

CARD PLAY FUNDAMENTALS: PART THREE
DEFENSE AGAINST NO TRUMP CONTRACTS
THE RULE OF ELEVEN

**Quote of the week: If your toast always falls butter-side down, plan ahead.
Butter the other side instead.**

The Rule of Eleven was devised by Mr. Robert Foster in 1881 and was first published in Foster's Complete Hoyle in the year 1897.

1. The Rule of Eleven application can only be used when you are certain your partner's opening lead is the "**fourth down**" from the suit lead. Once this has been determined you start counting.
2. The Rule of Eleven states that when your partner faces his opening lead you **subtract the number of that card** from the number **11**. The result is the number of cards **higher in that suit** contained in the hands of you, the dummy and the declarer. This information is, of course, useful to the declarer but, for our purpose, it is equally important to you as you apply the same mathematical calculation.

Example One: Declarer = South. Contract = 3NT. Lead = Six of Diamonds.

North (Dummy)

S: AK98
H: 987
D: QJ53
C: J4

West

S: J32
H: K54
D: KT7**6**2
C: T7

East

S: T54
H: JT2
D: 84
C: A9653

South (Declarer)

S: Q76
H: AQ63
D: A9
C: KQ82

Your partner, West, leads "fourth from his longest and strongest" suit; the Six of Diamonds. According to the Rule of Eleven, you subtract 6 from 11 = 5. There are 5 cards **higher** than the 6 of Diamonds in your hand, the dummy's, and the declarer's. You look at your hand and the dummy and count 3 cards **higher** than the 6 of Diamonds. You have only 1 card that is **higher**. Declarer must have two cards higher than the six. This is not a suit that will produce more than one trick for the defense. When you eventually gain the lead with your Ace of Clubs you should shift to the Jack of Hearts in an attempt to gain additional defensive trick(s).

Example Two: Declarer = South. Contract = 3NT. Lead = Seven of Spades.

North (Dummy)

S: K52
H: 987
D: KQJ53
C: JT

West

S: QJ87
H: K543
D: T76
C: 74

East

S: AT93
H: J2
D: 42
C: A8653

South (Declarer)

S: 64
H: AQT6
D: A98
C: KQ92

Your partner, West, leads "fourth from his longest and strongest" suit; the Seven of Spades. According to the Rule of Eleven you can count one card higher in dummy and three in your hand. West must, therefore, have three cards higher than the Seven and South, the declarer has none! You and your partner will take four spade tricks and the Ace of Clubs setting the 3NT contract by one trick. If West makes any lead other than a spade, declarer will run his five diamond tricks, and "knock out" your Ace of Clubs. Assuming a heart return by you, South will rise with the Ace and collect three additional club tricks to make his contract. Or, if you (foolishly) play a spade (either the Ace or a smaller card), South will earn an overtrick with the King of Spades in dummy.