

New players often dread playing in **notrumps** as declarer. *That fear is mostly irrational!*

More can go wrong for declarer when there is a trump suit, often in an unexpected way.

For example:

- ♣️ Winning tricks might get trumped
- ♣️ Defenders trumps might get promoted
- ♣️ Declarer might run out of trumps

More detail below on how defenders can make the most of these situations.

## OPENING LEADS

### Short suit lead

Leading a **singleton** (that is an off-suit with one card in) is often very effective. [7]

And more so if a careless declarer doesn't draw trumps when they should!

Leading a **doubleton** can also be effective but that is less likely.

It is important to always lead the *higher* card of any 2-card holding. That helps partner determine whether you have one card or two in the suit. [7]

Occasionally the opponents' bidding can indicate a singleton in partner's hand.

For example you hold four cards in a suit the opponents have both bid. They should have eight so at leaves only one for partner [6]

### Leading Trumps

Trump leads are more effective more often than most players realise.

A trump lead is indicated from the bidding if:

Dummy evidently has a short suit and/or

Declarer bids a suit you are strong in. [1] [5]

Later in the play of the hand always be alert for the need to stop dummy trumping your winning tricks [2]

Finally **Most Important** on OPENING LEADS

**NEVER LEAD A SMALL CARD IN A SUIT**

**YOU HOLD THE ACE IN**

*and assume partner never does either*

## PROMOTING TRUMPS

If two adjacent hands are both void in the suit which is led, trumps can get promoted sometimes in an unexpected way.

A simple example with the last two tricks of a hand. Spades are trumps:

	<b>North:</b> ♠ A Q	
<b>West:</b> ♠ none		<b>East:</b> ♠ K
♥ 3		♥ none
♦ 3		♦ 2
	<b>South</b> ♠ 9 8	

West leads ♥3

East will *always* make a trick with the ♠K because North has to commit his card first.

A real-life example: Spades are trumps:

	<b>North:</b> ♠ 7 5	
<b>West:</b> ♠ J 6 2		<b>East:</b> ♠ 10 4
	<b>South:</b> ♠ A K Q 9 8 3	

Unless one opponent has four, North-South will not have any losers.

### **BUT:**

If East can lead a suit neither South nor West have any cards in, West's ♠J is promoted to a winner no matter whether South trumps high or low or not at all. [8]

### **AND ALSO:**

If *West* can lead a suit neither South nor East have any cards in, and East plays ♠10 West's ♠J is promoted to a later winner [4]

## RUNNING DECLARER OUT OF TRUMPS

If a defender holds "quite a few trumps" (usually meaning 4) there is often a good opportunity to run declarer out of trumps.

Leading a suit which declarer needs to trump might ultimately promote winners in that suit because declarer has no trumps left. [3]

## GENERAL

To lead a suit **DECLARER** can trump is Ok

To lead a suit **DUMMY** can trump is NOT Ok.