

Barbara's



Bridge

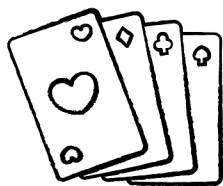


Tips



Barbara Seagram

Barbara's Bridge Tips



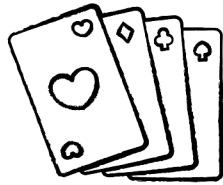
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Part One



Bidding

1. HAND EVALUATION AND REVALUING

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 fifth card in long suit, 1 extra point for sixth, etc). That is counting distribution. Let's call your points including distribution **total points**.

You need 13 total points to open the bidding in first or second 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 first or second 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:

♠ A 8 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 3 ♦ A 7 6 4 ♣ 5

Your 12 HCP plus two four-card suits = 20. You have permission to open the bidding.

Note: You should not use the Rule of 20 to give you permission to open the bidding in first or second seat when you have a hand such as this:

♠ Q J ♥ Q J 6 ♦ Q J 7 4 ♣ Q J 4 2

This assortment of junk will tally 20 with the 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 hand is not 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 and grows or it wilts and dies. If you have a short suit in your hand and partner bids 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), adjust your point count as follows:

- if you have a void in partner's suit, deduct up to 3 length points from your hand.
- if you have a singleton in partner's suit, deduct up to 2 length points from the value of your hand.

- if you have a doubleton in partner's suit, deduct up to 1 length point from your hand.

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 ♥ A J 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 7 6

Counting total points on this hand, it comes to 15. But if we open with 1♥ and partner bids 1♠, this hand has now dropped in value and we only have 13 (subtracting 2 length points for the singleton spade). We should choose 2♥ as our rebid as this is now a minimum hand.

But, if instead (see hand above again) partner has bid 2♥ after our 1♥ opener, then our hand now grows up. We must add 1 extra point for the fifth card in the suit that has been supported and 2 extra points for each remaining card. (Yes, in addition to the length points you already counted. You may call it 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 2♥ bid that showed 6-9 points. How can this be right?

This idea 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 revaluing method. In the above example, we now have 20 points (after adding the extra 5 points). Partner has raised us to 2♥ (showing 6-9 points), and we should now bid 4♥.

If the opponents have bid a suit in which you have a singleton king or queen, or even a doubleton queen or jack, count nothing for these cards: they are most unlikely to win any tricks.

Dummy Points

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.

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 counted as 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*-card support (or more) for partner, then use the 5-3-1 dummy points method. Short-suit points will be counted as 5-3-1 (5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton).

Always remember to revalue your hand — up or down — as the bidding proceeds.

A misfit? Quit!

The ideas in this section are so important that they are worth emphasizing again. Less experienced players sometimes pick up their hand, count their points, find they have 13 points and no matter what happens during the entire auction, they continue to believe they have 13 points. That’s very rarely true. A bridge hand is like a living, breathing thing, and its value changes during the auction. We must learn how to evaluate our hand at all times and bid accordingly. Take the following scenario:

♠ K J 10 9 7 5 3

♥ 7

♦ K 6 3 2

♣ 3

♠ Q 4 2

♥ K 8 4

♦ A J 4

♣ K 10 9 4

♠ 6

♥ A Q 10 9 6

♦ Q 7

♣ A J 7 6 5

♠ A 8

♥ J 5 3 2

♦ 10 9 8 5

♣ Q 8 2

N

W S E

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
pass	1 ♠	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♠	pass	3 ♣
pass	3 ♠	pass	4 ♣
pass	4 ♠	dbl	all pass

This wasn’t an auction, it was a fight! Indeed, without the use of bidding boxes, the auction would get louder and louder as each player insisted on the right to play in their choice of trump suit! (Tip to the opponents: always penalty double such an auction!) On any reasonable line of defense, declarer will go down two in 4♠.

Now let's look at a much rosier situation, where the players still went wrong.

♠ 2	♠ K 9 8 7	♠ Q 10
♥ A 10 8 4	♥ K 7	♥ 9 6 3 2
♦ Q 10 9 2	♦ 8 5 4 3	♦ A K J
♣ Q 4 3 2	♣ 7 6 5	♣ J 10 9 8
	<div>W N E S</div>	
	♠ A J 6 5 4 3	
	♥ Q J 5	
	♦ 7 6	
	♣ A K	

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
pass	2 ♠	pass	3 ♠
all pass			

Whenever partner supports your long suit, remember to add 1 extra point for the fifth card in the suit that has been supported and 2 extra points for each remaining card in that long suit. Yes, this is *in addition* to all the points you started with. Now this hand is worth 20 points. Partner promised you at least 6 points. Add this together and away you go! Knowing her side has 26 points, South should have bid 4♠, instead of inviting partner with 3♠.