

Fourth-Seat Opening Bids

Beyond the Rule of 15

You Are in the Fourth Seat

- How often can you expect to see 3 passes?
- Bridge odds say perhaps about 10% of the time.
- Should you open?
- Or pass?
- When you are in doubt, use the rule of 15.

The Rule of 15

- If your high-card points, plus your spades equal 15, open the bidding.
- If not, pass.

Rule of 15 Examples

Hand 1

♠ A 10 4 2

♥ K 7

♦ J 9 5

♣ K 9 4 3

11 points, 4
spades =15.

Open 1 ♣

Hand 2

♠ K 9

♥ J 8 3

♦ K 9 7 5

♣ A 9 4 3

11 points, 2
spades =13. Pass

If that was all there is to consider in 4th seat opening,
there would be no need for this lesson.

Beyond the Rule of 15

Hand 3

♠ 9

♥ K J 8 3

♦ K Q 7 5

♣ A 8 4 3

- 13 points, 1 spade =14.
- Does not make the rule of 15.
- You would open this hand in any other seat.
 - 1 quick trick
 - Scattered points
 - Best to pass.

Beyond the Rule of 15

Hand 4

♠ 9

♥ A J 8 3

♦ 9 7 5

♣ A K 10 4 3

- 12 points, 1 spade =13.
- Does not make the rule of 15.
- Nevertheless, you should open this hand.
 - 3 quick tricks
 - A good suit
 - You would open this hand in any seat.

Beyond the Rule of 15

Hand 5

♠ K Q 10 9 6

♥ A J 8

♦ 9 7

♣ 10 4 3

- 10 points, 5 spade =15.
- Makes the rule of 15.
- You should open this hand.
 - 2 quick tricks
 - A good suit
 - Stacked points

Beyond the Rule of 15

Hand 6

♠ 9 5 4 3

♥ K J

♦ Q J 5 2

♣ K Q 9

- 12 points, 4 spades =16.
- Make the rule of 15.
- You should not open this hand.
 - 1 quick trick
 - Downgradeable hand with quacks
 - This is a bad 12.

Beyond the Rule of 15

Hand 7

♠ K Q 10 4 3

♥ 6 5 2

♦ A 10 8 7

♣ J

- 10 points, 5 spades, borderline hand
- Assume partner has about 10 points and 2 or 3 spades.
- Partner's share of what's out there
- Should be able to make 2 spades or 2 diamonds

Opening Above the 1-Level

Hand 8

♠ K 4 3

♥ A Q 10 9 5 2

♦ 7

♣ K 7 3

Hand 9

♠ 4 3

♥ 9 5 2

♦ A

♣ K Q J 8 6 3 2

- A good, long suit is an advantage.
- Don't open with a long weak suit.
- If you open in 4th seat, you expect to go plus.
- Open hand 8, 2 ♥.
- Open hand 9, 3 ♣.

Opening Above the 1-Level

Hand 10

♠ K 8

♥ 5 4

♦ K Q 10 9 5 3

♣ K J 10

- This hand should be opened 2 ♦.
- You have a good suit.
- Close to opening bid count.
- When you open 4th seat (2 ♦, 2 ♥, 2 ♠) you should have a good hand and almost opening count.

Opening Above the 1-Level

Hand 11

♠ A 8

♥ Q 4

♦ Q 9 7 5 3 2

♣ K J 10

- In 1st or 2nd seat you would open this hand 1 ♦.
- In 3rd seat, 2 ♦.
- In the 4th seat, you probably should pass.

Other 4th Seat Considerations

Hand 12

♠ K Q 3

♥ K

♦ K 6 4 3

♣ A J 8 7 3

- This hand has plenty of points to open, but what should you open?
- If you open 1 ♣, after partner's 1 ♥, what will you rebid?
- You might open 1 ♦.
- I suggest opening 1nt.

Other 4th Seat Considerations

Hand 13

♠ K J

♥ J 6 3

♦ Q J 5 4

♣ A J 9 8

- This hand makes the rule of 15.
- But it is a quacky hand.
- If you passed, I would not say you were wrong.
- If you open, open 1 ♣.

Other 4th Seat Considerations

Hand 14

♠ K 2

♥ A K 6 3

♦ A J 10 4

♣ A 4 2

- 19 points
- In any other seat, you would open 1 ♦, then rebid 2nt.
- In 4th seat, it's probably best to just open 2nt.
- 3 aces and a quality ♦ suit
- Up grade 1 point.

Final Point

- When you open the bidding in 4th seat, your prime concern is that your side gets a plus score.
 - If the auction becomes competitive and you push your opponents to the level that they go down, that's good.
 - But if they get into the auction and make a plus, your opening was an error.
 - Conversely, if the opponents come in and push you to the point you go down, your bid was an error.