Improvers' Lesson 6: Opening Leads

NZBridge

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

North: ♠ 8 3 ♥ K Q 2 ♦ K J 7 4 ♣ Q 9 7 5
West: ♠ Q 9 7 6 2 ♥ 10 9 6 ♦ 8 6 ♣ A 10 4
East: ♠ A 5 4 ♥ J 8 4 3 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ J 6 2
South: ♠ K J 10 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ A Q 10 5 ♣ K 8 3

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

Lead: small spade

The small card lead promises an honour. East wins and returns the suit. South plays the ♠ J losing to the ♠ Q. West must continue with a third round, then keep spades and the ♣ A while declarer takes their diamond tricks.

When declarer tries to get a club trick, West must take ♣ A and the remaining two spade winners.

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

North: ♠ Q 10 7 5 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ Q 10 ♣ A 9 6 2
West: ♠ J 6 ♥ J 10 8 2 ♦ A 9 7 5 ♣ K J 10
East: ♠ A 9 ♥ A Q 9 5 3 ♦ K 6 3 2 ♣ Q 5
South: ♠ K 8 3 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ 8 7 4 3

West	North	East	South
		1 ♥	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

Lead: small spade

South attacks with a small spade promising an honour. East wins and crosses to ♦ A to take a losing trump finesse. The defence can now take a trick in each suit to defeat the contract. If South had led a club at trick one, the spade loser would have been discarded on the third club.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

North: ♠ Q 8 7 6 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ K ♣ A Q 8 7 3
West: ♠ A 4 ♥ J 10 8 7 5 ♦ A J 6 3 ♣ 10 6
East: ♠ 5 3 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 9 8 5 2 ♣ K 9 4 2
South: ♠ K J 10 9 ♥ A 9 3 2 ♦ Q 7 4 ♣ J 5

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

Lead: ♥ 4 singleton

East leads the heart, hoping to get a ruff. North wins and plays a spade to the king. West wins and returns a heart for East to ruff. East should play a diamond as clubs were bid by North.

This defence now defeats the contract. If East had not led a heart at trick one, the contract would have made.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

North: ♠ Q J 6 2 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ 8 5 3
West: ♠ 10 5 ♥ Q J 10 9 8 2 ♦ A 2 ♣ A K Q
East: ♠ K 9 3 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K Q 8 4 3 ♣ 10 9 6
South: ♠ A 8 7 4 ♥ A K ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ J 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

Lead: ♠ Q

North leads the top of a sequence enabling the defence to take two tricks in that suit. If any other lead is made, declarer can discard a losing spade on the third round of diamonds. A low spade lead would not beat the contract as declarer can play low from dummy.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

North: ♠ Q J 7 3 ♥ K 2 ♦ K Q J 8 4 ♣ A 4
West: ♠ A 10 9 6 2 ♥ A 8 6 ♦ A 10 5 ♣ J 10
East: ♠ K 8 4 ♥ 10 9 7 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ 9 8 7 6
South: ♠ 5 ♥ Q J 5 4 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ K Q 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
1 ♠	1 NT	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Lead : ♠ 4

East leads partner's suit. With three cards and an honour, East leads a small card. If East leads ♠ K at trick one, declarer will make 9 tricks.

On a low spade lead, the defence takes four spades and two aces.

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

North: ♠ 10 8 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ J 7 ♣ A 9 5 4 3 2
West: ♠ Q J 7 5 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ K Q 8
East: ♠ A K 9 3 2 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ A 9 ♣ J 10 7
South: ♠ 6 4 ♥ 10 9 8 4 ♦ K Q 10 8 3 2 ♣ 6

West	North	East	South
		1 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

Lead: ♣ 6

South must choose between ♦ K and a singleton club. It is preferable to lead a club hoping to get a ruff.

There is a greater chance of beating the contract by getting the ruff first and hopefully the ♦ K later.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

North: ♠ A Q 10 5 ♥ 9 6 ♦ A J 2 ♣ J 10 5 4
West: ♠ 9 8 3 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ Q 9 7
East: ♠ K J 7 2 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ K 10 6 5 ♣ 8 3
South: ♠ 6 4 ♥ A K 10 3 2 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A K 6 2

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Lead ♦ 5

It is better to lead the unbid suit rather than declarer's suit.

When declarer attacks clubs or hearts,then West will return a diamond when in with the ♣ Q or ♥ Q.

When East gets in, they must not play a spade which was declarer's first bid suit.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

North: ♠ A J 10 3 2 ♥ K J 5 ♦ J 9 3 ♣ 9 4
West: ♠ K 9 8 ♥ A Q 8 7 4 ♦ 8 ♣ K 8 6 5
East: ♠ 7 6 5 ♥ 9 ♦ A Q 7 2 ♣ A J 10 3 2
South: ♠ Q 4 ♥ 10 6 3 2 ♦ K 10 6 5 4 ♣ Q 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	All pass		

Lead: ♠ Q

South leads partner's suit. With a doubleton, lead the higher card (with more than 2 of partners suit, lead low)

If you lead a diamond, declarer will discard a spade from dummy and will now lose only 2 spade tricks.