

# BLUE MOUNTAINS BC - TOUGH COMPETITOR NOTES



## 1. Law of Total Tricks (Simple version!)

On partscore deals (where each partnership has a combined total of about 17-23HCP):

the number of tricks you can take on offence is equal to the combined number of trumps you hold

In practice, this means that if you & partner have only an 8-card fit, you should usually stop at the 2-level.

If you have a 9-card fit, you can safely bid 3 of your suit if the opponents try to force you one level higher.

### a. USING THE LAW

Partner RHO You LHO				Partner RHO You LHO					
(1)	1H	1S	2H	2S	(2)	1C	Pass	1S	2D
	? <sup>1</sup>	P	? <sup>2</sup>			2S	3D	? <sup>1</sup>	
<sup>1</sup> - bid 3H if have 6th ♥ even if weak <sup>2</sup> - if partner Passed you bid 3H if have 4th ♥					<sup>1</sup> - bid 4S with high card strength - with 6-10pts Pass - with 5 spades & weak bid 3S				

### b. TYPICAL STRATEGIES

- With 8 trumps typically Play 2 level, Defend 3 level
- No five after five. If opponents bid to 5 level we typically Pass or Double

### c. OTHER OCCURRENCES:

- Preemptive Raise eg 1S 4S shows 5 trumps & weak
- Raise a Weak Two to 3 level with 3 trumps & 4 level with 4 trumps even when weak
- Cue Raise - a jump to 3 level is weak & shows 4 trumps & 4 to 7pts (some 6-9pts), eg 1H <2C> 3H
- **Bergen bids - though these are less popular these days especially if playing 2/1**

#### Quiz 1

You are West. What do you bid?

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♠	3♣
?			

(a)	(b)	(c)
♠ A Q 7 6 5	♠ K Q 7 6 5	♠ A Q J 7 6 5
♥ 8 6	♥ A K J 6	♥ 8 7
♦ K 8 5 4	♦ A 3	♦ A 6 5
♣ K 2	♣ 7 3	♣ 7 6
Pass	4♠	3♠

a) Pass - min, b) 4S - 19tp, c) 3S - extra trump

#### Quiz 2

You are South. What do you bid?

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dbl	4♥	?

(a)	(b)	(c)
♠ A Q 7 6 5	♠ Q J 7 5	♠ K J 10 7 6 5
♥ 8 6	♥ Q 9	♥ 8 7
♦ K 8 5 4	♦ Q 7 5	♦ 6 5 4 2
♣ K 2	♣ 10 7 3 2	♣ 7

4♠. Normal game      Pass. Happily, out.      4♠. Hopefully 10 trumps

a) 4S - strong b) Pass - weak, c) - 10 card trump fit

## The Law of Total Tricks

When both sides are competing for the contract, the Competitive Guideline derived from the Law of Total Tricks<sup>5</sup> is useful in deciding how much to bid:

### Competitive Guideline

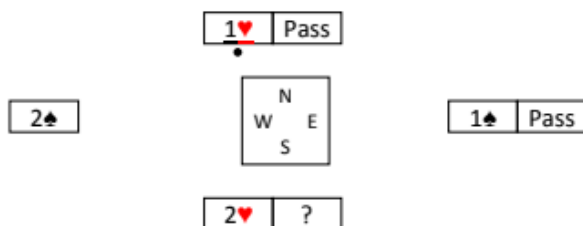
Strive to compete to the level of the number of trumps held by the partnership.

All four players at the table (opener, responder, intervener, advancer) can make use of this guideline.

The previous examples of responder's preemptive raises essentially follow this guideline. With a weak hand and five-card support for opener's five-card major opening of 1♠ – a total of ten trumps –, responder competes to the ten-trick level, 4♣. Similarly, when opener bids 2♥, showing a six-card suit, and responder has four-card support and a weak hand, responder is willing to jump to 4♥.

Bidding in competitive situations is not always a matter of high-card points. It is dependent on the combined trump fit the partnership holds. Responder could bid a little with a lot with a little or a lot with a little. Here is an example of how responder can apply the guideline in a competitive auction.

Suppose North opens 1♥, East overcalls 1♣, South raises to 2♥, and West bids 2♣. The auction is now passed back to responder, who must decide whether to pass and defend against 2♣ or compete further to 3♥.



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

Here responder has a near maximum in high-card points for the raise to 2♥, 9 high-card points, but only three-card support. Assuming opener has only a five-card suit, the partnership has eight combined trumps. The Competitive Guideline suggests passing. There are not enough combined trumps to compete to the three level, and that takes priority over having maximum high-card points for the raise.

♠ 9 5 4  
♥ K 8 3 2  
♦ Q J 7 5  
♣ 10 8

Here responder has only 6 high-card points, a near minimum for the raise to 2♥. However, responder has four-card support for hearts, giving the partnership a nine-card fit. The Competitive Guideline suggests competing to 3♥. This may make, or may push the opponents higher, or may be defeated less than the value of the opponent's partscore.

## 2. Hand Evaluation

### 2 TOUGH COMPETITOR - HAND EVALUATION - SUMMARY

- Shape - Long suits & 2 suited hands are great. => Rule of 20
- Length - Better than 4333's, add length pts from the outset. [HATE 4333](#)
- Shortage in dummy with a fit is gold (even better with more trumps)
- Where your HCPs are - want in long suits not short suits
- Like honours working together (KQ3); [HATE separate honours Q53 K43](#)
  - Want our honours in the long suits
- 10's & 9's matter - having them, in long suits is best
- Like Aces & Kings; [HATE Js \(lesser extent Qs\)](#). (Aces worth 4+pts, Js<1pt)
- [Unguarded honours may be worthless K, Qx, Jx, QJ](#)
- Fits - bid more if have extra trumps for ptner, regardless of pts (LOTT)
- The Bidding - upgrade if hold honours in RHO's suit; [downgrade if LHO's suit](#)
- [Misfits - Bid less if have no fit, or if hold length in opponent's suit](#)

## 1) No Trumps ♠♥♦♣

- a) The value of spot cards (10 & 9s)
- West AJ6 vs East 853 - 25% chance of winning 2 tricks (eg when South has K & Q)
  - West AJT vs East 853 - now 75% chance of winning 2 tricks
- b) The value of honours working together
- West K63 vs East Q52 - assuming Defence plays low in 2nd seat likely win only 1 trick
  - West KQ3 vs East 652 - now win 2 tricks 50% of the time (eg when South holds Ace)

<b>Hand 1 - North</b> ♠AJ2 ♥KJ4 ♦K543 ♣KJ6	<b>Bidding</b> North. South 1NT 2NT ? <b>Hand 1</b> Pass - poor spot cards, Js poor value <b>Hand 2</b> 3NT - good spots in ♦s & honours working together	<b>Hand 2 - North</b> ♠KQ6 ♥QJ4 ♦KT98 ♣KQ6
<b>Hand 3 - South</b> ♠K76 ♥Q7542 ♦K6 ♣Q65	<b>Bidding</b> North. South 1D 1H 1NT ? <b>Hand 3</b> Pass - poor spot cards, honours in separation <b>Hand 4</b> 2NT - good spots & honours working together	<b>Hand 4 - South</b> ♠A76 ♥KQT97 ♦T6 ♣JT5

## 2) Suits - HCPs still matter but to a lesser extent. What matters now is how your honours gel with partner.

- a) North opens 1S

<b>South - Hand 1</b> 13HCP ♠A765 ♥873 ♦AKQ ♣876	<b>South - Hand 2</b> 10HCP ♠A765 ♥KQJ ♦873 ♣876	<b>North's Hand</b> ♠KQJ982 ♥AT652 - ♣A3
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**South Hand 1** makes 11 tricks (can only discard 3 losers on ♦AKQ) whereas **Hand 2** makes 13 tricks even though less HCP.

- **Why => strength opposite shortage is wasted.** The diamond strength & the void are doing the same job

- b) North opens 1S

- **Be conservative when you have values facing a shortage, especially secondary values, QJs**

<b>South - Hand 1</b> 10HCP ♠KJ76 ♥Q654 ♦Q5 ♣Q93	<b>South - Hand 2</b> 8HCP ♠KT76 ♥KQT4 ♦72 ♣963	<b>North's Hand</b> ♠AQ543 ♥A83 ♦A83 ♣74
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- With **South Hand 1** bid 2S (Qs are poor & one will be facing a shortage as North has 5+ spades).
- With **South Hand 2** bid 3S (♥KQT powerful, doubleton, 4th trump) & North will bid & make game with only 22HCP between N/S

### 3. Cue Raises

<p><b>CUE RAISES - INTRODUCTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a bid of opponent's suit after an overcall (either theirs or yours)</li> <li>• shows 3+ major suit support &amp; 10+ TP, 4+ support minors</li> <li>• use Cue Raises to show <u>all</u> your raises in support of partner including game-going hands.</li> <li>• must be made on 1st round of bidding - after partner's overcall or opposition's overcall of partner's opening bid</li> <li>• frees up higher level raises to be weak, distributional hands (eg Law of Total Tricks). <b>Once you play Cue Raises, you need to remember that the 3-level raise is a pre-emptive bid!</b></li> <li>• can overcall on weaker hands &amp; not get too high</li> </ul>	<p><b>CUE RAISES - After Opponent's Overcall</b></p> <p>Example 1: Bidding Options after: West North East South 1H 2C ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bid 2H - 3+ hearts, 6-9(10) TP</li> <li>• 2NT: natural 10-12 pts &amp; stopper in their suit.</li> <li>• <b>Cue Raise 3C (3+ hearts, 10+pts)</b></li> <li>• <b>Bid 3H - 4-card support &amp; weak hand (0-6 HCP), pre-emptive</b></li> <li>• Bid 4H - shows a weak hand with 5-card support.</li> </ul>																																																							
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### 4. Negative Doubles

- Shows 4 cards in unbid major suit (& usually other non bid suit)
- Denies a fit for partner & denies a stopper for no trumps.
- Does not have to alerted
- Negative Doubles over 1 level - 6+HCP, over 2 level - 8+HCP, over 3 level - 10+HCP
- Learn.Bridge.NYC [here](#) is really good at explaining Negative Doubles

<p><b>NEGATIVE DOUBLES</b></p> <p>North 1♦ East 1♠ South ? South holds ♠932 ♥KQ63 ♦75 ♣QJ74</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8HCP so you want to bid</li> <li>• 1NT (6-9 HCP) is not appropriate with no spade stopper.</li> <li>• A bid at the 2-level shows 10+ HCP.</li> <li>• You can't support diamonds with only 2 cards (no fit)</li> </ul> <p>South doubles - show unbid Major (ie ♥), 6+pts (&amp; ideally support for ♣)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denies a fit for partner &amp; denies a stopper for no trumps</li> <li>• Shows 4 cards in unbid major</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEGATIVE DOUBLES - Unbid Suits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♥) X (double) = 4 spades &amp; 6+pts (&amp; ideally the non bid minor)</li> <li>• 1♠/♦ (they overcall 1♠) X (double) = 4 hearts &amp; 6+pts (&amp; ideally the non bid minor)</li> <li>• 1♣ (they overcall 1♦) X (double) = 4 hearts &amp; 4 spades</li> <li>• 1♥ (overcall 1♠) X = 4+ in both minors</li> <li>• 1♥ (they overcall 2♣) X = 4 spades &amp; 8+pts (&amp; ideally 4 diamonds)</li> </ul>
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NEGATIVE DOUBLES - EXAMPLE 1:		NEGATIVE DOUBLES - NATURAL BIDS	
<b>East</b> ♠T 9 8 7 ♥A Q x x ♦A x x x ♣x  ♠K T 9 8 ♥x ♦A K x x ♣A x x x	<b>Bidding:</b> West North East South 1C 1S ?  West North East South 1C 1H ?	<b>Notes:</b> - East doubles with 4♥s & 4♦s - Raise if West bids ♦ or ♥, Pass if West bids 2♣  - Have ♦ & ♠. Double & plan to bid again as strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By inference, if responder bids a suit over an overcall, it typically shows 5+ cards in suit:              1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♥) 1♠ = 5 spades &amp; 6+pts</li> <li>1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♠) 2♥ = 5 hearts &amp; 10+pts, eg              ♠54 ♥AK542 ♦A83 ♣652</li> <li>1♥ (overcall 2♣) 2♠ = 5 spades &amp; 10+pts</li> </ul>

## 5. Additional Resources

Topic	Additional Notes	Video	Quizzes
LOTT		<a href="https://vimeo.com/731993443">https://vimeo.com/731993443</a> Excellent Paul Martson How to Win video on competitive bidding (25mins)	
Hand Evaluation	Notes: <a href="https://www.bridgewebs.com/bluemountains/Excellent%20BH_Hand-Evaluation.pdf">https://www.bridgewebs.com/bluemountains/Excellent%20BH_Hand-Evaluation.pdf</a>	We use 531 for shortage pts rather than 321 in video but good explanation (9 mins) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1zrPuzBRJY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1zrPuzBRJY</a>  A bit advanced so only if keen <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkpoU16paF4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkpoU16paF4</a> (26mins)	Cohen hand evaluation  <a href="https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/309">https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/309</a>  <a href="https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/358">https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/358</a>
Cue Raises	<a href="http://www.bridgewebs.com/bluemountains/11.19%20Cue%20Raises%20Single.pdf">www.bridgewebs.com/bluemountains/11.19%20Cue%20Raises%20Single.pdf</a>	Hollands (15mins) <a href="https://bridgevid.com/2016/04/03/cue-raises/">https://bridgevid.com/2016/04/03/cue-raises/</a>	Baker - <a href="https://bakerbridge.coffeecup.com/Cue-bid/_Start.html">https://bakerbridge.coffeecup.com/Cue-bid/_Start.html</a>
Negative Doubles	NYC Negative Doubles <a href="https://nebula.wsimg.com/f51d17d8f879a2dcfcc6d210f91d2aa8?AccessKeyId=A1664F80F3B444830257&amp;disposition=0&amp;alloworigin=1">https://nebula.wsimg.com/f51d17d8f879a2dcfcc6d210f91d2aa8?AccessKeyId=A1664F80F3B444830257&amp;disposition=0&amp;alloworigin=1</a>	NYC Negative Doubles 1D 1S X shows either 4 hearts & 6+pts or, more advanced, 5 hearts & 6-9pts. Not sure I'd have started video with the latter but hang in there (16mins)! <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WvLahNHB_E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WvLahNHB_E</a>	Baker has pts for 2 level X as 10 & 3 level as 12+. I recommend 8+ & 10+ respectively so some answers may differ. <a href="https://bakerbridge.coffeecup.com/Negative/_Start.html">https://bakerbridge.coffeecup.com/Negative/_Start.html</a>  Lidor - quite hard <a href="https://news.bridgebase.com/2022/12/14/quiz-the-negative-double/">https://news.bridgebase.com/2022/12/14/quiz-the-negative-double/</a>
If you're really keen look at Larry Cohen's "After they Interfere Quizzes" (#2 thru to #6)			<a href="https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/bidding">https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/bidding</a>

## 6. Practice Hands (it is slow to get to Bridge Training hand!) - click links below.

Bid & play hand then you can get hints in the Game Review section.

- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=kSRqMAB9&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=eunTVpki&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=4uRbPwgQ&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=L9HpcZKJ&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=Q9eUhar6&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=rcPERLxM&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=uweJGgPY&lang=en>
- <https://bridge-training.com/player?dds=xfGeNP8&lang=en>

## 7. Cheat Sheet



## 1 TOUGH COMPETITOR - LOTT Common bidding scenarios

- bid to the level of trumps your partnership holds
  - Responder raises 1 major to 4 major if hold 5 trumps
  - Responder raises Weak Two to 3lvl with 3 trumps
  - Over 1H 1S, 2H 2S we will bid 3H if:
    - We have 9 trumps (opener 6 or responder 4)
    - We have 8 trumps & willing to sacrifice (care Vul.)
  - Typically play at the 2 level, defend at the 3 level
  - **Care if unfavourable vulnerability, 4333 &/or pts unevenly split**

## 2 TOUGH COMPETITOR - HAND EVALUATION - SUMMARY

- Shape - Long suits & 2 suited hands are great. => Rule of 20
- Length - Better than 4333's, add length pts from the outset. **HATE 4333**
- Shortage in dummy with a fit is gold (even better with more trumps)
- Where your HCPs are - want in long suits not short suits
- Like honours working together (KQ3); **HATE separate honours Q53 K43**
  - Want our honours in the long suits
- 10's & 9's matter - having them, in long suits is best
- Like Aces & Kings; **HATE Js (lesser extent Qs)**. (Aces worth 4+pts, Js<1pt)
- **Unguarded honours may be worthless K, Qx, Jx, QJ**
- Fits - bid more if have extra trumps for ptner, regardless of pts (LOTT)
- The Bidding - upgrade if hold honours in RHO's suit; downgrade if LHO's suit
- **Misfits - Bid less if have no fit, or if hold length in opponent's suit**

### CUE RAISES - After Opponent's Overcall

Example 1: Bidding Options after:

West North East South  
1H 2C ?

- Bid 2H - 3+ hearts, 6-9(10) TP
- 2NT: natural 10-12 pts & stopper in their suit.
- **Cue Raise 3C (3+ hearts, 10+pts)**
- **Bid 3H - 4-card support & weak hand (0-6 HCP), pre-emptive**
- Bid 4H - shows a weak hand with 5-card support.

### CUE RAISES - After Partner's Overcall

Example 2: Bidding Options after:

West North East South  
1H 1S Pass ?

- Bid 2S - single raise shows 3 card support, 6-9 HCP.
- **Cue Raise 2H (3+ spades, 10+pts)**
- **Bid 3S - 4-card support & weak hand (0-6 HCP), pre-emptive**
- Bid 4S - shows a weak hand with 5-card support

### CUE RAISES - After Opponent's Overcall

Bidding: South planned to bid 3H but, after East's 2C, bids 3C to show 3+ ♥s & 10+pts. If partner bids 3H (min 12-14pts) pass.

Opener's Rebid Options:

- 3H - Rebid suit at lowest level (minimum 12-14pts)
- 4H - Rebid suit at game level, eg game values opposite 10+TP

South	West	North	East	South
♠Axx	1H	2C	3C	
♥QTxx	Pass	3H	All	Pass (3H is min 12-14pts)
♦KQxx				
♣xx				

### CUE RAISES - After Partner's Overcall

Bidding: South bids 2H to show 3+ ♠s & 10+pts

Overcaller's Rebid Options (after partner's Cue Raise):

- 2S - Rebid suit at minimum level. Minimal hand (say 7-11pts)
- 3S - Jump rebid suit (to 3-level). 12-14pts
- 4S - Rebid suit at game level, eg game values opposite 10+TP

South	West	North	East	South
♠Axx	1H	1S	Pass	2H
♥xx	Pass	2S	All	Pass (Minimum response)
♦Axxx				(Note - in 2S not 3S)
♣Kxxx				

## 4 TOUGH COMPETITOR NEGATIVE DOUBLES - Unbid Suits

- 1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♥) X (double) = 4 spades & 6+pts (& ideally the non bid minor)
- 1♠/♦ (they overcall 1♠) X (double) = 4 hearts & 6+pts
- 1♥ (they overcall 2♠) X = 4 spades & 8+pts (& ideally 4 ♦s)

Treat as similar to a Takeout Double

- 1♣ (they overcall 1♦) X (double) = 4 hearts & 4 spades
- 1♥ (they overcall 1♠) X = 4+ in both minors

More Advanced:

- 1D 1S X = could show 5 hearts & 6-9pts (rebids hearts)

## 4 TOUGH COMPETITOR NEGATIVE DOUBLES - NATURAL BIDS

- By inference, if responder bids a suit over an overcall, it typically shows 5+ cards in suit:

1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♥) 1♠ = 5 spades & 6+pts

- 1♣/♦ (they overcall 1♠) 2♥ = 5 hearts & 10+pts, eg ♠54 ♥AK542 ♦A83 ♣652

## 4 TOUGH COMPETITOR NEGATIVE DOUBLES - OPENER'S REBIDS

Opener's Rebid After a Negative Double

- Minimum hand (12-15) rebid at cheapest level.  
1D 1S X P, ?; with ♠AT ♥QT84 ♦AK62 ♣73 bid 2♥
- Can pass if RHO competes - 1♥ (1♠) X (2♠); Pass
- Medium hand (16-18), opener jumps a level, or bids even if opponents compete eg 1♥ (1♠) X (both minors) (2♠), 3♣/♦
- Maximum hand (19-20) bid game

## 4 TOUGH COMPETITOR NEGATIVE DOUBLES - SUMMARY

	North	East	South	
1.	1 minor	1S	X	- shows 4 hearts & 6+pts, or exactly 5 hearts & 6-9pts (rebid H)
2.			X	- shows 4 hearts & 6+pts
3.			2H	- shows 5+ hearts & 10+pts
4.	1 minor	1H	X	- shows exactly 4 spades & 6+pts
5.			1S	- shows 5 spades & 6+pts
6.	1C	1D	1H/S	- shows 4 in suit (as always)
7.			X	- 4:4 in majors & 6+pts (occasionally 5:4 & 6-9pts)
8.	1H	1S	X	- 4:4 in minors & 6+pts (occasionally 5:4)
9.	1S	2 minor	X	- shows 4 hearts & 8+pts
10.			2H	- 5+ hearts & 10+pts
11.	1H	2 minor	X	- 4 spades & 8+pts
12.	1 minor	3H	X	- 4 spades & 10+pts