

Tidbit 20

Never lead away from an Ace in a suit contract.

Interpretation:

This idiom also referred to as “not underleading an Ace in a suit contract” is self-explanatory. This refers to the opening lead and the risk is that declarer or dummy has a singleton King in that suit and your underlead of the Ace will result in you taking no tricks in that suit at all.

This is the last of “Barbara’s Idioms” so there will no exercise set for what in reality is a very sensible guideline. A brief survey of recent play (see below) will demonstrate how frequently applicable this idiom is.

That does not prevent you underleading an Ace during the course of play, when you have the benefit of seeing dummy and, perhaps, having some insights into declarer’s hand when she (and not your partner!) might be fooled by your lead.

Examples:

| Date | Board | Contract | Underlead | Outcome | +/-/= |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|-------|
| Dec 15 a.m. | 1 | 5D | AS | 12 tricks rather than 11 | - |
| Dec 18 a.m. | 8 | 3S(South) | AS | 11 tricks rather than 10 | - |
| Dec 21 p.m. | 4 | 3C | AH | 11 tricks rather than 9 | - |

Answer to Exercise Tidbit 19:



Dir: West
Vul: None

♠ 974
♥ --
♦ KJ53
♣ KQ8752

NORTH
WEST 8 EAST
SOUTH

♠ AKQ1052
♥ 7642
♦ A10
♣ 3

♠ J863
♥ A853
♦ Q876
♣ A

♠ --
♥ KQJ109
♦ 942
♣ J10964

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 5 | 1 | - | - | - |
| S | 5 | - | - | - | - |
| E | - | - | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| W | - | - | 2 | 5 | 3 |

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 9 | | |
| 11 | | 13 |
| 7 | | |

You are West, the Dealer. The bidding proceeds:

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 1S | 2S* |
| 4S | 5C | 5S | 6C |
| Double | | | |

*Michaels cue bid = 5+ hearts and a minor.
What do you lead?

This was a very unusual hand as you can see. West led the AH which was ruffed and declarer led a small club to West’s hand. In desperation West now led a spade to partner’s suit which South ruffed and proceeded to discard dummy’s 4 x diamonds on his hearts making 6C doubled holding not 1 x Ace!! If you led the AC to look around you would need to switch to a diamond to defeat the contract. This was a case of better to lead partner’s spade suit than either of your Aces. Isn’t bridge an interesting game.

Signing off: The Alchemist.

