

A Good Rule for Penalty Doubles

The best bridge lesson I ever had was from Tony Glynne who said, "You're the dummy one quarter of the time. You're the declarer one quarter of the time. That means you're defending half the time. If you're not doubling, you're not getting enough matchpoints to win."

So my partner and I decided to double much more often. My only rule is, "You can't play this game scared." So don't be scared to double. However, many of our doubles went bad and I always had a problem determining when to double and when to keep bidding.

A couple of years ago I read a book by Mel Colchimaro which gave me a wonderful guideline for doubling, so here's Mel's rule. It is not well known, so I really hate to pass it on, but just for you folks I'm going to. Please don't tell anyone else!

Here's Mel's RULE OF NINE:

1. Take the level of the contract.
2. Add the number of the opponent's trump suit you hold.
3. Add the number of honors you have in that suit.
4. If it comes to nine, DOUBLE!

It works most of the time if you defend carefully. Try it. You'll like it.