

Trump Leads

A trump lead can be highly effective, either to cut down the ruffing potential in the enemy hands or as a passive lead (trying not to give a trick away on lead).

A trump lead is reasonable if dummy has shown support for declarer's suit and you have a safe trump holding to lead.

Do not lead a trump if dummy has not supported declarer's suit. Even if you have two or three rag trumps, your lead may destroy a trick in partner's hand. For example, if the opponents have bid 1S – 1NT

3S - pass then a lead from two or three low trumps could cost on these layouts:

| | | | | |
|----|--------------|--|-------------|----------|
| | 4 | | --- | |
| 72 | J865 | | 754 | Q 10 6 2 |
| | A K Q 10 9 3 | | A K J 9 8 3 | |

When dummy has shown support and no long suit, a trump lead may be attractive but if you have one trump, partner often has three or four. You may well trap partner's trick.

Therefore ; do not lead a singleton trump (unless the opposition have sacrificed) ,partner may have three or four, and your lead may destroy a potential trick or two in partner's hand, such as Q-x-x, K-Q-10-x, J-x-x-x or J-10-x-x.

Do not lead a trump if dummy has shown a useful, long suit (choose an unbid suit instead), if you have four or more trumps (try to force declarer to ruff to cut down declarer's trump length) or if your trump holding may give away a trick. Dangerous holdings from which to lead a trump are: A-Q, A-J, A-J-x, K-x, Q-x, Q-x-x, J-x, J-x-x, 10-x, 10-x-x. Good holdings are x-x, x-x-x, A-x-x and K-x-x.

Do start with a trump lead if your trump holding is a safe lead, dummy has shown support and:

1. You have no strong lead and dummy has not shown a long suit.
2. Declarer has bid two suits and dummy has given a preference to the second suit. If so, dummy will be short in declarer's first suit and declarer's strategy will be to ruff losers in dummy. By leading trumps, you cut down dummy's ruffing potential.

3. Dummy has shown a two-suiter (e.g., the Unusual 2NT) and declarer has chosen one of the suits. Again, declarer is likely to be ruffing the other suit and if you are strong in the second suit, a trump lead may remove declarer's ruffing power.
4. Each opponent bid a suit and they have ended in the third bid suit as trumps. Such hands are often played as a cross-ruff and the best defence against a cross-ruff is repeated trump leads.
5. Declarer or dummy has shown a 4-4-4-1 where the main value lies in scoring ruffs.
6. They have bid beyond the level suggested by their point count. They expect to score extra tricks by ruffs. Limit their ruffing with a trump lead.
7. Your side is strong in the three suits outside trumps. By leading a trump, you may protect your outside tricks from ruffs.
8. The opponents are sacrificing and you are strong in the other suits. Even a singleton trump is OK here.
9. You doubled for takeout at the 1-level and partner passed for penalties. In this case, you should lead a trump even if it is a singleton.
10. They are in a 4-3 or 4-4 fit and you have five low trumps (exception to the principle of leading your long suit when you have 4+ trumps).