

Windows of Strength

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Agenda

- Windows of Strength
 - How strong is my hand? Think in “windows.”
 - What is the right level for our combined hands?
 - Opener or Responder: who places the contract?
- Four Steps to Successful Auctions
 - Four Step Communication
 - “He who knows, goes!”
- Partnership Harmony
- The Golden Rules

Windows of Strength

Questions, Deductions, and Conclusions

- How strong is my hand?
- What strength does partner show?
- What is the best contract level for the combined hands?
- Who decides the final contract?

How Strong is My Hand?

How Strong is Partner?

Think of both hands in “Windows” of Strength

Window

As Opener:

As Responder:

Minimum	12 - 14	6 - 9
Good	15 - 17	10 - 12
STRong	18 - 19	13 - 15
ANIMAL	20+	16+

At What Level Should We Play the Contract? Part Score, Game, or Slam?

Estimated Combined Points	Goal
Less Than 25	Sign off in the cheapest acceptable Part Score
May total 25	Invite game in Major suit or Notrump
Windows total 26 - 28	Bid game in 8-card Major suit fit or Notrump
Windows total 28 - 32	Bid the best game: Major suit, else NT, else minor suit
Windows total 33 - 36	Bid slam in best suit fit or Notrump
Windows total 37 - 40	Bid a Grand Slam in best suit fit, or Notrump

Describer & Captain

- The opening bid range is 12 - 20
- Opener's second bid Describes his hand in both size and shape
- Having heard all this, Responder may now place contract
- Some Auctions require further investigation questions:
 - Is his Bid *Forcing*? Is my Bid Forcing?
 - Is his Bid *Invitational*? Is my Bid Invitational?
 - Is his Bid *to Play*(closeout)? Is mine?

Four Steps to Successful Auctions

Four Step Communication in the Auction

In the auction we work together to describe both our *strength* and *distribution* in hopes of arriving at the best contract at the best level. To achieve this, think of the auction in Four Bidding Steps

1. The Opening Bid: minimum, Good, STRong or ANIMAL
 2. The Response: minimum, Good, STRong or ANIMAL
 3. The Description: Opener narrows his opening to window of strength and distribution
 4. The Placement: Adding the two windows together to place the best contract.
- Opening → Response → Description → Placement
 - Responder is often the “Captain,” but *He Who Knows Goes!*

Partnership Harmony

Building Blocks for a Good Partnership

- Your partner is your only friend at the table
- Avoid Disasters; if in doubt, keep it simple
- Look at your possible bids through your partner's eyes
- Partners love to have their suit raised
- Partners usually want their opening lead returned
- Trust Partner

(You can win the post mortem discussions with the last three points)

The Golden Rules

The Golden Rules

- Bidding is more fun than passing.
- Playing the Dummy is much easier than Defending
- Search for the “Golden” 8-card major fit
 - 4-4 is often the best
 - 5-3 or 6-2 works
 - Nine cards is even better!
- With 25+ points, bid the “Golden Fit Major Game”, or 3NT with stoppers

Recap

Key Points to Remember

- Always think of your hand in terms of the Four Windows of Strength
 - minimum / Good / STRong / ANIMAL
- Apply the Four Step Communication process
 - Opening / Response / Description / Placement
- Build Partnership Harmony
 - By the bids you choose and your active trust in partner
- Remember the Golden Rules
 - Golden fits at the right level
 - Majors first, then NT, then minors if you must

The Most Important Golden Rule

In the vast majority of your partnerships – at least until you reach the expert level of bridge skill, let this be your Golden Rule:

- Reduce the complexity of the auction down to counting in Four Windows of Strength, and a Simple Four Step Bidding treatment.

Good luck!

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