

## **“RULES” TO REMEMBER**

There are several Bridge conventions whose names include numbers, so-called “*Rules*” that are mathematically or number-based that assist the Bridge Player in the bidding or in the play of the hand. Using them can be productive and should be tried when appropriate. They include the following:

**“The Rule of 1”**: - When there is just 1 Trump remaining outstanding higher than yours, it is normally best to simply leave it out, to ignore it and to take tricks in the other suits as available, assuming there is not a transportation problem accessing a long suit. To eliminate their single top Trump costs you two Trumps and gives up the initiative, possibly neither of which you can afford. *Exception* When you are planning to run a long side suit in an otherwise entryless Dummy, one should eliminate the master Trump first in order to prevent the Defender from killing the suit with a ruff.

**“The Rule of 2”**: - When you are missing 2 non-touching honors, and hold fewer than 9 pieces of the suit, it is usually best to “deep finesse;” i.e., to first finesse for the lower missing honor, in a secondary finesses, once again for the higher. With 9 pieces, you should only use the “simple finesse.”

Example: AQTX (finesse the “T” if holding 8-pieces or fewer, the Queen if holding 9-pieces)

**“The Rule of 2”**: - (*Mel Colchamiro’s “Balancing Rule of 2”*) - When seated in the balancing (4<sup>th</sup>) seat following a 1-NT opening bid by one’s LHO, the 4<sup>th</sup> seat Player should choose to enter the bidding using “DONT,” “Cappelletti,” or any other, by Partnership agreement: if he/she has at least *two shortness points*, defined as either a void, a singleton or two doubletons - *no matter what his/her high card point strength*. Remember, the fewer high-card points one holds, the more one’s Partner has, because your side will have, on average, 20 HCP’s. (See “*The Rule of Eight*” for guidelines for competing in the direct (2<sup>nd</sup>) seat.

**“The Rule of 2-3-4”**: When contemplating a pre-emptive call, holding 7 pieces, or more, in the suit in which one is prepared to pre-empt, the would-be Pre-emptive Bidder computes a 2-step process in order to determine the level for his/her pre-empt. Once made, the pre-emptive call can be understood by the Partner as to how strong or how weak the hand chosen for the pre-emptive bid was in all actuality; i.e., just how many tricks the pre-emptive hand can produce, and thus, how many tricks the Preemptive Bidder anticipates going down in his/her sacrifice attempt. The two steps are as follows:

1. The number of presumed, winning tricks is computed by the Bidder by subtracting his/her losing trick count from 13.
2. To this number of winning trick count, the would-be Pre-emptive Bidder adds either 2-3-or 4 additional tricks he/she is willing to go down based upon the relative vulnerabilities, as follow:

**Note**: This technique is fairly aggressive in that it presumes that one trick will be found in Partner’s hand for the sacrifice to give up fewer points than would be given up by simply allowing the Opponents to secure their rightfully-presumed, makeable, Game-level contract.

- a. **Unfavorable Vulnerability** - Red (V) vs. White (NV) = An anticipated **2-Trick Set**
- b. **Equal Vulnerability** - Red (V) vs. Red (V) *or* White (NV) vs. White (NV) = A **3-Trick Set**
- c. **Favorable Vulnerability** - White (NV) vs. Red (V) = A **4-Trick Set**

**“The Rule of 3”**: - On a competitive part score deal, with the HCP's roughly evenly split between the Opponents and your side, once the bidding has reached the 3-level, tend to defend rather than to bid on; unless your side holds 9 trumps, in which case you can contemplate competing to the 3-level. This is based upon “THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS.”

**“The Rule of 4”**: - Avoid giving Partner 3-card support for his/her 5-card Major suit, if a likely 4-4 fit is available in the other Major. If the 4-4 alternate Major suit fit is found, the 5-3 Major side suit can later be used to throw off a losing trick, effectively making one more trick with the 4-4 suit as Trump than one would have alternatively made with the 5-3 suit as Trump. When holding both a 4-4 and a 5-3 Trump suit holding, naming the 4-4 fit as the Trump suit, and the 5-3 suit as the side suit, is the better alternative.

**“The Rule of 5”**: - When the bidding has reached the 5-level in a competitive auction, tend to defend rather than to bid on. *“The 5-Level belongs to the Opponents”*. In wildly distributed hands the opposite is true.

**“The Rule of 6”**: - A 6-card suit is revealed when Responder bids 1-NT and later follows with a change of suit. Example: 1S --- P --- 1-NT --- P  
2H --- P ---- 3C -----P

**“The Rule of 7”**: - In No-Trump Contracts, when having only one stopper in the enemy’s led suit, add the number of cards held by both you and the Dummy hand in that suit and deduct that number from 7. **The answer is the number of times you must duck or hold up before taking the trick in order to sever the communication between the Opponents so as to lessen the chances they can run the suit later.**

Examples: With five cards, duck twice! With six cards, duck once!

**“The Rule of 8”**: - With 8 cards in a suit, including the Ace, King, and Jack, it is normally best to finesse for the Queen on the second round after playing the Ace; then play towards the Jack. If holding the King, Queen and ten, finesse after playing the King. This is to eliminate the loss to a possible singleton honor.

**“The Rule of 8”**: - (*Mel Colchamiro’s “Rule of 8”*) - A guideline for minimum values coupled with distribution, which if satisfied, implies a statistical likelihood of success if one should decide to compete over an Opponent’s opening of a strong 1-NT, as opposed to defending *when seated in the direct, 2<sup>nd</sup> seat*. (See *Mel Colchamiro’s “Rule of 2”* for the 4<sup>th</sup> seat)

1. The Player first subtracts the number of “Losing Tricks” from the total number of cards contained in the two longest suits.
2. If the subtraction results in a number of 2 or more, then the Player should decide to compete and make an overcall. (See Item #4)
3. If the subtracted number is fewer than 2, then the Player should **not** make an overcall, but choose, rather, to defend.
4. One’s holding, when deciding to compete, should contain at least 6 high-card points. It is from this number of minimum values that the designation for this particular Rule is derived. A minimum of 6 high-card points plus the minimum difference of 2 equals the number 8 (or more), hence the *“Mel Colchamiro’s Rule of Eight.”*

<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
1-NT	????
Q9842, Q7652, 5, 32 (“Pass”)	
10 cards - 7 Losers = 3	
3 + 4 HCP’s = 7 (Insufficient to satisfy the “Rule of 8)	
A7532, K743, K2, 74 (Using “DONT,” bid “2H”)	
10 cards - 7 Losers = 3	
3 + 10 = 13 (The “Rule of 8” is satisfied)	

**“The Rule of 9”**: - With 9 cards including the Ace, King and Jack, it is normally better to play the two top honors hoping to drop the Queen; i.e., do not finesse on the second round; similarly for the Jack when holding the King, Queen and ten of the suit - *“Nine never, Eight ever”*.

**“The Rule of 9”**: - (*Mel Colchamiro’s “Rule of 9”*) - When Partner makes a Take-Out Double, If the number of cards you hold in the Opponent’s suit added to the number of honors you hold in that suit (including the 10) plus the level of the contract equals 9 or more, **“PASS,”** thereby converting Partner’s **“double”** to penalties. If the computation comes to fewer than 9, then bid on!

<u>North</u> 1C	<u>East (Partner)</u> Double	<u>South</u> Pass	<u>West (You)</u> ???
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**You Hold:** a) 96, K74, 63, KQT532 (Pass! You hold 6 cards in the Opponent’s suit, plus 3 honors in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of 1 for a grand total of “10.” - Mel’s **“Rule of 9”** has been satisfied!)

b) 9642, K74, 96, KQ32 (Bid 1S! You hold 4 cards in the Opponent’s suit, plus 2 honors in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of 1 for a grand total of “7.” - Mel’s **“Rule of 9”** has **not** been satisfied!)

<u>North</u> 3D	<u>East (Partner)</u> Double	<u>South</u> Pass	<u>West (You)</u> ???
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**You Hold:** a) 96, K764, QJT3, 532 (Pass! You hold 4 cards in the Opponent’s suit, plus 3 honors in their suit, Diamonds, plus a contract level of 3 for a grand total of “10.” - Mel’s **“Rule of 9”** has been satisfied!)

b) 42, KQ74, Q976, 532 (Bid 3H! You hold 4 cards in the Opponent’s suit, plus 1 honor in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of 3 for a grand total of “8.” - Mel’s **“Rule of 9”** has **not** been satisfied!)

**“The Rule of 10”**: - When contemplating a Penalty Double of a Suit contract below Game, in a deal where the HCP’s are evenly split between the sides (17-23), add your expected Trump tricks to the number of tricks the Opponent’s are committed to win based upon their stated contract. If the answer is 10 or more, the **“double”** is sound and likely to succeed, when coupled with the **“Rule of 12;”** if below 10, the **“double”** is not sound; i.e., the Rule is **not** satisfied.

Partner opens 1S. You have the following hand: (7 Q103 AJ863 K952) assuming the final contract of the Opponents to be: (a) 2C, (b) 2D<sub>2</sub> or (c) 2H, which contract satisfies **The Rule of 10?**

**(Answer: Only (b) should be “doubled.”)**

**“The Rule of 11”**: - In a No-Trump Contract, if the opening lead is assumed to be the 4<sup>th</sup>-highest, deduct the numerical number of the card led from 11. The answer is the number of cards in the three remaining hands that can beat the card led. This rule can be utilized both by Declarer as well as by the Partner of the Opponent who led.

<u>Example:</u> (1)	West leads the 7	???	<u>A93</u>	(The 9 is the card to play)
(Use by Declarer)			<u>QJ5</u>	
<u>Example:</u> (2)				
(Use by the Defense)			<u>AJ6</u>	
	Partner (West) leads the 7 and North’s 6 is played		???	<u>K93</u> (East should play the 9)

**“The Rule of 12”**: - When contemplating a Penalty Double, below Game, on a deal where the HCP’s are approximately split between the two teams (17-23), add the actual total number of Trumps you hold to the number of tricks the Opponents have contracted to win based upon their stated contract. If the answer is 12 or more, and the Rule of 10 is also satisfied, one can **“double”** for penalties with some reasonable likelihood that the Opponent’s contract will not make. If the answer is below 12, you do **not** have a sound **“double.”**

**“The Rule of 12”:** - In order to execute a simple, two-suit squeeze, one should subtract the number of sure tricks one has from the number 12. That number tells you how many tricks you must duck (“*Rectification*”) and lose before you run off all your winners in a squeeze attempt.

**“The Rule of 13”:** - If you have a strong Trump fit (or a self-sufficient Trump suit) with no losers in the first three rounds of any suit, you are likely to win all 13 tricks. If you are unable to account for the first three rounds of every suit, be content to try for a sound Small Slam; the Grand Slam will not likely be present.

**“The Rule of 14”:** - In order determine if a squeeze is possible: (a) Count the number of tricks that must be lost, (b) Add that to the number of tricks that must be won, and finally (c) Add the number of cards that must be held in the threat suits by one Defender. If the addition is 14, the squeeze is feasible, if 13, it is not.

**“The Rule of 14”:** - Respond to Partner’s one-of-a-suit opening call in a new suit at the 2-level, and holding 6 or more HCP’s, or its equivalent, *only* if the number of high-card points (HCP’s) in your hand, when added to the number of cards in the suit in which you are considering responding, reaches 14 or more. Do not make a two-over one response when you fail the Rule of 14. Alternatively, respond 1-NT. (This Rule does not apply if the Partnership is utilizing the “*2/1-Game-Forcing*” bidding system!)

Partner opens 1S and you hold:

<b>QX</b>	(You hold 9 HCP’s with a	<b>X</b>	(You hold 6-HCP’s with a
<b>AXXX</b>	5-card Club suit-	<b>QXX</b>	6-card Diamond suit-
<b>XX</b>	Respond 2C!	<b>KJXXXX</b>	Respond 1-NT!
<b>QJTX</b>		<b>XXX</b>	

**“The Rule of 15”:** - When considering opening the bidding in 4<sup>th</sup>-seat position after three previous consecutive “*passes*,” statistically speaking, you will end the hand with a plus score for your team if you can count 15 or more (HCP’s, plus one point for each physical Spade you hold); and a negative score for your team if the summation of the above two items is less than 15. If the “Rule” is not satisfied (15 or more) “*pass-out*” the hand and do not open the bidding.

**“The Rule of 17”:** - (*Mel Colchamiro’s “Rule of 17”*) - When Partner opens a weak 2-bid, If the number of high-card points in your hand plus the number of cards you hold in Partner’s suit equals 17, or more, try for Game.

Partner has opened 2S. Should you, holding the following, try for game?

5, KJ5, KQ7532, AQ7 (Pass! - The “Rule of 17” is not, here, satisfied)  
K8, AQ84, A832, QJ6 (Try for Game!)

**“The Rule of 20”:** - When considering opening the bidding in the first or second seat, statistically speaking, your hand is strong enough to open if you can count 20 or more (HCP’s, plus one point for every card you hold in the two longest suits); and is not strong enough to open, if the count is less than 20.

**“The Rule of 22”:** - When considering opening the bidding in first or second seat, statistically speaking, your hand is strong enough to open if you can count 22 or more (HCP’s, plus one point for every card you hold in the two longest suits, plus one point for every “quick trick”); and is not strong enough to open if the summation is less than 22.

<u>Quick Tricks:</u>	A-K of Same Suit = 2	A-Q of Same Suit = 1½
	A or K-Q of Same Suit = 1	K-X = ½

If the number of cards in one’s two longest suits, when added to the number of HCP’s is 19 or fewer, “*pass*.” If you hold 20 or more, open, *but only* if you hold 2-plus defensive tricks. (20 + 2 = 22)

**“The Rule of 23”:** - (*Mel Colchamiro’s “Rule of 23”*) – a. In later rounds of bidding, one should avoid bidding 2-NT, unless you are sure that your side holds at least 23 HCP’s.

b. If you know your side holds at least 23 HCP’s and the Opponents “have the bid,” you have only two options, (1) “double,” or (2) Bid on!. To “pass” is not an option.

**“The Rule of 26”:** - (*“The Twenty-Six Small-Slam Splinter Rule”*) - When bidding one-of-a-Major, many Partnerships play “Splinter” bids in support of Partner. A “Splinter” bid usually shows four-card support for Partner’s Major suit bid, and 13-15 HCP’s by a Responder, or 19 {+} HCP’s by an Opening Bidder. If Partner can add his/her HCP in the three suits “*outside*” the known “Splinter” suit, + 19 if by an Opener, or 13 if by a Responder, and if the total is 26 (+), he/she should consider seeking Slam in the Major suit bid, by either cue-bidding, else Ace-Asking. This Rule works because once the Partnership can ignore the HCP’s in an entire suit, the Partnership can expect to make a Small Slam with only 26 (+) Game points; they do not need 33 (+) points which is required when one has to take into account all four suits!

(a)	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	(b)	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	(a)	1S – “4C” – “4-NT” – etc.
	AKxxx	QJxx		AKxxx	QJxx		{Slam is possible}
	xx	AKxxx		xx	AKxxx	(b)	1S – “4C” – 4S
	AQxx	Kxx		xx	Kxx		{Slam is impossible}
	xx	x		KQxx	x		

**“The Rule of 30”:** - When Partner reveals a void and you have a strong Trump fit (or self-sufficient suit), there are only 30 relevant points, not 40 in the deal in question. A Small Slam may then be bid on 23-24 high-card points, while a Grand Slam is feasible around the 26 high-card point mark.

**“The Rule of 40”:** - There are always 40 HCP's in the deck. When Dummy becomes visible, each Defender should count Dummy's high-card points. Then add his/her own HCP’s plus any shown on the lead, and any evidenced from the bidding. When one then deducts this total from 40, each Defender will have a good idea where the missing high-card points are likely to be placed.