

Losing Trick Count

7 July 2020

© pete.dyer@live.co.uk

Losing Trick Count

- 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
- **v** 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
AKQ	0
АКх	1
A Q x	1
AJT	1
AJx; Axx	2
KQ	1
Кхх	2
Q J T; Q J 9	2
QJx;Qxx	2.5
К	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-biding 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:

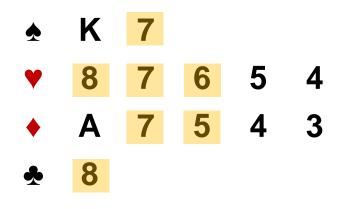
Your Responding Partner may be weaker than if she were making an opening bid in the suit

Assume she has an LTC of no more than 9

You are Responder

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 **•**

Your hand:



What is your bid? 4 💙

Your opening Partner may have 4, 5 or more **v** s

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

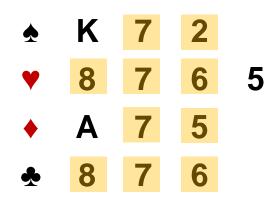
Your LTC is 7; 7 + 7 = 14; 18 - 14 = 4;

You can bid 4 🎔

You are Responder

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 **\nothesize**

Your hand:



What is your bid? 2 •

Your opening Partner may have 4, 5 or more **v** 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 Version may be a step too far, but you would bid it to show support

You are Responder

Example 3

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 •

Your hand:



What is your bid? 1 \bigstar

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 秦

Partner's rebid is 2 \blacklozenge . What is your bid? $3 \checkmark$ Partner has 5+ \clubsuit s; your LTC is 8; 8 + 7 = 15; 18 - 15 = 3; You can bid 3 \clubsuit

You are Opener who bid 1 🔶

Your partner has responded with 1 \blacklozenge

Your hand:



- Your responding Partner must have at least 4 \blacklozenge s
- You have a fit of at least 8 cards in \spadesuit s
- Your LTC is 6 adding 1 for no Ace; 6 + 9 = 15; 18 15 = 3You can bid 3 \blacklozenge

You are Opener who bid 1 🌩

Your partner has responded with 3 \blacklozenge

Your hand:



- Your responding Partner has shown you have a fit in \spadesuit 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