

# Comments on Bidding Matters

By Neil H. Timm

Karen Walker in her article “Relearning Bridge – part 25” in the April 2022 issue of the “Bridge Bulletin” provides some key points on hand evaluation, having not read articles on the Optimal Point Count (OPC) Method of Hand Evaluation. She states:

1. Don't be a slave to the Law of Total Trumps
2. Be cautious with any method the counts length or shortness without finding a fit.
3. Avoid over-counting shortness (e.g., voids with a fit are not worth 5pts). I agree you should count a void for no more than 4D points.

## DISTRIBUTION-FIT POINTS “SHORTNESS” (S)

Number of trumps	4	3	2
Void	4pts	3pts	2pts
Singleton	3pts	2pts	1pts
Doubleton	2pts	1pts	0pts

4. Do not try to assign a point count to a freak hand (she says base your hand on playing tricks not length or shortness). No example is provided but using the OPC method all hands are evaluated using **HLD** points independent of shape and open any hand with hearts, diamonds, or spades with **HLD POINTS = 12-17 and with 18+ points open 1♣\***.

To illustrate point (1) she uses the hand:

♠J9753 ♥643 ♦KJ5 ♣Q5

and says do not bid 4♠ after partner opens 1♠ with the hand even though you have a 10-card trump fit and only 7H points.

Why? The “Law “applies only in competitive auctions and using the OPC method the hand has 6H points and 2F points or 8HLD points so bid 2♠. Yes, I agree.

To illustrate point (2) she says suppose you open 1♦ and partner holds:

♠AQJ9 ♥K53 ♦Q106532 ♣-

She counts the hand as 15 support points and down-grades the void and recommends bidding only 2♠.

Using the OPC method the hand has 12.5**H** points, 1**F** point (at least 8 cards), and 4**D** points (void with a fit) or 17.5**HLDF** points.

**Sorry, bid 4♠ not 2♠!**

She replaces the above hand with the following: ♠A965 ♥K53 ♦KQ106532 ♣ void

and recommends the invitational bid of 3♠; however, this hand has 13.5**H**, 4**D** points, 2**L** points, 1**F** point and 1 Q points for the diamond suit or 21.5**HLDF** points.

A total of 33.5 points – Why not investigate slam!

Reference: Timm, Neil (2022), The Optimal Modified 2/1-Club System, Trafford Press.