

Rule of 11

In bridge, the **Rule of 11** is applied when the opening lead is *the fourth best from the defender's suit*. By subtracting the rank of the card led from 11, the partner of the opening leader can determine how many cards higher than the card led are held by declarer, dummy and himself; by deduction of those in dummy and in his own hand, he can determine the number in declarer's hand.

Example 1:

NORTH
 ♠ Q 9 7 6
 ♥ K Q 7
 ♦ J 8 5
 ♣ Q J 7

EAST
 ♠ K 10 5 4
 ♥ A 6 4
 ♦ K 10
 ♣ 9 6 3 2

N	E	S	W
		1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South is declarer in 2NT and West leads the 6♦. East determines that South has only one card above the six. Applying the rule of 11 results in 5 (11 – 6) and South can see two cards in dummy (North) and two in his own hand greater than the 6♦, so there can only be one in South.

Of course this can also help declarer.

NORTH
 ♠ Q 9 7 6
 ♥ K Q 7
 ♦ J 8 5
 ♣ Q J 7

SOUTH
 ♠ A 3 2
 ♥ J 9 8 5
 ♦ A 4 3
 ♣ A 10 4

N	E	S	W
		1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

After West leads the 6♦ South will see the dummy and assuming West is playing the fourth best card from his longest suit determines that West has two cards greater than the 6♦.

Example 2:

WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠ K J 9 7 3	♠ Q 8 2	♠ A 10 5
	SOUTH	
	♠ 6 4	

When West leads the 7♠ in this hand, East applies the Rule of 11. This shows that there are four cards higher than the 7♠ that dummy, declarer and East hold. Since East can see the Q♠ and 8♠ in dummy and the A♠ and 10♠ in his own hand, declarer can have no cards higher than the 7♠. Knowing this, if the dummy covers with the ♠8, East knows he can win the trick cheaply with the 10♠.

WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠ K J 9 7 3	♠ Q 8 2	♠ 6 4
	SOUTH	
	♠ A 10 5	

However, the declarer can apply the Rule of 11, too. When West leads the 7♠ in this deal, South can see the four higher cards in his hand and on the board. Accordingly, he knows that the play of the 8♠ from the board will win the trick cheaply.