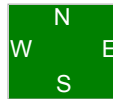


The Rule of Eleven

by [Rich Waugh](#)

Board 22
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K J 5
♥ Q J 10 8 4
♦ 6 3 2
♣ 4 2



♠ A 9 6
♥ 9 2
♦ A K 5 4
♣ A K 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Against 3NT, West leads the ♠4, declarer calls the ♠5 from dummy, and East plays the ♠8.

With the spade lead, declarer can count seven sure tricks: three spades and the minor suit aces and kings. In order to fulfill his contract, he must develop two additional tricks.

It will be easy enough to establish the heart suit, but there is an entry problem. If declarer wins the first trick with the ♠9 and leads a heart, competent defenders will duck the first round. Declarer can lead another heart to knock out one honor, but now he has no more hearts left in his hand and only one entry, in spades, to dummy. He can establish the heart suit but can't get back to dummy to cash it. Can you see how to overcome this dilemma to assure his contract?

The answer lies back at trick one. Declarer should win the first trick, not with ♠9, but with the ♠A! By applying the **Rule of Eleven**, he knows East's ♠8 was the only card in his hand higher than the ♠4 (check it). This leaves declarer with a finesse of the ♠J – and an extra entry to dummy.

	♠ K J 5		
	♥ Q J 10 8 4		
	♦ 6 3 2		
	♣ 4 2		
♠ Q 10 7 4 3		♠ 8 2	
♥ A 7 5		♥ K 6 3	
♦ 10 7		♦ Q J 9 8	
♣ J 9 3		♣ Q 10 8 7	

	♠ A 9 6
	♥ 9 2
	♦ A K 5 4
	♣ A K 6 5

Incidentally, please note that if declarer plays dummy's ♠J to the first trick, he can no longer make his contract.