

♠ AJ76
♥ 865
♦ KJ2
♣ Q82

N	E	S	W
P	1C	P	1D (1)
P	2H (2)	P	4H
P	P	P	

- (1) 4+ hearts
- (2) 4 hearts 12-15

What should South lead against 4H?

Defence 8 - When to Lead a Trump

Dealer: N
Vul: Nil

	♠ 942 ♥ 43 ♦ 9654 ♣ A1043		
♠ K863 ♥ AKQ7 ♦ 1087 ♣ 95	♠ AJ76 ♥ 865 ♦ KJ2 ♣ Q82	♠ Q10 ♥ J1092 ♦ AQ3 ♣ KJ76	

N	E	S	W
P	1C	P	1D (1)
P	2H (2)	P	4H
P	P	P	

- (1) 4+ hearts
- (2) 4 hearts 12-15

What should South lead against 4H?

There are 3 main situations where you should lead a trump in a suit contract:

- (1) The bidding suggests the opposition contract is deficient in high card points and the opposition declarer will try to ruff losers in dummy or cross ruff the hand,
- (2) From the bidding you know declarer has a side suit in which you have length and winners. You want to stop declarer ruffing away these side suit losers, and
- (3) You have honours by themselves or broken honours (eg KJxx) in all the side suits and don't want to lead away from these honours and possibly finesse yourself.

The above hand is a classic instance of the third situation. I was the East declarer in a recent club session. Look at the hand from my point of view – my losers are SA, DK and another diamond, and CA with an unknown number of further clubs. Things do not look promising.

However, my South opponent came to the rescue. She initially led the SA. This allowed me to get one diamond loser away on the SK. She then compounded the offence by leading the C2 to her partner's ace saving me a guess in clubs. I was able to ruff 2 clubs in dummy, just losing CA, SA and DK and made 4H where most of the field went down.

Notice anything but a trump lead helps declarer. When the opponents have the balance of the points in a suit contract, it often pays to avoid leading away from honours by themselves or broken honours. Just lead a suit with no honours in it. Sometimes that's the trump suit.