

The Mystery Of “May I Lead?”

- ♠ The first time I heard about this one was in the Okanagan last year. Multiple players insisted that they were told it was “in the Laws” or “proper” or “required” to say this before leading a card to start the play.
- ♥ My experience tells me that these usually trace back to some fussy player who simply doesn’t like to be rushed, or maybe doesn’t like the five options for opening leads out of turn, but has played for long enough to be believed when insistent.
- ♦ There is one method specified in the Laws that guarantees there will be fewer opening leads out of turn: making the opening lead **face down**. If you’re told it’s not your lead, you retract it and nobody has seen anything. But if you do make a face down lead and partner asks a question and discovers something new, you cannot change your face down lead. You might get a score adjustment.
- ♣ I’ve seen many bridge-rule rumors take hold over the years. One club in Palm Springs CA does not require 1NT opening bid ranges to be announced by partner, as ACBL regulations specify. Every year someone holidays there and plays, and comes back convinced that the rule has been abandoned, and it never has.

Play **Better** Duplicate Bridge! – Quick Quiz

Nobody got to slam on these two hands last week!

Dealer: ♠ AKJT986 ♥ (void) ♦ A7 ♣ KJ72

Partner: ♠ 3 ♥ T843 ♦ 96 ♣ AQ9843

The Q♠ dropped doubleton onside, so no matter how declarer attacked trumps in a spade contract, seven spades, six clubs and the A♦ were there plus a first-round ruff if they led hearts.

Three pairs played in a spade partscore and nobody got to slam although one pair was doubled in 4♠ and made three overtricks!

Can you find a logical auction to get to slam?

(Answers on next slide....)

Play **Better** Duplicate Bridge! – Quiz Answer

How to get to 7♠ (or at least 6♠) on last week's Board 12: West should open 2♣. North passes, East hasn't quite enough for a 3♣ response, a bid which would promise a good club suit (check) and at least 8+ points (nope). So East must respond 2♦ for now, and South will get in with 2♥ or 3♥ but not more than that while vulnerable. West can cuebid in hearts, which will leave East little option but to bid clubs, and a jump if possible might get the message across that East is not minimum. So, it's 2♣ – 2♦ (3♥) 4♥ - 6♣ and now West can pass and let East make the slam in clubs, or bid 6♠ and make an even higher score, or even bid 6♥, a second cuebid surely showing a void, which might get them to 7♣!

<h1>#12</h1>			V NORTH	Feb. 24, 2026		
			♠ 5 4 2	Dealer: W		
			♥ J 7 5	NS Vul		
D WEST			N EAST			
♠ AKJT986			♠ 3			
♥			♥ T 8 4 3			
♦ A 7			♦ 9 6			
♣ KJ72			♣ AQ9843			
	5		♥ AKQ962		2	
16	HCP	6	♦ QT43	9	FRK	6
	13		♣ 5		6	