

Barbara's Rule of EIGHT

Some of you may be fairly new to bridge. It seems to me that less experienced players have some trouble memorizing the point ranges for when we are competing in the bidding. We all know we need 13 points to open the bidding and 6 or more points to respond to partner's opening bid but when the opponents open the bidding, it makes it tougher for us to get into the act. How dare they!

The number 8 pops up a lot so you can use it as a memory aid for when competing in the bidding.

You need 8 points to overcall at the one level.

You need 8 points to respond to partner's overcall.

When you respond to partner's takeout double: You bid your best suit at the cheapest level and this promises 0-8 pts.

When you have more than 8 points and are responding to partner's takeout double, you jump with more than 8 points.

When opponents intervene after your partner's takeout double, there is no longer a gun to your head and you do not have to bid. BUT if you have 8 or more points, you do now bid, even though the pressure was off.

W	N	E	S
1D	Dbl	2D	

South now needs 8 or more points to respond to partner's TOD.

This is just a simple memory aid. We still need 13 points to make a takeout double, NOT 8!!

THE 4-4 FIT or THE 5-3 FIT...DOES IT MATTER??

by Barbara Seagram

Sometimes we have a choice between playing a suit contract in a 5-3 fit or selecting another suit as trumps in which we have a 4-4 fit.

Let's have a look at an example:

S AK87
H AQJ64
D 6
C 953

S 3
H 9875
D KJ93
C J1084

S 9642
H 3
D 108742
C KQ2

S QJ105
H K102
D AQ5
C A76

Dealer: North

N	E	S	W
1H	P	1S	P
3S	P	4NT	P
5H *	P	???	

* 5 H would be the correct response to REGULAR Blackwood.
5D would be the correct response to KEY CARD BLACKWOOD
SHOWING 3 or 0 key cards (playing 1430).

What should South bid next? He knows that NS has a 4-4 spade fit. His next bid should be 6S.

If instead South bids 6H, knowing that North has a five card Heart suit, then let's now see what happens to the contract of 6H.

With Hearts as trumps, North has 2 Club losers. There is no solution for these Club losers. He can try the Diamond finesse but it fails and North goes down one in 6 Hearts.

If South plays the contract in 6 Spades, then he can ruff two Diamonds in North hand (dummy) and then draw trump, pitching 2 Clubs from South hand on the long Heart suit in dummy. making 7. Be careful to ruff one Diamond HIGH in dummy so that you retain a small Spade in North hand with which to return to South hand and draw the remaining trump.

Note therefore that the 4-4 fit is superior as after drawing trumps, you get discards (pitches) on the "lopsided" suit. With the 5-3 fit as trumps, there are no pitches possible with the 4-4 suit.

When given a choice between playing a hand on a 5-3 fit or a 4-4 fit, the 4-4 fit is always best of all. Draw trumps with the 4-4 trump fit and on the long 5-3 side suit (non-trump suit), make discards.