

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 5 December 2022

Congratulations to Moira and Trevor, almost 7% ahead of the rest of the field headed by Erica and Christopher. I was not playing, I guess Moira will not want to play with me again.

If you think of any number n less than about 25, some famous bridge player is bound to have propounded a 'Rule of n ' to tell you how to bid in various situations, justified by carefully cherry-picked hands. The rules mentioned below are all genuine, but follow them at your own risk.

Dir: East
Vul: N/S

♠ A Q J 8
♥ Q J 9 8 2
♦ 7 3
♣ 8 4

Optimum
NS +140

♠ K 5 4
♥ K 7
♦ Q 8 5
♣ Q 9 7 5 2

W	NORTH	E
E	2	A
S		S
T	SOUTH	T

♠ 9 7
♥ A 10 6 5
♦ A J 10 9 4
♣ 6 3

10	
10	9
11	

♠ 10 6 3 2
♥ 4 3
♦ K 6 2
♣ A K J 10

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	1	-	2	3	1
S	1	-	2	3	1
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

Board 2 was twice passed out, twice played in 2♠ by South - which should make 9 tricks losing a diamond, two hearts and a club - and once an over-ambitious 2NT by South. Here, after three passes, you can justify an opening bid with the **Rule of 19**: *the total of high card points together with the number of cards in the two longest suits must come to nineteen or more*. North's hand just makes the grade, so you open 1♥, and raise partner's 1♠ to 2♠ to share a top. The Rule worked!

Ah, but there is another rule specifically for opening 4th in hand. **Rule of 15**: *if you have less than 12 points 4th in hand, open*

only when high card points + number of spades ≥ 15 . Here $10+4 = 14$. Don't open. In this case, wrong.

Look at the choice of opening bid by North on Board 5. Two passed, two opened 2♠, one opened 1♠. Well, the hand just meets the **Rule of 19** above. But if you open 1♠, your partner can hardly stop short of game, and this was the only pair to reach the unmakeable 4♠. So this time the rule did not work.

Opposite the weak-two openers, South must have applied the **Rule of 17**: *opposite a weak 2, add your HCP to your number of trumps, you need more than 17 to explore game*. Here $14+2$ is only 16. So South passes and gets a good result. It worked!

Dir: North
Vul: N/S

♠ Q 8 7 6 5 2
♥ K 9 6
♦ 6
♣ K Q 4

Optimum
NS +600

♠ K
♥ 7 5 3 2
♦ A Q 7 2
♣ A 10 6 5

W	NORTH	E
E	5	A
S		S
T	SOUTH	T

♠ J 10 9 3
♥ Q 10 4
♦ 8 5
♣ 9 8 7 2

10	
13	3
14	

♠ A 4
♥ A J 8
♦ K J 10 9 4 3
♣ J 3

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	1	4	2	3	3
S	1	4	2	3	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

I'm not sure if any of these rules are any use. The only one everyone should follow slavishly, but often forgotten, is the Rule of 13 – *there are 13 cards in each suit*.

Dlr: East
 Vul: E/W
 Optimum
 NS +450

♠ A Q 10 6
 ♥ 10 6
 ♦ J 9 4
 ♣ A 9 5 4

♠ K 7 2
 ♥ 9 7 5 4
 ♦ Q 8 3 2
 ♣ J 8

NORTH
 6
 SOUTH

♠ J 9
 ♥ K J 8 3
 ♦ 10 6
 ♣ K 10 6 3 2

11
 6 8
 15

♠ 8 5 4 3
 ♥ A Q 2
 ♦ A K 7 5
 ♣ Q 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	4	1	4	3
S	3	4	1	5	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

I was quite surprised by the opening lead chosen on Board 6 by all three Wests who were defending against 4♠ by North. They led the ♠9, immediately allowing the declarer to avoid a trump loser. Let's make a Rule: *never make an opening lead from doubleton (or tripleton) Jack or Queen in trumps*. Not ever.

Dlr: West
 Vul: N/S
 Optimum
 NS -130

♠ 10 5
 ♥ K Q J 10
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ Q J 10 4

♠ Q 8 7 4 2
 ♥ 9
 ♦ K 10 9 5 2
 ♣ 9 5

NORTH
 12
 SOUTH

♠ A 3
 ♥ A 7 5 4
 ♦ Q 8 3
 ♣ A 7 6 2

9
 5 14
 12

♠ K J 9 6
 ♥ 8 6 3 2
 ♦ A J
 ♣ K 8 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	2	-	-	
S	1	2	-	-	
E	-	4	-	2	1
W	-	4	-	2	1

Board 12 is interesting only in that at every table East played in 2♠ after a transfer sequence, but the number of tricks made varied between five and nine. Those that went down apparently tried to scramble some tricks by ruffing hearts on dummy. What about another rule: *ruffing in the long trump hand is usually wrong*.

Sorry, got rather carried away....