**Part II Defending Against Notrump Contracts**

Chapter 3 Opening Leads Against Notrump

1. Longest and strongest suit – 4th best from any suit containing an honor

(problem 1)

1. Lead from the **top** of a three-card sequence or broken sequence.
2. Lead the higher of the two touching cards in an interior sequence (problem 2)
3. AQJ – lead the Q QT9 – lead the ten
4. Works best with a 5+ card suit
5. With two 5-card suits, lead from the stronger. (Problem 3)
6. Lead Top of Nothing. From a 3-card suit, lead the top card. From a 4-card suit, lead 2nd highest card. (problem 4)
7. Lead partner’s suit. (problem 5)
8. Avoid leading a suit that opponents have bid.
9. Rule of 11: When partner leads 4th-highest card, subtract that number from 11 to find how many cards higher than partner’s lead are in the other three hands – dummy’s, declarer’s and yours.
10. With a very weak hand, lead a short suit in hopes that partner has length in it.

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Chapter 4 Defending Notrump in **Third Seat**

1. When you win the opening lead from a three-card suit, return the higher of your two remaining cards. (Problem 6)
2. Estimate how many points partner is likely to have – Rule of 40.
3. With a doubleton honor in the suit partner has led, play the honor and return the lower card – even if it means overtaking partner’s lead. (Problem 7)
4. When you win partner’s lead, decide whether returning that suit holds promise or if switching to a different suit might be better. Read partner’s lead. Assess the dummy. Consider the bidding. (problem 8)
5. Holding a doubleton honor in the suit partner has led, unblock by playing your honor on the 1st round. (Problem 9)
6. If partner’s bid or lead has indicated a long suit, think ahead to how declarer will play the hand and where there might be possible entries to partner’s hand. (problem 11)
7. When partner’s lead indicates an honor in the suit led, if you have an honor higher than one in dummy, keep it to cover dummy’s honor if you can play a card higher than an eight. (problem 13)
8. Maintain parity with the dummy. If you have a suit with the same number of cards as dummy, try keep the same number of cards in the suit as dummy keeps. If necessary, discard from a different suit. (problem 14)
9. When discarding, play a discouraging card from the suit you do not want partner to lead rather than an encouraging card from the suit you do want led. And count on partner to figure it out. (problem 16)
10. Unblock, even when it’s uncomfortable. (problem 17)