

Balancing



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Joke

A senior citizen drove his brand new Corvette convertible out of the dealership. Taking off down the road, he floored it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little gray hair he had left. Amazing, he thought as he flew down I-94, pushing the pedal even more.

Looking in his rearview mirror, he saw a state trooper behind him, lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120. Suddenly he thought, What am I doing? I'm too old for this. And pulled over to await the trooper's arrival.

Pulling in behind him, the trooper walked up to the Corvette, looked at his watch, and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Friday. If you can give me a reason for speeding that I've never heard before, I'll let you go."

The old gentleman paused. Then he said, "Years ago, my wife ran off with a state trooper. I thought you were bringing her back."

"Have a good day, sir," replied the trooper.

Facts About Fits

1

				
YOU:	4	3	3	3
PARTNER:	2	3	3	5
FIT:	6	6	6	8
One 8-card fit				

13+13 = 26 Cards
26/4 = 6.5 Avg per suit


				
YOU:	4	3	3	3
PARTNER:	2	3	4	4
FIT:	6	6	7	7
Two 7-card fits				

				
YOU:	5	5	2	1
PARTNER:	1	1	4	7
FIT:	6	6	6	8
One 8-card fit				

Fact #1: You are guaranteed at least two 7-card fits or one 8+ - card fit on every deal.

2

				
LHO:	4	3	3	3
RHO:	4	3	3	3
FIT:	8	6	6	6
One 8-card fit				

				
YOU:	3	4	3	3
PARTNER:	2	3	3	5
FIT:	5	7	7	7
Three 7-card fits				

Rare.

Fact #2: If the opponents have an 8-card fit, there is only one mathematical combination where you won't have an 8-card fit as well (above), but you will have three 7-card fits.

More Facts About Fits

3

	♠	♥	♦	♣
LHO:	4	3	3	3
RHO:	5	3	3	2
FIT:	9	6	6	5
One 9-card fit				

26

Fact #3: If the opponents have a 9-card fit, your side **MUST** have at least one 8+-card fit (in this case, in clubs).

5

	♠	♥	♦	♣
LHO:	4	5	2	2
RHO:	4	3	3	3
FIT:	8	8	5	5
Two 8-card fits				

26

Fact #5: If the opponents have two 8-card fits, your side **MUST** have a 9+-card fit or two 8-card fits also.

4

	♠	♥	♦	♣
LHO:	4	3	3	3
RHO:	6	3	3	1
FIT:	10	6	6	4
One 10-card fit				

26

	♠	♥	♦	♣
LHO:	4	3	3	3
RHO:	6	2	2	3
FIT:	10	5	5	6
One 10-card fit				

26

Fact #4: If the opponents have a 10-card fit, your side **MUST** have at least one 9+-card fit (higher chart) or two 8-card fits (lower chart).

The Trick Reservoir



Imagine if every deal of bridge is played twice, once by N/S in their best fit, then again by E/W in theirs.

Now let's suppose each deal has associated with it a magic reservoir that contains the exact number of tricks that will be consumed by N/S and E/W combined.



Hmm.

$$18 - 10 = 8 \text{ Tricks}$$

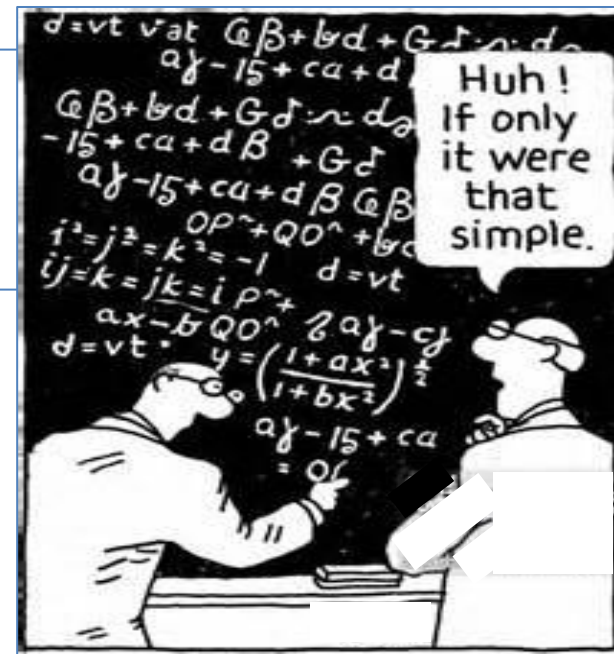
If you knew how many total tricks there were in the reservoir for a certain deal, and you knew how many tricks the opponents are likely to take (use up), you could calculate how many tricks your side can take (the remainder). **THAT'S POWER!**



For example, if the reservoir for a deal holds 18 total tricks, and N/S can only take 10 tricks in Spades, E/W should be able to take 8 tricks (the remainder in the reservoir).

But how do we calculate the total available tricks in the reservoir for a certain deal? Bridge experts started realizing that the flatter the hands in a deal, the fewer available tricks in the reservoir. The more shapely the hands, the more tricks in the reservoir.

The Formula



**Total Trump
Your Side Has
In Your Best Fit**

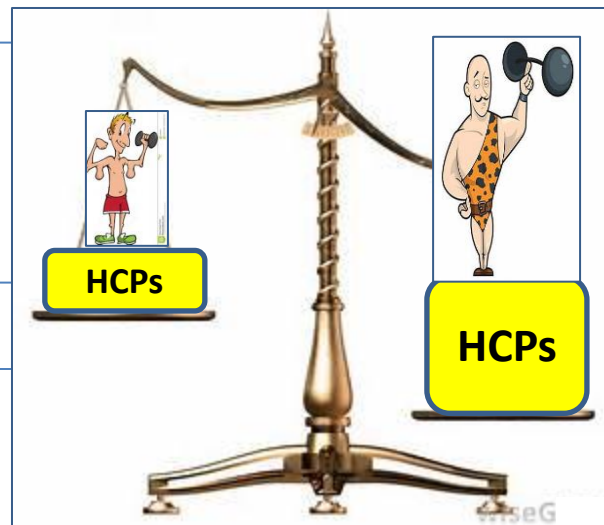
+

**Total Trump
Their Side Has
In Their Best
Fit**

=

**Total Tricks
Available To
Both Sides in
the Reservoir**

Putting It Into Practice



<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
2D*	Dbl	Pass	3D
Pass	4H	Pass	4NT*
Pass	6D*	Pass	6H
Pass	Pass	???	

Weak
2 Bid

Vul: None
Dir: North

West
 ♠ KJ6
 ♥ A95
 ♦ Q
 ♣ J109862

North
 ♠ 95
 ♥ 632
 ♦ AKJ963
 ♣ Q5

East
 ♠ AQ1032
 ♥ KQJ1074
 ♦ ---
 ♣ A3

Available Tricks
 = 12 Diamonds
 + 9 Hearts = 21

Opponents will
 use 12 of them

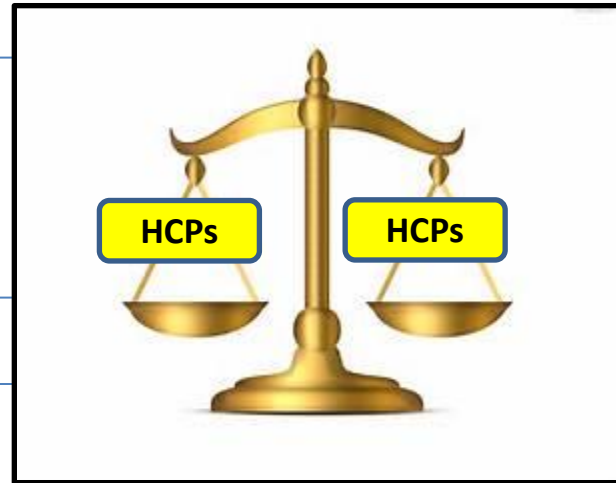
South
 ♠ 874
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 1087542
 ♣ K74

This leaves 9 tricks
 left for your side.
Bid 7D!
 Down 4 doubled =
 -800 vs. their +980

21 Total
Tricks

If the HCPs are evenly split, each side will take as many tricks as they have total trumps

The Corollary



<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
2S	3H*	3S**	2H
Pass	???		Pass

Vul: None
Dir: West

West
 ♠ 105
 ♥ AKJ965
 ♦ 83
 ♣ 963

North
 ♠ KJ976
 ♥ 1083
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ Q85

East
 ♠ 84
 ♥ Q42
 ♦ K9542
 ♣ AK2

South
 ♠ AQ32
 ♥ 8
 ♦ J1076
 ♣ J1074

N/S have 9 Spades and will take 9 tricks.
 E/W have 9 Hearts and will take 9 tricks.

* East bid 3H because of their 9 total Hearts.
 ** South bid 3S because of his 4th Spade.

Another Example

EXAMPLE

Hand #93 from the 1958
World Championship

Vul: None
Dir: West

10 Clubs +
8 Spades =
18 Total
Tricks
Available

West

♠ QJ1092

♥ 10854

♦ AQ

♣ 104

North

♠ A6

♥ 97

♦ K964

♣ AQ932

East

♠ K87

♥ AJ62

♦ J10852

♣ 6

South

♠ 543

♥ KQ3

♦ 73

♣ KJ875

The Italians sitting N/S
played 4C, and their
teammates sitting E/W
were allowed to play 2S
at the other table. Both
contracts made.

Balancing

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE A BALANCED DIET



- You are in the Balancing Seat when yours will be the last pass.
- Balancing should be considered whenever they find a fit and stop at the 2 level. (If they double you, it will be into GAME.)
- If you get the opponents to the 3 level, you've usually done your job.

Partner will probably have 11+ HCPs.

North	East	South	West
Pass	1H	Pass	2H
Pass	Pass	???	

South

1) ♠J10432 ♥87 ♦Q32 ♣A105

2S

2) ♠Q1083 ♥87 ♦KQ3 ♣K543

Dbl*

3) ♠KQ10 ♥Q1097 ♦87 ♣A972

Pass

4) ♠103 ♥87 ♦KQ873 ♣A1075

2NT**

* For take-out, NOT penalties.

No easy way to enter the auction.

** For the minors, NOT natural.



1-Level Balancing

WEST

Bids in balancing seat may have a king less.

1) ♠KQ105 ♥K93 ♦82 ♣Q843 **DbI**

2) ♠85 ♥A83 ♦73 ♣AQJ973 **2C**

3) ♠QJ ♥K83 ♦QJ53 ♣KJ53 **1NT**

North	East	South	West
1D	Pass	Pass	???

Then rebid 1NT.

4) ♠K85 ♥AQ3 ♦AQ53 ♣Q103 **DbI***

Michaels (can be undisciplined) for the majors.

5) ♠AJ832 ♥QJ976 ♦2 ♣A2 **2D***

Shows a good 6-card suit with 12-16 HCPs.

6) ♠KQ10963 ♥A8 ♦A4 ♣Q54 **2S***

Unusual NT (can be undisciplined) for the 2 lowest suits.

7) ♠63 ♥AK762 ♦4 ♣A8732 **2NT***

More Jokes



You know how they throw the ball into the stands after winning the game. I just found out that's not such a good idea in bowling.

Later Round Balancing



<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1NT	Pass	2D*	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	???

WEST

♠A1085 ♥3 ♦KQ82 ♣Q1093

Dbf

Sometimes you're forced to bid a 4-card suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
		1H	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	???

♠KQ108 ♥8532 ♦A92 ♣J6

2S

Partner will know you're weak – you didn't overcall.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	???

♠108643 ♥86 ♦A42 ♣QJ2

2S

Unusual NT (can be undisciplined) for the 2 lowest suits.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
		1H	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	???

♠63 ♥82 ♦AQ84 ♣QJ962

2NT*

Be careful when the opponents haven't found a fit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2D	Pass	Pass	???

♠J93 ♥A76 ♦983 ♣KJ102

Pass

Playtime



"Your wife wants to know if she should get a new propane tank for the barbecue."