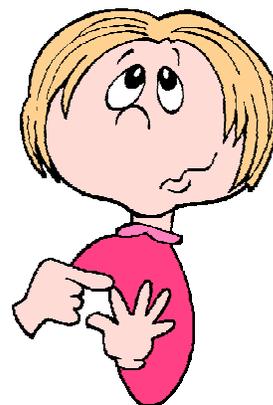


HAND EVALUATION & REVALUING by BARBARA SEAGRAM

Many students have great difficulty with the concept of hand evaluation. It is right to count distribution even as an opening bidder. If someone tells you otherwise, ignore them. Some count short suits, some count long suits; both methods are correct. Just choose one or the other, not both.

If you have Axxx Axxx Axxx x the short suit counters have 14 points so will open with 1 D. Long suit counters may worry that they do not have the required 13 points to open the bidding.

Thus, along came the RULE of 20. 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. (This is the same as counting distribution but this is how some get around this issue!)



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: Qx KJx KQxx 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.

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.

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 small spade singleton in your hand, subtract two points from your hand, even if you are a long suit counter and did not add any to this to start with. Your hand has gone downhill. It is devalued.

♠ 3
♥ AJ65432
♦ AK4
♣ 76

Counting points on this hand totals 15, regardless of which method you are using (long suit or short suit method). This time it is the same, it will often differ a bit by a few points here or there, but not enough to worry about at all.

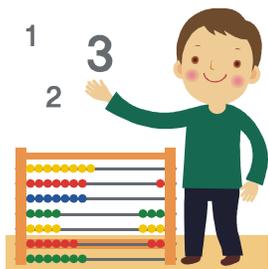
If we open with 1H and partner bids 1S, this hand has now dropped in value and we only have 13. We should now bid 2H as our rebid as this is now a minimum hand.

BUT
if instead 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. Long suit counters must do that also even though they already counted three length points to start with. (Yes, they are 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. We 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, we should now bid 4H.

NOTE: Short suit counters should never count extra for distribution for value for doubleton Qx and Jx or singleton K or singleton Q or singleton J. Those holdings just get the high card points (except with singleton J where they get 2 points or it would be worth less than a singleton 3 which would seem wrong).



When you are going to become dummy, if you have THREE card support for partner, then short suit points are 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 short suit points are worth 5-3-1 (5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton).

It is our belief that as soon as you are going to become dummy, if you are a long suit counter, then long suit points go away and short suit points come in. Too much time and energy is spent fussing over this concept, unfortunately. It is the only time that we do not have to be on the same wave length as partner. Let partner do it one way and you do it another and all will go well. BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER to **revalue your hand**.