

Fifth Chair



Rules of 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 19 and 20

The Rule of 7 - How many times to hold up as declarer in a notrump contract. Add the number of cards in your hand and in dummy in the suit led. Subtract the sum from 7. Hold up that many times if possible.

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge, 3rd Edition, pub. 1976, contains the following: "RULE OF ELEVEN. A mathematical calculation applicable when the original lead is construed as a 4th highest one. It is sometimes possible to obtain an exact reading of the distribution in all four hands. The discovery of the rule is generally credited to R. F. Foster, and was published by him in his 'Whist Manual'. First put in writing by him in a letter from Foster to a friend in 1890, it is said to have been discovered independently by E. M. F. Benecke of Oxford at about the same time. The rule states: "Subtract the pips(symbols) on the card led from eleven; the result gives the number of higher cards than the one led in the other three hands".

The Rule of 11 is in almost every standard book on defense or on play in general, including Audrey Grant, Bill Root, and Sheinwold.

"Rule of 10 and 12" is the same as rule of 11 but applied to those playing 3rd & 5th leads instead of 4th best. Of course, you have to guess whether partner's lead is 3rd or whether it is 5th, in order to decide whether to use rule of 10 or 12..

The first section of Ron Klinger's "100 Winning Bridge Tips" contains a number of the "Rules".

Rule of 11...(fourth down) look in ACBL Series on Defense. Ron Klinger, _Improve your Bridge Memory_, Houghton Mifflin,1984 (has rule of 11, explained as derived from law of 15, and several other handy tricks, but not as many basic items as Bergen.

There is another "rule of 12" used in the UK. It is the same as rule of 19 (or 20) (see information below about the rule of 19-20 how to figure this), but applied to the values required for natural response to opener's 1-suit in an uncontested auction.

Rule of 15 - in 4th seat, count your high cards, add to them irrespective of where high cards are - the number of spades in your hand. If you reach 15 open the hand. Helps to decide whether to open in 4th seat. The Encyclopedia of Bridge gives the rule of fifteen but gives no attribution.

It is attributed to (the late, I believe) Don Pearson of California. The sum of hcp and spades is known in some circles as "Pearson points".

Rule of 15 is in Max Hardy's books..

"Points, Schmoints" by Marty Bergen has Rules of 15 & 20, with good explanations.

Rule of 20 - Count your high cards, add the length of your two longest suits if you reach 19/20 INCLUDING 2 quick tricks, open.

The rule of 19 is used in England; the same as the USA uses the rule of 20!

Bergen's POINTS SCHMOINTS is excellent. The book has a great deal more than just the rules; it would be a good investment for novices. It covers many aspects of bridge in a very easy to read style.
Marty Bergen, Points Schmoints/Bergen's Winning Bridge Secrets

Magnus Books, 1995 (has an index, so easy to find specific topics--all three rules in index) For the folks that want Marty Bergen's "Points Schmoints", they can call him directly at 1-800-FUN-SHDC and order the book. "To Bid or Not to Bid - The Law of Total Tricks" by Larry Cohen, also an excellent book. Card Play Technique by Nico Gardener and Victor Mollo was first published in 1955. The paperback came out in 1981. We suggest its study..