

## SOME GUIDELINES FOR NEWER PLAYERS

**The Rule of 1: When you are declarer and there is just one trump out higher than yours, it is normally best to leave it out.**

You: S: AKQ 73 H: 5 D: AK C: AK642

Dummy: S: 6 H: J642 D: 9752 C: 8753

You are in a contract of 5 clubs. Hearts are led and you ruff the second heart. You play the AK of clubs but they split 3-1 so the queen is still out. Don't play another club to get trumps out. Just play spades and ruff the two low ones letting the defender ruff whenever they wish you guarantee your contract. If you play another trump and a defender has five spades you can't make your contract as you only have one trump left in dummy.

**The Rule of 2: When you have two honors you must finesse it is normally best to finesse the lower one first:**

You hold: AQ10

Dummy holds: 234

You lead the two from dummy. Finesse the 10 first then later finesse the Q. Why? If the K and J are split between the defenders hands it doesn't matter which one you do first you will win two tricks. If the K and J are behind you it also doesn't matter you will win only one trick. But if the K and J are in front of you finessing the low card first gets you all three tricks.

**Another Rule of 2: After bidding goes 1NT P P bid if you have two or more shortness points (especially not vulnerable.)**

Why: well opener has 16 points on average if they play 15-17 hcps for nt. His partner has 7 points at most or would have bid. This means you and partner hold almost half the points. Try to push the opponents to a higher contract they may not be able to make.

**Rule of Three and Five: In a competitive auction when opponents bid at the three or five level it usually pays to defend. Don't try to out bid them.**

Bidding: 1H 1S 3H 3S 4H 4S 5H P P ? Be satisfied you have pushed the opponents to the five level if you are the weaker side. Be satisfied with that achievement don't sacrifice again.

**Rule of 7: In no trump when they lead your weak suit and you only have one stopper add the number of cards held by you and dummy and subtract from 7. This is the number of times you should hold up.**

Hearts are led dummy north holds two low cards you south hold two low cards and the Ace of hearts. You and dummy hold 5 hearts  $7-5 = 2$ . Don't play your ace until the third round.

Why: If you hold up twice and the heart suit is split 5-3 between the opponents then if you have to lose the lead later in the play you try to lose it to east who won't have any hearts to lead to his/her partner. The same if you hold 6 hearts except now you only have to hold up once.  $7 - 6 = 1$ . If hearts are split 5-2 east can't lead a heart to his partner. If the hearts are split 4-3 and you only lose the lead once to east he can get back to his partner but west only holds 4 hearts so defense can only take three hearts and the one other trick.

**Rule of 9: When you hold 9 trumps play that the trumps will split 2-2 among the defenders.**

You hold: AKJxx in spades dummy holds xxxx. Play the ace of spades first. Then go to dummy and lead to your KJxx. If person on your right plays a low card percentages say to play the King – don't finesse.

Exception: you hold AK10xx in spades and dummy holds xxxx. Play the ace of spades first. If the queen or jack falls on your left when you play the ace Then go to dummy and lead to your K10xx. If person on your right plays a low card percentages say to play the Jack – finesse.

**Rule of 11: One of oldest rules in bridge, usually used at no trump, the 4<sup>th</sup> best card in a suit is a common lead. The rule states subtract the rank of the card led from 11 and that is how many cards in the suit are above it in dummy, declarer and other defenders hand. (This can be very valuable sometimes)**

Ex. The opponents are in 3NT and your partner leads the 7 of hearts. Dummy holds K52 and you hold A1093. Subtract 7 from 11 you get 4. Dummy has one card above the 7 and you have three. Declarer can't have any cards above the 7. (opening leader has three) so don't go up with any high card as you will not be able to play another heart immediately without giving declarer a trick with the king in dummy.

**Rule of 15: Is a rule to use when you are in 4<sup>th</sup> seat and the bidding has gone P P P ?:**

Count your high card points and the number of spades if you get 15 or more open the bidding.

Ex. S: Q10985 H: KJ5 D: A32 C: 98 You have 10 honor points and 5 spades = 15 bid one spade

Ex. S: 98 H: KJ5 D: A32 C: Q10985 You have 10 honor points and 2 spades = 12 pass

The reason: The high card points must be about evenly distributed around the table. On hand 1 if you open 1 spade you have a good chance of playing the hand. The opponents will have trouble bidding over 1 spade. Whatever partner bids you will pass – usually 1nt or some number of spades. You now get a positive score whereas passing would give you nothing. On hand 2 if you open the opponents may have good spades and will end up being hard to outbid so they will get a positive score. Better hand is just passed out.

**Rule of 20 + 2: When deciding when to open the bidding count your high card points and length of cards in your two longest suits. If you get 20 and also have 2 high honors bid.**

Ex. you hold S: AQxxx H: 109 D: A10987 C: 8 You have 10 honor points. You have two 5 card suits. You have two aces. Open the bidding 1 spade. (It is also better if your honor points are in your long suits and also if you have some 8's and 9's and not 2's and 3's as your other cards.

**Rule of 23: If you know your side has greater than or equal to 23 hcp's and your opponents bid you have two options double them or bid. (pass is not an option)**

Ex. Your partner opens 1 diamond your right hand opponent bids 2 clubs you make a negative double and partner bids two hearts. Right hand opponent now bids three clubs.

You hold: S; AQxx H: Kxxx D: x C: Q10xx You have 11 high card points and your partner who opened should have at least 12 high card points this totals 23. You either need to bid 3 hearts or double 3 clubs. Doubling three clubs is almost surely best. This brings up another factor to use in your decision making. Partner opened 1 diamond you made a negative double and partner bid hearts. He almost surely only has 4 hearts or he would have opened 1 heart. You have only 4 hearts. **In a competitive auction use the "Law of Total Tricks"** You have 4 hearts Partner has 4 hearts you are safe to bid to take  $4 + 4 = 8$  tricks (the two level – you add up your number of trumps. This rule is used in a competitive auction only when both teams hold about the same amount of high card points) Also you have good clubs behind the 3 club bidder and you can use the rule of 3 and 5.

If anyone read the first weekly lesson and has read this one let the NHBA know. You can do this by clicking contact us on the left side of the home page and leaving a message. We will continue them if members are finding them useful. (Ross Huntington)