

The Rule of 20 – 1st and 2nd seat openings

- ♠ K10
- ♥ J108
- ♦ A863
- ♣ A1086

Do you open or pass with this hand? At the table this hand passed in 3rd seat. I said that I would open the hand in any (1st, 2nd or 3rd seat) position, Chuck and Paul agree. Hans said that he would only open it in 3rd seat. So who's right? What does the rule of 20 say?

This rule indicates which hands should be opened (as opposed to passed) in 1st or 2nd seat (3rd seat may open lighter). What you do is add the length of your two longest suits to your point count. If the total is 20 or more, then open. In this case; 12 pts +4 +4 = 20, so an opener. This particular hand may add on a plus (about one point) for 3 tens, and with two in aces (in 4 card suits!) it is a clear opener. Guess they have other rules in Holland (Hans)?

Actually, Chuck does have a different rule. He would open the hand because it contains 2½ quick tricks (a quick trick is an ace, a king is ½ a quick trick), this is really just another way of saying that aces and kings are good cards, quacks are not. So, a good rule if you lack ten fingers and ten toes.

Incidentally, the Rule of 20 is only applicable to 1st and 2nd seat openers. In 3rd seat you may open very light and in 4th seat the rule of 15 applies.