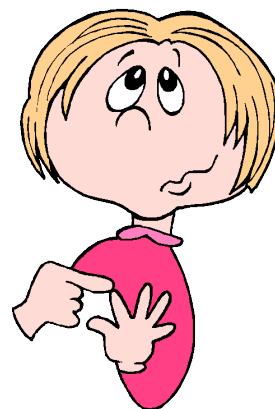


## HAND EVALUATION & REVALUING by BARBARA SEAGRAM

Many students have great difficulty with the concept of hand evaluation. I believe that it is right to count distribution even as an opening bidder. Most people now count long suits (1 point for 5<sup>th</sup> card in long suit and 1 extra point for 6<sup>th</sup> etc.) That is counting distribution.



You need 13 points including distribution to open the bidding in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> seat. Some books say 12 only but then they are not including distribution. You need to know the Rule of 20 for when you are in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> seat and only have 11 or 12 points. If you find yourself close to an opening bid but feel you don't have enough points to open, use the **Rule of 20**. Count your HCP and then add the length of the two longest suits. If this totals 20, then you have permission to open the bidding.

e.g. If you have

S Axxx

H Axxx

D Axxx

C x = 12 HCP plus two four card suits = 20. Now you have permission to open the bidding.

Let's call points including distribution: **TOTAL POINTS**.

NOTE: You should not use the Rule of 20 to give you permission to open the bidding when you have a hand such as this:

S Qx

H KJx

D KQxx

C Jxxx

This assortment of junk will tally 20 with Rule of 20 but doubleton Queens or Jacks are a sorry sight and do not deserve much respect. We call Queens and Jacks "Quacks!" This should not be an opening bid.

Here's what you REALLY have to remember: The value of your hand is in a constant state of flux. Once partner starts bidding, your hand is like a flower: it either blossoms or grows or it wilts and dies.

e.g. If you have a short suit in your hand and partner now names that suit, you are depressed. Your hand has wilted. It is NEVER good to have a shortage in partner's suit. We are constantly searching for FITS, not MISFITS. If partner bids spades and you have a shortage of spades in your hand: 2 or fewer, subtract:

up to three length points from your hand, if you have a void in partner's suit

up to two length points from your hand, if you have a singleton in partner's suit

up to one length point from your hand if you have a doubleton in partner's suit

i.e. If you had not added any length points because you had no long suit, you will not subtract at all. But you need to realize that your hand has gone downhill. It is devalued.

## DECLARER POINTS

♠ 3  
♥ AJ65432  
♦ AK4  
♣ 76

Counting TOTAL points on this hand, it totals 15. If we open with 1H and partner bids 1S, this hand has now dropped in value and we only have 13. We should now bid 2H as our rebid as this is now a minimum hand.

### BUT

If instead (see hand above again) partner has bid 2H after our 1H opener, then our hand now grows up. We must add 1 extra point for the 5th card in the suit which has been supported and TWO extra points for each remaining card. (Yes, you might call this double dipping.) YOUR hand has INCREASED in value, now that you know you are going to be declarer. If you do not do this, then you remain with the same old 15 points and will have to pass partner's 2H bid that showed 6-9 points. How can this be right?

This was the invention of Charles Goren, many years ago and will never fail you in getting you to games and slams. I truly believe it is the best hand re-valuing method.

In the above example, we now have 20 points (after adding the extra 5 points) and after partner has raised us to 2H (showing 6-9 points) we should now bid 4H.

If the opponents have bid a suit in which you have a singleton K or Q, or even a doubleton Qx or Jx, count nothing for these cards, they are most unlikely to win any tricks.

## DUMMY POINTS

When you are going to become dummy, if you have **THREE** card support for partner, then use the 3-2-1- dummy points method.

Short suit points will be worth 3-2-1 (3 for a void, 2 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton).

When you are going to become dummy, if you have **FOUR** (or more) card support for partner, then use the 5-3-1 dummy points method.

Short suit points will be worth 5-3-1 (5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton).

When you are going to become dummy (because you have three card or better support for partner's major suit or five or more of partner's minor suit), then long suit points go away and short suit points come in.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER to revalue your hand.**

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