

## How to Count a Bridge Hand by Eddie Kantar.

### Chapter 1 Key Points

1. Pay attention to your distribution, not just your point count; the two go hand in hand.
2. Use the opponents bidding as a guide to the count. The bidding is part of declarer play. Pay attention to your opponents' bids so you will remember them later.
3. Hands where an opponent pre-empts or show a two suited hand are the easiest to count.
4. If you spot a two-way suit, try to get a count on the other suits before playing that suit.
5. You need only count on defender's hand, not both. If an opponent turns up with a long suit, count that hand.

### Chapter 2 Key Points

1. When either opponent shows out of a suit, take the time out to count. The count on this suit is now firm.
2. When missing a queen in a two-way suit, play the opponent who was longer originally in the suit for the queen. Remember your piles.
3. If you don't have time to get a count on a two-way suit, at least remember that length attracts shortness and shortness attracts length. In other words, if one opponent has turned up with a long suit, that player is more likely to be short in any other suit, including the dreaded two-way suit.
4. You are allowed to make distributional assumptions from their bidding; assuming normal distribution for the bidding unless you are playing against a known maniac.
5. There is no substitute for counting. Stick with it.

### Chapter 3 Key Points

1. There are oodles and oodles of two-way suits, not to mention three, four and five-way suits! The best way to get a handle on them is to get a count on the other suits, keeping the bidding in mind at all times. Of course, it is assumed you are having fun while you are doing all of this.
2. When you finally wind up playing a two-way suit and arrive at a position where you are missing two cards and have to decide at a position where you are missing two cards and have to decide between playing for the drop or taking a finesse, use the principle of Restricted Choice to guide you.
3. Ask your opponents what signaling method they are using and use their signals to help you with the count. More on this later.

### Chapter 4 Key Points

1. The opponents are telling each other their count. You must watch the show. It will help you count the entire hand.
2. Examine your small spots. Sometimes their spot card is high or low depending on what you hold. For example, if they signal a 6 and hold the 5, 4, 3 and 2, you have a good idea that their 6 is low. But if you are missing the 5, 4, 3, and 2, that 6 is a high spot card.

## Chapter 5 Key Points

1. Their opening lead often tells you the count before dummy comes down. For example, when a 2 is led against notrump and they lead fourth-best.
2. When they lead a four-card suit against your notrump contract, you may assume they don't have a five-card suit to lead.
3. Their bidding often tells you if a suit is breaking 4-4. Pay attention to their bidding, just in case you end up as the surprise declarer.

## Chapter 6 Key Points

1. When they open the bidding one club, they usually have four or more clubs. Even if they play a short club.
2. When the one-club opener shows up with only three clubs, he is 4-4-2-3 or 4-3-3-3 or 3-4-3-3.

## Chapter 7 Key Points

1. When the opponents have eight cards in an unbid major and they are in the bidding, assume that major is divided 4-4. If either opponent had five cards in that suit, you would have heard about it eons ago.
2. Similarly, if you have something like x-x facing x-x in any unbid suit (but probably a minor), and the opponents are not in the bidding, the suit is a major and the opponents are not in the bidding, the suit is very likely to be dividing 5-4. Most players who hold a six-card major find their way into the bidding one way or another.

## Chapter 8 & 9 Key Points

1. When they open one notrump and you become declarer and your opponent shows up with a five-card suit find his doubleton and you can assume he is 5-3-3-2.
2. In notrump, don't hold up your ace at trick one if a shift to another suit is very bad for you.
3. Common sense, or bridge logic, is a great fall back, when you are not sure what to do.
4. Another way to count is to subtract your total cards in a suit from 13. Then start subtracting when you see them follow.

## Chapter 10 Key Points

1. When missing an important card (like a queen), play the hand that started with the longer holding in the suit for the missing card.

2. When playing notrump, you may beed to set up an extra trick to make your contract. If the choice is a finesse or knocking out an ace, count the number of tricks your opponents will be able to take.
3. With ace-fifth facing king-fifth, missing only the queen third, decide who is more likely to hold a void, in case the suit is 3-0. You will need to cash the honor in front of the three-card suit in order to finesse the queen next round.
4. Avoid guessing the two-way suit if you can, by making a throw in. If the hand that is thrown in must play the two-way suit or give you a ruff-sluff, you will have avoided the guess. Often you need to make a suit even to do that, like x-x facing A-x.
5. Remember the rule: Count the hand with the known long suit. That hand is easier to count.

## Summary

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|-------------|--|
| Crutch # 1  | Their Bidding                                |
| Crutch # 2  | An opponent shows out                        |
| Crutch # 3  | Restricted choice                            |
| Crutch # 4  | Their Attitude signals                       |
| Crutch # 5  | Their count signals                          |
| Crutch # 6  | Their leads                                  |
| Crutch # 7  | Inferences                                   |
| Crutch # 8  | What they did not bid                        |
| Crutch # 9  | Bridge logic                                 |
| Crutch #10  | The subtraction method                       |
| Crutch # 11 | Avoid guessing the two-way suit if possible. |