

## Balancing.

Simply stated, balancing is the act of bidding in the passout seat. There are a number of times that this can happen, but today I want to focus on the logic of it in a low level auction.

If both opponent's have bid, they tend to have at least 18 HCP. (12 for the opener, 6 for responder)

If they have stopped before getting to 2N or 3 of a suit, then they tend not to have invitational values or combined they usually have less than 23 HCP.

When these two conditions are met, the opponents tend to have 18-22 HCP, or to put that another way, we have between 22 and 18 HCP ourselves!

This means that we are often at the same strength as them, they just acted first or their points are more divided (12-8 vs 10-10).

What does this all mean? Well if we're as strong as they are, we should consider fighting for the contract. This means taking an action in the balancing seat.

My favorite statistic in bridge is that if the opponents have an 8 card fit, then 90% of the time we have an 8 card fit. The inverse of that is that if the opponents don't have a fit, then 90% of the time neither do we.

Ergo without a fit by the opponents, it's often correct to be conservative about bidding in the balancing seat. And when they do have a fit, it's often correct to be aggressive.

So in an auction like

North	East	South	West
1♣	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	2♥	P
P	?		

There's no fit proven, so be conservative

Whereas in an auction like

North	East	South	West
1♣	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

There's a proven fit, so be aggressive.

As a general rule, try not to let the opponents play in 2 of a major when they have a fit.