

The Ubiquitous Lead of 2 of Diamonds

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If you look at the online results of any session which has been scored using Bridgemates and where the opening lead has been recorded, you will notice that the two of diamonds has been led a disproportionate number of times. Many players tend to be rather careless when entering the opening lead because "it doesn't matter".

Although it is very convenient to press the "2" button and then the "diamond" button, I would like to try to convince you to be more conscientious when entering the opening lead for a number of reasons....

A lot of players derive a level of enjoyment from looking at the results and trying to determine how pairs reached certain contracts and how the contract was made on the opening lead given. This phenomenon is not at all limited to those players who were playing in a given session. In particular, many players new to the game find it very educational to look at hands, contracts and results when they are published on line. It can be a most useful learning tool.

Even if you do not believe that this motivation is worth going to the trouble of accurately recording the lead, there are reasons where your own results may be impacted if the correct lead is entered.

Many scoring programs now have the capability of checking for anomalous results entered into the Bridgemate unit. The accuracy of the opening lead provides an additional method for the director to judge whether or not a strange score is possible. If you have entered the correct lead, your chances of the error being picked up and brought to your attention during the session are enhanced. Otherwise, when you do discover the error, it may be too late to do anything about it.

Common Bridgemate errors –

- The wrong declarer is entered and not noticed by either pair in accepting the score.
- A gross error in the number of tricks recorded. This classic case happens not infrequently: NS play 4♥ and make 11 tricks. Not vulnerable, this should score 450. The Bridgemate unit operator however accidentally enters 1 trick rather than 11. That's nine off – still 450, but neither side notices that it has been given to EW.

Occasionally, boards can get fouled during the session. This happens when, at the end of the play of the hand, the players return the cards to a different pocket from whence they originally came. Or, some cards may get mixed between hands even though all still have 13 cards. Of course, when the board is played at the next table, the players have no idea that there is something wrong. Ideally this should be discovered and rectified as soon as possible. This may be possible if the director is checking the results as they come in. A really bizarre might be discovered by the error checking mechanism (for instance, NS playing 6NT when it is an EW hand). However, if the contracts are more mundane (e.g. both sides playing 1NT or other low level contracts), it may be that the only way of identifying a fouled board is because the stated opening lead doesn't make sense.

So, apart from it being the right thing to do, there are a variety of reasons for taking the trouble to accurately record the opening lead. Getting it right will be appreciated on a number of levels. ♥

Accurately recording the opening lead is a considerate act.

