

Rule of 20

The Rule of 20 is a guideline for deciding whether to open the bidding. The rule is: add your high card points plus the number of cards in your two longest suits. If the total is 20 or more, then the hand is worth an opening bid. Remember that you should not add points for voids and singletons unless you have agreed a suit with your partner.

Examples

1)

♠ T8

♥ KT973

♦ 6

♣ AK865

10 HCP + 5 hearts + 5 clubs = 20. Open 1♥.

2)

♠ AQ9

♥ AJ63

♦ T32

♣ 754

11 HCP + 4 hearts + 3 of any other suit = 18. Pass.

3)

♠ KQ

♥ K

♦ J9743

♣ J8654

10 HCP + 5 hearts + 5 clubs = 20. Open 1♦??

Better to have your points in the long suits as in Example 1. Although, as Marty Bergman(who introduced this in the 1990s) says 'Not all 20s are created equal and vulnerability should not be an issue....so enjoy yourselves and don't lose too many partners.