



# Losing Trick Count

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- ♥ We are familiar with counting High Card Points (HCPs) to assess the strength of a hand
- ♣ The other dimension to consider is the shape of a hand – the favourability of its distribution
- ♦ One way of combining strength and shape of a hand is to adjust the HCPs as follows:
  - ♣ Add 5 for a void
  - ♣ Add 3 for a singleton
  - ♣ Add 1 for a doubleton
- ♠ Losing Trick Count (LTC) is a more accurate way of assessing both your strength and distribution
- ♥ NB If you are using LTC, don't add points as well for voids, etc.

# Features of Losing Trick Count

- ♥ Concentrates on losers rather than winners
- ♣ Use as a conversation tool between you and your Partner
- ♦ Only use when you have agreed or are agreeing a trump suit with your Partner
- ♠ Use LTC for deciding whether to bid to game in unbalanced hands
- ♥ LTC is less effective with balanced hands
- ♣ LTC is not sufficient, on its own, to decide whether to bid a Slam

# Determining the LTC

- ♥ Assumes a **maximum** number of losers in each suit as the lower of:
  1. **the number of cards you hold in that suit, and**
  2. **3**
- ♣ A void suit counts as no losers
- ♦ A singleton counts as one loser unless it is the Ace
- ♥ A doubleton counts as 2 losers unless:
  - they are **A K** – counts as no losers;
  - they are **A x** – counts as 1 loser; (**x is a card less than a Queen**)
  - or they are **K x** – counts as 1 loser.
- ♠ In practice, you count one loser for each of the top three cards in each suit that is not an Ace, King or Queen – with some minor refinements

# Determining the LTC (cont.)

♥ We have covered the general principles for determining LTC

♣ Here is a table that includes the refinements:

Holding	Losing Tricks
A K Q	0
A K x	1
A Q x	1
A J T	1
A J x; A x x	2
K Q	1
K x x	2
Q J T; Q J 9	2
Q J x; Q x x	2.5
K	1

I find it easier to count a Q (without a K or A) as a winner if in trumps, otherwise as a loser

♦ Add the losing tricks for each suit and round the total up for your LTC

♠ Add another losing trick to your count if you have no Aces in your hand

# Using your LTC

**Firstly, you must know that you and your Partner have a fit of 8+ cards**

♥ **When you are responding to an Opening bid by your Partner:**

**Assume your Partner has an LTC of no more than 7**

**Add your LTC to 7 and subtract the total from 18 to give the level of bid you can respond with.**

♣ **When you are the Opener re-bidding after your Partner has supported your suit:**

**Responder will have assumed you have 7 losers when they decided what level to respond**

**If you have an LTC of less than 7, you can raise the level of bid by the difference**

♦ **Restrict your bid to the 4 level in a major (Game) and the 3 level in a Minor to explore whether you should be in 3 NT**

# Using your LTC (cont.)

LTC can also be used:

♥ When you are responding to an Overcall bid by your Partner:

**Your partner is a little less likely to have fewer than 7 losers  
– probably safer to assume she has 8 losers**

**N.B. Bidding to the Level of Fit (< 10 HCP) and Unassuming Cue Bid  
or 1 NT (10+ HCP) are better tools if you can remember them**

♣ When you are the Opener re-bidding after your Partner has changed suit:

**Your Responding Partner may be weaker than if she were making an  
opening bid in the suit**

**Assume she has an LTC of no more than 9**

# Example 1

You are Responder

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 ♥

Your hand:

♠	K	7			
♥	8	7	6	5	4
♦	A	7	5	4	3
♣	8				

What is your bid? 4 ♥

Your opening Partner may have 4, 5 or more ♥ s

You have a fit of at least 9 cards in ♥ s

Your LTC is 7;  $7 + 7 = 14$ ;  $18 - 14 = 4$ ;

You can bid 4 ♥



# Example 2

You are Responder

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 ♥

Your hand:

♠	K	7	2	
♥	8	7	6	5
♦	A	7	5	
♣	8	7	6	

What is your bid? 2 ♥

Your opening Partner may have 4, 5 or more ♥ s

You have a fit of at least 8 cards in ♥ s

Your LTC is 10;  $10 + 7 = 17$ ;  $18 - 17 = 1$

Even bidding 2 ♥ may be a step too far, but you would bid it to show support

# Example 3

You are Responder

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 ♥

Your hand:

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

What is your bid? 1 ♠

Your opening Partner may have 4, 5 or more ♥ s

You do not yet know if you have a fit of 8 cards in ♥ s

Your response should be 1 ♠

Partner's rebid is 2 ♦. What is your bid? 3 ♥

Partner has 5+ ♥ s; your LTC is 8;  $8 + 7 = 15$ ;  $18 - 15 = 3$ ; You can bid 3 ♥

# Example 4

You are Opener who bid 1 ♦

Your partner has responded with 1 ♠

Your hand:

♠	K	8	6	3			
♥	5						
♦	K	Q	7	6	5	2	
♣	K	J					

What is your rebid? 3 ♠

Your responding Partner must have at least 4 ♠ s

You have a fit of at least 8 cards in ♠ s

Your LTC is 6 – adding 1 for no Ace;  $6 + 9 = 15$ ;  $18 - 15 = 3$

You can bid 3 ♠

# Example 5

You are Opener who bid 1 ♠

Your partner has responded with 3 ♠

Your hand:

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

What is your rebid? 4 ♠

Your responding Partner has shown you have a fit in ♠ s

Your Partner will have assumed you have 7 losers when bidding 3 ♠

Your LTC is 6, one less than your Partner assumed; You can raise by one level

You can bid 4 ♠



**Thank you**