# OFFENSIVE-DEFENSIVE RATIO (ODR)
# HAND POTENTIAL

## By Neil H. Timm

Jeff Rubens in his book (1969) "The Secrets of Winning Bridge" Chapter 5 pp. 49-67 discusses the offensive verses the defensive potential of a bridge hand in some detail.

When making an opening bid it is important to evaluate the offensive and defensive strength of your hand. As we saw in our prior tip on Hand Valuation aka Rubens, hands with concentrated honors are more offensive than defensive while hands with distributed honors are more defensive than offensive.

Consider the following two hands with the opening bid of 1♠:

Hand (1) ♠KQJxxx ♥x ♦KQJ10 ♣xx
Hand (2) ♠Axxxx ♥A ♦Axxx ♣Axx

Hand (1) has 12HCP and Hand (2) has 16HCP; Hand (1) has more Offensive Strength than Hand (2) and very little Defensive Strength. Using the Optimal Point Count Method, the HLD value of Hand (1) = 20 and Hand (2) =18. Which verifies that Hand (1) is more Offensive than Defensive aka Rubens.

In a close competitive auction, you should let the opponents play the contract only if your hand is primarily defensive in nature or has equal offensive-defensive strength as in Hand (2); otherwise, you should win the auction and play.

**On average an opening 1-level bid with generate 4-5 offensive tricks and 2-3 defensive tricks**.

Consider the two hands (Page 55 in Rubens' book)

Hand (1) ♠KQ109876 ♥75 ♦75 ♣74

Hand (2) ♠AJ100976 ♥J75 ♦7 ♣74

| South (you) | West | North | East |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3♠ | 4♦ | X | 4♥ |

Most would argue that you must pass with either hand since you made a preemptive bid so you must allow your partner to decide whether to X or bid on.

However, Rubens says South must pass with hand (1) and double with hand (2) since you have three cards in the opponents suit with a trump honor and an outside Ace in your own

suit, a defensive powerhouse aka Rubens.

Can we quantify his expert observations using the Adjusted Optimal Point Count Method suggest by Patrick Darricades in his book (2020) "Optimal Hand Evaluation in Competitive Bidding", pp.67-91?

Yes! We calculate for each hand the Adjusted Optimal HLD Count (AOC) which addresses three factors: Length and Honors in the opponents suit and the value of honors in the remaining 3-card and 4-card suits.

**Rules for Length in Opponents' Trump suit**

**Deduct** 1/2/3 for 3/4/5-cards in the opponents' suit
**Add 1 point** a singleton or void in the opponents' suit
Ignore doubletons in the opponents' suit

**Rules for Honors in the Opponents' Trump suit**

An Ace retains its value 4.5 or 3.5 for a singleton. No adjustment.

A Queen No adjustment.

A King **alone** one deducts 1 point, regardless of it position
**with** the J: No adjustment
**with** the Q: -1 if before the opponents' suit or +1 if after the opponents' suit

A Jack **without** 10 discount its value of 0.05
**with 10** No adjustment

**Rules applied to other 3/4-card suits**.

An Ace retains its value 4.5 or 3.5 for a singleton. No adjustment.

A Queen No adjustment.

A King **alone** deducts 1 point, regardless of it position
**with** the J/Q: No adjustment

A Jack **alone** deducts 0.5 pts (Jxx/Jxxx)
**with 10** deduct: No adjustment (remains 2=J10x)

If the AOC >11 double a game contract in a **competitive auction**; otherwise pass.

AOC Hand (1) = 11 and for Hand (2) =11.5 so X.

Hand (2) was taken from a rubber-bridge game where the North hand was:

♠4 ♥K42 ♦AQ106 ♣K10932

If South had passed, North could not have doubled 4♥ on his own and it would probably make with Hand (1). The game was defeated by 3-tricks so south made the correct bid by doubling the heart suit game contract.

**The rule should only be applied in competitive auctions and not those involving preemptive bidding. However, the rule may also be used to determine whether to make a takeout X.**

Your opponent opens 1♥ and you hold:

♠Kxx ♥Qx ♦AJxx ♣Kxxx Optimal HLD= 12.5; but AOC = 10.5

Do not make a takeout X.

Your opponent opens 1♦ and you hold:

♠AKx ♥x ♦J10xx ♣Axxxx Optimal HLD= 16; but AOC = 13.0

What happened? Observe that a hand that would have been opened has decreased in value. Because its adjusted AOC value is >11 some may bid 2♣ as lead directing bid. However its ODR changed from offensive to defensive when the opponent opened 1♦.