

## Ultimate Defence 20

It's time now for us to get back to more basic things where defence is concerned. One of the things a good defender needs to learn is the "Rule of 11". Let's see how it works to help you to defend better when partner makes the opening lead.

### Where does the "11" come from?

It is standard practice for us to lead "fourth highest" in most defensive situations, both against trump and No Trump contracts. The highest card is the ace, and because the lowest is the two, the effective value of the ace is 14. With the lead of "fourth highest", there are three higher cards than the one led. Subtracted from the highest, which as explained before, has a value of 14, that leaves 11.

Now, how to apply the rule. By subtracting the value of the card that has been led from 11, you can deduce just how many cards above the card led are held by declarer, simply by accounting for dummy's and your own. For instance, if partner leads the FIVE and dummy has two cards higher than the five and you have one yourself, then declarer will have the rest, as follows:

Card led	Dummy	You	Declarer
5	2 higher	1 higher	$(11 - 5 = 6 \text{ minus } 3)$ holds THREE higher cards

I hope you can follow this elementary bit of mathematics.

Sometimes it may not matter but often it is a distinct advantage for you to know how many high cards declarer holds in 'your' suit; it may help you to decide which card to play at trick one or whether to return partner's lead or switch to something more profitable. And no, it is NOT always correct to play 'second hand low' and 'third hand high'.

Let us now take a look at some examples of the "Rule of 11" in play

Partner leads the SEVEN. Dummy puts down K 6 2

You hold A J 9 3

When declarer calls for the two from dummy, which card will you play?

The "Rule of 11" makes your decision very simple. If partner's seven is a genuine 'fourth highest' then declarer has  $11 - 7 - 1$  (dummy's king)  $- 3$  (your AJ9) equals ZERO cards that can beat partner's 7, so you would be silly to follow with any card other than the THREE! Partner's cards in the suit led are an open book: Q 10 8 7 (possibly with a fifth card as well) and when you follow with the three and partner's seven holds, partner will know what to do next!

More to follow in the next issue!