

Rubens' Pearls on Hand Evaluation (2)

The following is a summary of pointers on Hand Evaluation Rubens made in his book "The Secrets of Winning Bridge".

..... on HAND VALUATION

- High Card Point counting works best for balanced hands.
- The High Card Point count could be adjusted upwards where you have Aces and Kings or good quality intermediate cards or a fit with partner. High Card Points should be adjusted downwards for unguarded honours.

..... on LOCATION OF HONOURS

- The longer the suit in which an honour is located, the more valuable the honour.
- Honours in combination are more valuable than isolated honours.
- The nature and location of your side suit honours affects their value.
- Your hand is depreciated if you have honours in a suit in which partner is void. Conversely, your hand is appreciated if your honours are in a suit where partner also holds values.
- With a trump fit and wishing to invite game, it is useful to bid a suit in need of help from honours which your partner may hold.

..... on IN-OUT VALUATION

- It is better to have your secondary honours in partner's suit and your primary honours outside it.

..... on APPLYING VALUATION TECHNIQUES

- An Adjustment to the Losing Trick Count
- Culbertson's rule for inviting slams can be extended to inviting games.
- The Finesse Rule for bidding a small slam
- In a close decision be aggressive if your potential trump holding is strong and vice versa.

..... on COMPETITIVE BIDDING

- Assessing the offensive versus defensive potential of a hand is crucial in competitive bidding.
- An opening one-bid will normally contain 4 to 5 offensive tricks and 2 to 3 defensive tricks. Compare your opener with this to assess its offensive versus defensive orientation.
- A more offensive hand contains:
 - more cards in your own suits, and fewer cards in theirs
 - more of your honours in your suits
 - the more secondary honours you have in your suits and primary honours in theirs
- A more defensive hand is the opposite.
- If the suit in which your honours are located is not known to "belong" to either side, primary honours are defensive and secondary honours are offensive.
- In close decisions, pass the decision to partner, if possible
- It is the partner with length in the enemy trump suit who is best able to judge the combined offensive-defensive potential of his partnership.
- The partner whose hand has been less well defined by the bidding should make the final decision on the contract.

