

This Lesson is Brought to You by
the Numbers:

15And20

The Number 15 is Important in Literature

- We remember in Shakespeare's play "Julius Caesar," Caesar ignored the warning to "Beware the ides (15th) of March" and went into the Roman Senate, where some grumpy senators stabbed him to death.
- The number 15 is also important in Bridge.
 - A couple of weeks ago, I told you about the "rule of 15" for 4th seat opening bids.
 - I won't repeat that here.

15 is the Lower Limit of a No Trump Opening Bid

Hand 1

♠ K Q 7 5
♥ 10 9 7
♦ A K 8 5
♣ K 4

Hand 2

♠ K Q 7 4 2
♥ 10 9 7
♦ A K 5
♣ K 4

Hand 3

♠ A K J
♥ 9 7
♦ K Q 5 2
♣ Q 8 3 2

- All of these 15 point hands qualify for a 1 no trump opening bid.
- Even hand 2 with a 5-card major suit.
- And hand 3 with a weak doubleton.
- When partner opens 1 no trump, you add 15 to your points and you know the bottom limit of your values.

15 is the Top Range of a Minimum 1-Level Suit Opening Bid

Hand 4

♠ K J 7 5 3

♥ K Q 9 7

♦ A Q 2

♣ 4

- When you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♠.
- 15 points is not enough to make a game try.

15 is the Top Range of a Minimum 1-Level Suit Opening Bid

Hand 5

♠ K J 10 5 3

♥ A 9 7

♦ A Q 10 9

♣ 4

- If you have 15 points and excellent distribution...
- You might make a game try.
- Bid 3♦, to make a help-suit game try.

Don't Forget to Revalue Your 15 Point Hand When You Support Partner's Suit

Hand 6

♠ K 10 5 4

♥ A J 9

♦ A K 10 8 3

♣ 4

- You open this hand 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. You must revalue.
- Now your hand is no longer a 15 point hand.
- It is worth 18 points in response to partner's bid.

Suppose You Have This 15-Point Hand

Hand 7

♠ K 10 5 4

♥ A J 9 3

♦ A K 10 8

♣ 4

Change the hand to...

Hand 8

♠ J 10 5 4

♥ A 9 7 3

♦ A K 10 8

♣ 4

- Before the bidding starts you have 15 points.
- Suppose RHO opens 1♣.
- You make a takeout double.
- Partner assumes you have 12 to 15 points.
- But when partner bids one of your 4-card suits, your hand goes to 18 points. You will raise partner's bid one level.
- With hand 8, the same bidding, your hand goes to 15 points.
- You will pass partner's bid.

Most of You Have Heard of the Rule of 20

- Let's make it the Rule of 20 + 2.
- It is a guideline for opening distributional hands that do not have 12+ hcps.
- The Rule:
- ***If the number of cards in your two longest suits and your hcps =20 and you have 2 quick tricks, open the bidding.***
- Here are some examples.

Rule of 20 + 2

Hand 9

♠ A Q 10 9 7 3



♦ 10 8 4

♣ A 8 7 4

- The Rule of 20 + 2 says you should open this hand 1♠.
- You have only 10 hcps.
- 6 spades 4 clubs =10
- 10 hcps.
- Two quick tricks.

Rule of 20 + 2 Best used for Distributional Hands

Hand 10

♠ K Q 6 4

♥ A 7 5 3

♦ 4

♣ K 10 7 4

- This hand makes the rule of 20 + 2
- But it has 12 hcps. You would open it naturally, without the rule.

Rule of 20 + 2 Best used for Distributional Hands

Hand 11

♠ Q J 4

♥ A 7 5 3

♦ 4

♣ K J 10 7 4

- This hand makes the rule of 20 (11 hcps + 5 clubs and 4 hearts)
- It does not have 2 quick tricks.
- Best not to open the hand.

Rule of 20 + 2 Best used for Distributional Hands

Hand 12

♠ Q 9 7 4

♥ A 7

♦ 9 6 4

♣ A 10 8 7 4

- This hand does not meet the rule of 20 +2.
- It does have 2 quick tricks.
- 5 clubs and 4 spades =9
- 10 hcps =19
- Best not to open the hand.

Rule of 20 + 2 Best used for Distributional Hands

Hand 13

♠ 7 4

♥ Q 7 3

♦ A K Q 10 9 6 4

♣ 4

- 7 diamonds 3 hearts.
- 11 hcps.
- 2 quick tricks.
- Open 1♦.

Some Thoughts About the Rule of 20+2

- Middle cards 10s, 9s and 8s are worth something when they are in your long suits.
- Vulnerability is a factor:
 - Be more aggressive with borderline hands when not vulnerable.
 - Be more cautious when vulnerable.

Points Should be in Long Suits

Hand 14

♠ A Q 10 7 5

♥ A 10 9 8 3

♦ 5

♣ 7 4

- A really good hand for the rule of 20 + 2

Points Should be in Long Suits

Hand 15

♠ 10 7 5 4 2

♥ 9 8 5 4 3

♦ A

♣ A Q

- Counting strictly this hand makes the rule of 20+2.
- Don't even think of opening it.

Be Cautious of Singleton Honors

Hand 16

♠ A J 10 7 5

♥ 9 8 5 4 3

♦ K

♣ K 3

- Counting strictly this hand makes the rule of 20+2.
- But the singleton king of diamonds and the king doubleton of clubs are negatives.
- Probably best not to open this hand.

Good Middle Cards Might be Worth an Upgrade

Hand 17

♠ A J 10 7

♥ K Q 10 9 8

♦ 10 9 8

♣ 3

- This hand does not make the rule.
- It has 2 quick tricks.
- But 5 hearts and 4 spades (9) + 10 hcps. = 19.
- This hand has great middle cards.
- Probably worth a 1 point upgrade.
- Open 1♥.

Final Thoughts

- Keep in mind the number 15. It is an important number as you value and revalue your hand.
- Use the Rule of $20 + 2$ when it is appropriate for the situation.
- It is not to be followed religiously.
- Common sense always applies.