

RULE OF 11

Ever since bridge became a popular game, players have been trying to come up with new ideas to improve the game. Some have succeeded and some have not succeeded very well. The bridge community is quite selective and sometimes a new idea takes a long time before becoming accepted.

Here is another mathematical calculation, equation, formula. Its application becomes active, only when you are absolutely sure that the lead is the fourth down from the suit lead. Once you have ascertained this possibility, then you start counting.

This formula was devised by someone who was actually playing Whist. However, his Rule of Eleven was published in his writing of the **Whist Manual**.

Their Rule of Eleven states that you subtract the number of the card lead from the number 11, and then the result is the number of cards **HIGHER** contained in the hands of the **partner** of the leader and the **declarer** and the **dummy**. This information is useful not only to the declarer, but also to the partner of the leader, who can apply the same mathematical calculation. This information can be useful in deciding to play which card, either from the hand of the partner of the leader, or the hand of the declarer or from dummy.

The Rule of Eleven has a lot of merit and can be used effectively. Each partner must be attuned to recognize when it is appropriate to use it, or even to consider it. The Rule of Eleven has its most application against a No Trump contract since it is generally accepted that the leader plays the fourth card down from his longest and strongest suit. If you wish to make this a part of your partnership agreement, then practice this Rule of Eleven beforehand with your partner and see how it works and recognize when it is best used.

Declarer: South
Contract: 3 No Trump
Vulnerability: None
Lead: 6 of Diamonds

Dummy

♠ AK98
♥ 987
♦ QJ53
♣ J4

West

♠ J532
♥ K54
♦ K1076
♣ 107

East

♠ 104
♥ J102
♦ 82
♣ A96532

South

♠ Q76
♥ AQ63
♦ A94
♣ KQ8

According to the Rule of Eleven, the partner of the leader subtracts 6 from 11 and the result is 5. There are 5 cards **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds in the hands of the dummy, declarer and the partner of the leader. Likewise, the declarer subtracts the number 6 from 11 and the result is 5 cards **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds in the hands of the dummy, of the declarer, and of the partner of the leader.

The partner of the leader looks at dummy and his hand, and counts 3 cards **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds. The partner of the leader has 1 card **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds. The partner of the leader is not happy about the lead.

Declarer looks at dummy and his hand, and counts 4 cards **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds. Declarer has 4 cards **HIGHER** than the 6 of Diamonds. Declarer is happy about the lead.

Declarer: South
Contract: 3 No Trump
Vulnerability: None
Lead: 7 of Spades

Dummy

♠ K52
♥ 987
♦ KQJ53
♣ J4

West

♠ QJ87
♥ K543
♦ 1076
♣ 107

East

♠ A1093
♥ J2
♦ 42
♣ A9653

South

♠ 64
♥ AQ106
♦ A98
♣ KQ82

Declarer sees the 7 of Spades, and assumes it is the fourth down from the longest and strongest suit. Declarer subtracts 7 from 11 and counts 4 **HIGHER** cards than the 7 of Spades. Declarer counts only 1 card in his hand and dummy **HIGHER** than the 7 of Spades. This spells trouble for the declarer.

The partner of the leader also assumes that the 7 of Spades is fourth down from the longest and strongest suit of his partner. East also arrives at 4 cards **HIGHER** than the 7 of Spades. East can see all of these 4 cards: King of Spades in the dummy, Ace-10-9 in his own hand. If declarer calls for the King of Spades, East plays the Ace of Spades and returns a Spade. With this lead, East-West win 4 Spade tricks and the setting trick is the Ace of Clubs.

If declarer decides to play low on the first trick, East lets the 7 of Spades ride, because he knows that there is no **HIGHER** Spade than the 7 of Spades in the hand of the declarer. West continues to play the 8 of Spades, and declarer plays low, as does East. There is no way that declarer will take one Spade trick. East-West set the contract by applying the Rule of Eleven.