

Esther "Pop" Quiz #0418:
"As a Responder When Partner Sitting 1st or 2nd
Makes a 1-Level Suit Bid
Do You Know the '6 Point Rule' That May
Help Guide Your Bidding Decision?"

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

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Many of the ideas and the examples presented here are drawn from Andrew Robson's bridge posting, "Responder's Six Point Rule", on his "Andrew Robson Bridge" website:

<https://www.andrewrobson.co.uk/article/articles/3542>

Esther may have altered some of the cards in the examples.

As a bridge Responder when your Partner makes a 1-level Suit contract bid as Dealer, or when Partner's RHO as Dealer PASSEd, or when Partner bids in the "balancing" position following **3** PASSes, and you hold a relatively "weak" hand, when you should bid, and when should you PASS? In general, you should bid if you hold **6+** HCPs, and especially if you can "support" Partner's bid Suit. This is because Partner may have opened holding **19** HCPs, and if you hold **6+** HCPs a Game contract may be successful. Therefore, the "**6-Point Rule**" says that you should seriously consider bidding if you hold **6+** HCPs because together you and Partner may hold **25** HCPs, so you want to at least keep the conversation going.

Of course, Suit contracts are not primarily about HCPs! This is why we have the "**Law of Total Tricks**" and bridge "Rules" like

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¹ As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, the purported ACBL Double Triple Emerald Gold Platinum LifeMaster with 20+ million ACBL MasterPoints, in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So, this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

Marty Bergen's "Rule of 20"!

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/rules.pdf>

The fact that HCPs should not dominate your bidding in Suit contract conversations is validated by the ACBL bridge documentary film, "Moonraker", in which ACBL Lifemaster made a **7C DOUBLED REDOUBLED** contract even though his Partnership together held only **8** HCPs!:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/moonraker.pdf>

The truism that HCPs are not the only consideration in bidding Suit contracts is also illustrated in the bridge Board on which (1) all **4** players hold **10** HCPs, (2) all **4** players can make a **3NT** contract, (3) NORTH and SOUTH can *both* make both a **5D** or a **5S** contract, and (4) EAST and WEST can *both* make both a **5C** or a **5D** contract!:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/Mirror H.pdf>

**What Do You Know About Partner's Hand if Partner Sitting
1st or 2nd Opens 1H or 1S and**

Either Your RHO PASSES or Both Your LHO and Your RHO PASS?

- A. Your Partner holds **5+** cards in his bid Major and his bid Major has good "Suit Quality",² or possibly **4** cards if he holds **4** of the "top" **5** Honors in the Suit. As Marty Bergen argued in his ACBL Bridge Bulletin column from the December, 2024 issue (p. 55), "I have always believed that any [S]uit headed by four honors should be treated as if it had an additional card."
- B. Your Partner holds **13+** HCPs or meets the bidding requirements set forth in the first few pages of Marty Bergen's award-winning 1996 bridge book, Points Schmoints! Bergen's "Rule of 20" says, "If the sum of (1) your HCPs and (2) the number of cards in your longest 2 Suits equal **20** or more. This Rule honors the fact that 2-Suited Hands play very well in Suit contracts."
- C. Because Partner did not open **2C** Partner does not hold **22-24** HCPs.
- D. Because Partner did not open **2NT** Partner (1) does not hold **20-22** HCPs or (2) holds a void, a singleton, or 2 doubletons.
- E. Because Partner did not bid **1NT** Partner either (1) does not hold **15-17** HCPs or (2) holds a void, a singleton, or 2 doubletons.

² For discussion of the Ron Klinger "Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score" see:

https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0100_q.pdf

F. But Partner may indeed hold **18-19** HCPs, so if your Hand meets the requirements of the "**6 Point Rule**" a bid as Responder may be appropriate.

1. Partner *SOUTH* opens by bidding **1H**. Your RHO *PASS*es. What would you bid sitting *NORTH* if you held:

NORTH (**6**)
S: J 9 8 3
H: 9 5 4
D: J T
C: A 9 7 3

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0418_a1.pdf