The Rule of 20 - First and Second Seat Openings.

Rule of 20 - Refers to a secondary hand evaluation methodology when a hand does not have sufficient strength to open bidding using a traditional point count.

A player may open the bidding when the High Card Point sum added to the number of cards held in the two longest suits totals 20 or more.

Note: the player's honors should be in the long suit/s, *not* side suits (i.e., no defensive tricks)

High Card Points in 2 longest suits	Combined number of cards in 2 longest suits	Sum
9	11	9+11 = 20
10	10	10+10 = 20
11	9	11+9 = 20
12	8	12+8 = 20

ONE LEVEL OPENING BIDS

The tendency today is to open all 12 HCP hands regardless, although some 10/11 point hands are even more promising while some 12 HCPs are not worthy of an opening bid.

FIRST AND SECOND SEAT OPENERS

a) ♠ AKxxx   ♥ Kxxx   ♦ Jxx   ♣ x

b) ♠ xxxx   ♥ Axxxx   ♦ AKxx   ♣ Void

c) ♠ Jx   ♥ Qxx   ♦ AJxxx   ♣ Kxx

a) Here, with 11 HCP and strength in the major suits, this is certainly a solid 1♠ opener.

b) While you cannot count distribution points for your void (until a FIT is found with partner), your 2 1/2 quick tricks (i.e. sure winners in a suit) make this a clear cut opening bid 1♥.

c) Here the values are scattered and your major suits are weak. This is an 11 HCP hand which you should pass. Many inexperienced players open these hands and get into trouble.

The Rule of 20 is not relevant in Third or Fourth Seat. Mr. Marty Bergen strongly suggests that most hands worth an opening bid have at least 2 Quick Tricks. However, in the words of Mr. Marty Bergen, no hard and fast rule is possible. Some hands with 1 to 1.5 Quick Tricks should be opened. He also admonishes the bridge player to consider the fact that no suit can have more than a total of 2 Quick Tricks.

What you do is add the length of your two longest suits to your point count. If the total is 20 or more, then open. In this case; 12 pts +4 +4 = 20, so an opener.

♠ K6

♥ AJ96

♦ A1096

♣ 432

♠ Q85 ♥ AJ98 ♦ J ♣ A10742 ♠ K74 ♠ A1093 ♥ 652 ♥ 43 ♦ KQ1075 ♦ 93 ♣ 83 ♣ KQJ96 ♠ J62 ♥ KQ107 ♦ A8642 ♣ 5	North should open this hand using the Rule of 20 and after finding a fit they should play in 4♥. West leads the ♦K. We will talk more about counting winners and losers next week; but on this hand when you count your losers and you have 3 spade losers and four club losers, which is way too many. If you count winners you have the ♣A, ♦A, and 4 trumps for only 6 winners. How can you turn this hand into only 3 losers and 10 winners. The key is to score all of your trumps separately. You win the A of diamonds and trump a diamond. Then you cash the A of clubs and trump a club. You continue to trump diamonds in your hand and clubs in dummy until you have scored all 8 trumps separately. This way you get 8 trump winners and 2 Aces for 10 tricks. Notice that if you even draw one round of trumps you will waste 2 trumps on top of each other, getting only 1 trick for them instead of 2. Whenever you are going to cross-ruff, make sure to cash your winners in side suits first. If you don't, the opponents will throw away that suit and trump your winner. Say in this hand you had the ♠A instead of the ♠Q. You should cash the ♠A before you start trumping. If you don't they will throw away their spades when they are out of clubs or diamonds. Then, when you go to cash the ♠A later, they will trump it.
♠ A43 ♥ 876 ♦ A432 ♣ AK3 ♠ KQJ1098 ♠ 762 ♥ 32 ♥ 954 ♦ 98 ♦ KQJ106 ♣ QJ10 ♣ 54 ♠ 5 ♥ AKQJ10 ♦ 75 ♣ 98762	Here you are in 4♥. They lead the ♠K and you win the ♠A. What some new players do now is to think to themselves that since they are now void in spades in the south hand that they should trump a spade, cross back to the ♦A and trump another spade. They think that they are gaining tricks by trumping, but they are not, because they can throw those losers away against there trumps at the end when the South hand is good and they claim. By wasting those trumps now, they are only left with 3 trumps in the South hand. After they use those 3 trumps to draw the opponents' trumps, they will be of trumps. When West gets in with the ♣Q, he cashes all of his spades and they go down. The right way to play this hand is to draw only enough trumps to run the opponents out. So we win the ♠A and lead 3 rounds of trump. Now we come to a very advantageous position where we have 2 trumps and the opponents have none. Next, we work on developing our long suit why we still have control of the hand. So we play the ♣K, the ♣A and a low club. Now when West gets in, if he tries to cash a spade, we can still trump it and cash our good clubs. Instead of going down, we make 5. The only difference between going down and making 5 was preserving our long trumps to keep control of the hand.
♠ J43 ♥ AJ10 ♦ 76 ♣ AKJ108 ♠ 109852 ♠ AKQ ♥ 4 ♥ 32 ♦ Q8532 ♦A94 ♣ Q6 ♣ 97432 ♠ 76 ♥ KQ98765 ♦ KJ10 ♣ 5 South North 1H 2C 2H 4H	East wins the first two spades, noticing partner's deuce on the second. A high-low indicates either two or five cards, and the partner of the opening leader is supposed to work out which it is from the biding. In this case, West must have five spades or else, if the lead were a doubleton, South would have started with five spades, which would be inconsistent with the bidding. If East is a real player he shifts to a low diamond at trick three. South is apt to finesse the South has seen East's high spade honors so he willl probably place- the ace of diamonds in the West hand), resulting in a one trick set after wins the queen and returns the suit to partner's ace. The key to the defense was East's knowing that only two spade tricks were cashable. Had West played a higher spade at trick two, East would simply have cashed three spades and a diamond. Knowing that West started with only three or four spades and therefore that declarer held at least three.

♠ AK104
♥ 83
♦ 72
♣ A10984
 	
♠ J53   ♠ 2
♥ 92   ♥ K107654
♦ AQ9864 ♦ J103
♣ 76   ♣ KQJ
 	
♠ Q9876
♥ AQJ
♦ K5
♣ 532
	Contract: 4S Lead ♥9
	
	        N E S W
	        1C 1H 1S P
	        2S P 4S All Pass
	Assuming spades divide no worse than 3-1, you have four losers: two diamonds and two clubs. You can avoid one of the diamond losers even with the ace of diamonds offside. Can you figure out how to do it?
	West would not lead the nine of hearts if he held the king or ten, so you should conclude that they are in the East hand. If you play the heart suit correctly, you can establish a third heart trick in your hand to discard one of your losing diamonds in the dummy.
	First, you must cover the nine of hearts with the queen (a key play); East contributes the king and you, the ace. After drawing the trumps in three rounds, lead a heart from dummy and finesse the eight. You can now discard a diamond from dummy on the jack of hearts.