11. Being a slave to the Rule of 20 and not opening when you should Opening the bidding when the number of cards in your two longest suits added to your total point-count reaches 20 is a good guide. It factors in the power of shape as well as your high cards. It's a guide not gospel, though.

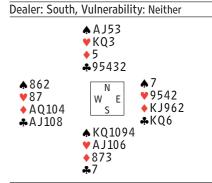
Bridge is fundamentally a game of winning tricks. Take a hand containing ♠ KQJ109 and ♥32 compared with a hand containing ♠ Q5432 and ♥ KJ. The first contains four certain tricks (with spades as trumps), while the second contains none at all; yet both have the same 5♠-2♥ shape and six high-card points.

When considering whether to open the bidding on a marginal hand, consider whether your high cards are in the long suits or short suits. Are the high cards sequential (good), or "gappy" (bad); do the long suits contain intermediate cards?

Also, will you be able to rebid conveniently? If you hold a hand with (say) five spades and four hearts, you will have an easy lathen-2 v route, whereas a hand with (say) five diamonds and four hearts will probably give you a tricky rebid (lo-then-2 v normally sends you to the dizzy heights of the Three-level).

You should definitely open the bidding with each of these tenpoint hands (which fail the Rule of 20).

♠QJ1083	<b>♠</b> AQ109	<b>♠</b> 4
♥KQ109	<b>v</b> 2	♥AQ1093
♦Q107	♦932	♦ KJ98
<b>♣</b> 2	<b>≗</b> K 11032	<b>≗</b> 1092



What Happened			
S	W	N	Е
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

## What Should Have Happened S N E 1♠(1) Pass 4♠(2) end

(1) Loving his robust majors, worth way more than their point-count value. And with an easy 1♠ -then-2♥ bidding plan.

(2) Loving the singleton — worth about three extra points.

Contract: 4♠, Opening Lead: ♥8

## What Happened

Nothing to see here.

What Should Have Happened South opens 1♠ and soon finds himself in the excellent 4♠. Win West's ♥8 lead (best) with ♥K and lead ♦5. West wins and leads ♥7.

Win in hand with ▼10 and ruff
◆3. Now lead ♠5 to ♠9 and ruff
◆8 with ♠A. Overtake ♠J with
♠Q, cash ♠10 (drawing West's trumps) and enjoy ▼AJ. Only a club is lost at the end — 11 tricks and game made plus one.

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