

RULINGS BY THE NUMBER

Rule of 1

For Declarers – When there just 1 trump remaining in the defenders hand AND it is higher than any you have it is best to leave it out, especially when it costs you two trump cards to draw. The exception is when you have a long dominant side suit, the run of which, might be disrupted by that outstanding trump card.

Rule of 2

For Declarers – When missing 2 non-touching honors AND you have less than 9 cards in that suit it is best to use the deep finesse, that is, finesse for the lower missing honor and then for the higher. If you have 9 or more cards in the suit then the simple finesse is better.

Rule of 4

When there is a likelihood for a 4-4 Major card fit avoid showing 3-card support for partners 5-card Major. The 4-4 fit can't produce an extra length-trick thus using the 5-3 fit as the side suit has the potential for producing 1 additional length trick.

Rule of 7

For Declarers – When in a NoTrump contract and you have a suit with just 1 stopper: count your suit (yours and dummy's) subtract from 7 hold up that number of times, if you can.

For Defenders – When Declarer is attempting to set up a suit in which you hold an honor: count the suit (yours and dummy's) subtract from 7 hold up using your honor that number of times, if you can.

Rule of 8

For Declarers – When you have a total of 8 cards in a suit that includes the **A**, **K** and **J** it is normally best to play the **A** first before attempting to finesse for the **Q**. Similarly for the **K**, **Q** and **T** it is normally best to play the **K** first before attempting to finesse for the **J**. This is done to avoid losing an honor to a singleton honor.

Rule of 9

For Declarers – When you have a total of 9 cards in a suit that includes the **A**, **K** and **J** it is normally best to forego the finesse for the **Q** and to play the **A** and **K** first in an attempt to drop the **Q**. Similarly for the **J** when holding the **K**, **Q**, **T**.

Another Rule of 9

Pass partner's Take-Out Double if the number of cards you hold in the opponents suit plus the number of honors (including the **T**) you hold in that suit plus the level of the contract equals or exceeds 9.

Rule of 11 (Spot cards are all non-honor cards, including the **T**)

When the lead is the 4th best, subtract the value of the lead spot card from 11, that gives you the number of cards higher than the lead spot in the remaining 3 hands.

Rule of 14

If you have a great hand, the opponents get into the bidding and Partner passes. You hate to sell out just because partner passes, you might be tempted to bid again. This rule tells you how many tricks you should be able to take, based only on your own Losing Trick Count. Subtract your LTC from 14, the result is the number of tricks you should be able to take especially if you have a 5-card suit. So if you have a 7 LTC, $14-7 = 7$, you can only make a 1-level contract – that's why we're safe opening 1 of something with a 7 LTC (12-14 HCP) hand. It's when you have a 5 LTC hand and partner passes you feel like you should compete and the rule says you can take 9 tricks; i.e. you can compete to the 3 level.

Rule of 15

In 4th seat – Open the bidding with 1♠ if the number ♠'s you hold plus your HCP count equal or exceeds 15.

Rule of 17

When partner makes a weak-2 bid AND the sum of your HCP plus number of cards in partners suit equals or exceeds 17. If you have a 9-card fit, and a weakish hand you want to advance the preempt. If you have a better hand, say 17+, no fit you probably should be in NT, so long as you can access partners long suit, Responder asks for a feature. What is meant by feature is: do you have a means, outside of Partners suit, to reach your long suit. If yes:

bid suit that offers entry to

note: When partner makes a weak-2 bid AND you hold at least 2-cards in that suit: bid 3 of the suit with 2.5 quick tricks; bid 4 with 3.5 quick tricks. Quick tricks: A = 1, Kx(xx)=.5

Rule of 23

Never bid 2NT or make a bid that forces Partner to bid 2NT unless your absolutely sure your side has at least 23 HCP. Why? It might mean that you could end up at the three level which requires 23 HCP to be assured of success. A 2NT contract likely requires 22HCP therefore this rule assures that you do not get yourself into an untenable contract. The other side of the rule of 23 says: If you know your side has at least 23 HCP and opponents "have the bid" you have only two options: bid on or Double – Don't Pass!

Rule of 30

When you have a strong trump fit (or solid suit) and partner reveals a void there are only 30 relevant points. The 6-level is possible with 24 HCP, and the 7-level is possible with 26 HCP.

Rule of 40

When on defense, take your HCP plus Dummy's HCP plus any HCP shown in the bidding subtract that from 40. That tells you how many HCP your partner is holding.