight and nine because North didn't play them.

With declarer known to have a doubleton AK, the two of hearts will knock out declarer's ace. Later, East will be able to cash three heart tricks.

Deal 2

	North	
	♠ J 8 5 ♥ A 9 4 2 ♦ 6 5 ♣ T 8 6 4	
West		East
♠ 4 3 2 ♥ J 8 7 5 ♦ A 3 2 ♣ A 9 2		♠ A Q T ♥ Q T ♦ K Q 9 7 ♣ K 7 5 3
	South	
	♠ K 9 7 6 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ J T 8 4 ♣ Q J	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

East's 2♦ denied a four-card major.
South leads ♠6, fourth-highest.
North plays the jack and East wins with the queen. East now leads the ♥Q. What does South know?

Declarer must have ♠A (North didn't play it) and the ♠T because North would have played the lower of equals.

East can have no more spades because of the 2♦ Stayman response. So North has the eight and five. The ♥Q lead strongly suggests that North has the ♥A. This means that East must have all the remaining high cards to justify the raise to 3NT.

South should allow North to win the heart trick. North plays back a spade through East's AT. The defence should take two spade tricks, two heart tricks and a club or diamond to beat the contract.

Deal 3

	North	
	♠ Q 6 5 ♥ K J 6 ♦ J 9 6 ♣ K 4 3 2	
West		East
♠ J 7 4 3 ♥ T 7 ♦ T 7 4 3 ♣ A 6 5		♠ A T 9 2 ♥ 9 8 4 2 ♦ A 8 5 ♣ 9 7
	South	
	♠ K 8 ♥ A Q 5 3 ♦ K Q 2 ♣ Q J T 8	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the ♠3, preferring a major to a minor. The ♠5 comes from dummy and partner's nine is overtaken by declarer's king.

Declarer leads back the ♣8. What does West know?

South must have ♠8 since East would play the lower of equals.

East must have the ♠10, since declarer could have won with that.

It is unclear who has the ♠A although declarers usually play the higher of equals. Sooner or later, West will win the ♣A and play another spade. When that happens, the defence will take three spade tricks to go with their minor suit aces.

If East plays the ♠A at trick one, declarer makes an extra spade trick and the contract.

Deal 4

	North	
	♠ A Q 8 5 4 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ Q 7 2	
West		East
♠ K 2 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ K Q J T 2 ♣ A T 3		♠ 9 7 6 ♥ T 8 6 ♦ A 7 6 5 ♣ K 9 5
	South	
	♠ J T 3 ♥ A J 7 2 ♦ 8 4 ♣ J 8 6 4	

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♠
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

North leads the fourth-highest ♠5. Dummy plays the six, South the ten and declarer wins with the king.

Declarer now plays a low diamond to the ace and then leads back a heart. It is South to play. What does South know?

Since North has overcalled 1♠ with a five-card suit, the suit must be headed by the AQ. Otherwise, the suit would fail the suit quality test.

By the rule of eleven, declarer can have only one card higher than the five and that has already gone. So North has the ♠8 and the suit must be AQ854 or AQ852. Since East-West must have 25 points, North cannot have much outside spades.

With the play on hearts, declarer is trying to steal a ninth trick before the defence take all their spades. South must go up with the ace and lead back the ♠J.