

# Leads versus NT II

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This is a continuation of the previous lesson<sup>1</sup> where the bidding was 1NT - 3NT, except in this lesson there might be a Stayman bid or partner may have opened or the opponents ended in 3NT. Questions to help you choose a lead are: (a) What's my strength and partner's likely strength? (b) What do we know about the opponents' hands? Generally, we still favor majors over minors.

## Suggested Lead Priority

- Safe honor sequence: KQJ(x), QJT(x), JT98(x) or Partner's suit: xxxx, xxx, xx
- 5-card major (4<sup>th</sup> best)
- 4+ card suit headed by KQTx(x), QJ9x(x), JT8x(x)
- 4 card major suit without an honor: xxxx
- 3/2 card major without an honor: xxx, xx
- 3/4 card major with an A or K: Axx, Axxx, Kxx, Kxxx

## Partner Opens; Opponents Bid 3NT Without Stayman

Partner opens a minor and the bidding proceeds 1♣/1♦ – 1NT – P – 3NT. Here's what we know: Partner has an opening hand without a 5-card major; the opponents have 24+HCP; neither opponent typically has a 5-card major. If you have a 5-card major with an honor and a possible outside entry, 4<sup>th</sup> best of the major will likely be your most effective choice.

E.g. 1♣ – 1NT – P – 3NT with ♠QT753 ♥K92 ♦843 ♣85 lead the ♠5. However, with ♠Q753 ♥942 ♦843 ♣QT8 lead the ♣8. Note: Lead 3<sup>rd</sup> best from xxx or Hxx unless you have a sequence.

If Partner opens a major, now you want to lead Partner's suit unless you only have a singleton and an honor sequence in an outside suit.

E.g. 1♥ – 1NT – P – 3NT with ♠QJT73 ♥2 ♦8743 ♣875 lead the ♠Q. However, with ♠QJT73 ♥9 ♦87432 ♣QT8 lead the ♥9.

## Leading After "Failed" Stayman

In the sequence 1NT – 2♣ // 2♦ – 3NT Responder has shown at least one major, which somewhat reduces the advantage a major suit lead holds over a minor suit.

After the auction above, you hold: ♠JT7 ♥96 ♦KJ94 ♣9832. Here, the ♠J is the choice. However, with ♠J7 ♥JT75 ♦QJT94 ♣K8 the minor suit with a solid honor sequence headed by the ♦Q is superior.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this lesson is from the book, *Winning NT Leads*, by David Bird and Taf Anthias.

# Quiz 7: Leads vs NT II

In this quiz, the bidding is provided; you are now on lead. Enter your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> lead choices in the space provided.

**Board 1**  
North Deals  
None Vul

N
W E
S

♠ A K 3  
♥ 8 6 2  
♦ K 9 6 5 3 2  
♣ 8

West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 2**  
West Deals  
N-S Vul

N
W E
S

♠ J 10 8 3  
♥ Q 10 3  
♦ 5 3 2  
♣ J 9 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 3**  
West Deals  
E-W Vul

N
W E
S

♠ 9 7  
♥ J 10 8 7 3  
♦ 4 2  
♣ K 5 4 3

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 4**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

N
W E
S

♠ 9 4  
♥ 8 4 3 2  
♦ A J 5 4 2  
♣ 5 4

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 5**  
East Deals  
N-S Vul

N
W E
S

♠ 8 7  
♥ 8 7 5 3 2  
♦ Q 10 5  
♣ 8 5 3

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 6**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

N
W E
S

♠ A K 5 4  
♥ 8 7 6 5 2  
♦ 10 4  
♣ A 9

West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 7**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

N
W E
S

♠ 8 2  
♥ J 2  
♦ 10 9 8 4 3  
♣ J 10 9 5

West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Board 8**  
West Deals  
None Vul

N
W E
S

♠ A 6 5 4  
♥ Q 4 3  
♦ 8 2  
♣ K 8 5 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣!
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 NT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_