

## The Extended Rule of 25

If you open a hand at the 2 level with any artificial bid, such as Benji Acol 2♣ or 2♦, then that hand **must** meet the Extended Rule of 25. Please note that this rule doesn't apply to normal Acol 2 bids, or any other 2 level opening which guarantees at least 4 cards in the bid suit.

A hand will meet the Extended Rule of 25 if any **one** of the following is true:

- a) at least 16 high card points.
- or b) the number of cards in the two longest suits plus the number of high card points is at least 25.
- or c) the hand contains at least 8 clear-cut tricks.

Please note that a clear-cut trick is not the same as a quick trick or a playing trick – the meaning is specific to the Extended Rule of 25. You can count aces and ace/kings as clear-cut tricks, but usually it is the quality of the long suit that is the issue. A clear-cut trick in a long suit is counted by assuming that (a) your partner has a void in your suit and (b) the rest of the cards in the suit are the second best possible break.

Here is a classic hand which does NOT meet the Extended Rule of 25:

♠AKJ98432   ♥A2   ♦9   ♣86

You must assume that the spades break 4-1 between your opponents (the second best break), and that the 4 are likely to include the Queen and Ten. So, since you will have to lead the spades from the top you will only make 6 clear-cut spade tricks, giving a total of 7 with the A♥.

### Bending the rules

If you open any hand at the 2 level using an artificial bid such as Benji 2♣ or 2♦ and the hand fails the Extended Rule of 25 then when your opponents realise what you have done they should call the Director. He or she will start by asking you and your partner if this is the usual way you would bid this hand. If it appears that you would normally bid the hand in this way, then you have **an illegal partnership understanding** and the Director will automatically award you an average minus score and your opponents an average plus (unless you have already done even worse). You might claim that your bid was a psyche, but the Director is not likely to be convinced by that explanation if you are only a point or two light or a clear-cut trick short; if he is convinced that you have psyched then there will be no penalty but he will enter the details in the psyche book.