

Losing Trick Count

Introduction

Method of hand evaluation (1935)

To be used in association with the standard point counting system (Milton Work Count)

- Primary use is by responder to an opening bid preferably in a major but not exclusively

- Responder has a fit in the opener's suit -
 - 3 or more cards when playing 5-card majors
 - 4 or more cards when opener's suit assumed to be 4 cards

How Does It Work?

- Firstly identify a fit
- What is a fit?

Once a fit has been identified:

- 1. Count your losers
- 2. Add your partner's losers
(opener assumed to have 7)
- 3. Subtract from 18

Result gives the expected
maximum level of the contract
with the fitting suit as trumps.

So - How do we count losers?

- 1. Only top three cards in any suit can be losers
- 2. Only the Ace, King, Queen are winners
- 3. Singleton King or Queen or a doubleton Queen count as losers

For Example

♠	5432	AK4	AK43	AK543	AK4
♥	32	J54	Q	Void	AK5
♦	432	KQ54	KQ654	KQ432	AK65
♣	5432	654	543	65	AK7
	11	8	6	4	4

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Points and Shape
- More points and more unbalanced yield
LESS losers

Strengths & Weaknesses

♠	Q432	A432
♥	Q432	A432
♦	Q432	A432
♣	3	2
Losers	7	7

- Clearly the isolated Queens are being over valued so count them as half a loser
- Therefore 4th rule is the Queen counts HALF a loser except when combined with an A, K, or J

Basic Assumptions

- Opener has 7 losers and 12 points
- Responder has at least 6 points and no more than 9 losers
- Responder subtracts his LTC plus 7 (for opener) from 18 to give suggested maximum bid

SO...

- with 9 losers responder bids 2 of the fitting suit
- with 8 losers responder bids 3 of the fitting suit
- with 7 losers responder bids 4 of the fitting suit

Where does 18 come from?

- Consider a hand with 4-3-3-3 distribution and no winners
- It has 12 losers?
- If you both have the same distribution then you also have 12 losers
- ie maximum number of losers is 24 for the partnership

Where does 18 come from?

- So as responder if we have 9 losers then the partnership has 16 losers in total (9+7 assumed for opener)
- Maximum losers is 24 so 24 minus 16 suggests we have 8 winners and can therefore make a contract for 8 tricks

Where does 18 come from?

- However we do not bid in terms of numbers of tricks – **we always bid in excess of 6**
- Therefore subtracting losers from 18 yields the level of our bid
- 18 minus 16 equals 2 in the fitting suit

Exceptional Situations

There is an important difference
between distributional and strong
hands with 7 losers

Exceptional Situations

- Look at these 2 hands replying to 1S

• ♠ JT432 A876

• ♥ Void K5

• ♦ AT9832 AQ76

• ♣ 32 765

- How should these 2 hands be bid?

Hand 1 – bid 4S directly showing a distributional (weak) hand

Hand 2 – bid 2D – opener must bid again – after which jump to 4S

Slam Possibilities?

• ♠	K432	AQ765
• ♥	AK	65
• ♦	AK854	32
• ♣	32	AK65
•	1D	1S
•	4S	?

Slam Possibilities?

- East remembers he is responder and counts his losers – 6
 - 9 losers – pass
 - 8 losers – 5S
 - 7 losers – 6S
 - 6 losers – 7S

Well, that was easy, wasn't it?

- **A Quick Recap**
- **Let's try some hands provided by the EBU to illustrate the LTC**

We have 8 prepared hands to play

The first four assume 5 card suits

The second four do not (ie maybe 4 or 5)

There will be an opportunity to review the results after each hand is played