

## TIP OF THE WEEK: INTRODUCTION TO COUNTING

**Counting isn't easy! It involves determining the the length and strength of each suit of the hidden hands. It will become easier the more you practice.**

### Collecting Information:

- . Use the **bidding** to come up with an initial picture of one or both opponents' hands. For example,
  - . a 1NT bid/rebid usually promises 2 cards in every suit, or once in a while, a singleton in partner's suit. A rebid of 1NT after opening 1S promises a 5332 hand.
  - . responder's rebid of NT after 3 suits were mentioned usually denies 5-cards in their first suit.
  - . declarer opens 1S and rebids clubs twice. He probably holds 3 cards in the red suits.
- . **The opening lead might suggest their exact length in a suit.** For example,
  - . if partner leads a 2 against a Notrump contract, it's most likely from a 4-card suit.
  - . a lead of a low card in a suit contract usually implies the defender doesn't hold touching cards.
- . **Look for evidence and clues during the play that will help you refine your picture of the hand you're counting. (i.e. an opponent showed out of a suit, an opponent didn't return their partner's suit, opponents' count and attitude signals).**

### Counting Tips:

- . **Memorize the eight most common patterns of 13 cards in a suit.**
  - 4-4-3-2
  - 4-3-3-3
  - 5-3-3-2
  - 6-3-2-2
  - 5-4-3-1
  - 6-4-2-1
  - 5-4-2-2
  - 6-3-3-1

The patterns in the four numbers fall into one or two even-odd combinations are 3 even numbers and one 1 odd, or 3 odd numbers and 1 even.

**Donna and Chris Compton suggested the following mental exercises...**

#### **What's the Pin?**

The pin is the 4-digit number of the shape of the hand in rank order (3-4-2-4). Each time you sort your hand, identify its pin. Then identify the dummy's pin number.

Or, ask partner to give you 3 numbers, such as 5-2-2 and you fill-in the missing number.

- **Concentrate on how the unseen cards divide.** If your hand and dummy have 8 total cards in a suit, focus on the possible divisions of the 5 cards, “3-2, 4-2, 5-0, etc.”
- **Observe a single unseen hand (i.e. The player who made the most bids, made the opening lead, or shared a long suit).** As each trick is played, look for evidence and clues that will help you refine your picture of the hand you’re counting.

(Source: Eddie Kantar)

1S - 1NT	
2S - 2NT	Declarer has 6S and 4H.
3H - 3S	<b>Once you get a count on either minor, the puzzle is solved.</b>
P	

**The more bidding your side does, the easier it is to count declarer’s hand.**

	(1H)		
2S (X) P	(2NT)		
P (3NT) P	(P)		
		A93	
		96	
		KQ96	
		A975	
			7
			KT842
			AJ753
			J3
	Lead: 2C		

**What do you Know?**

- Declarer has 5H because he didn’t rebid hearts.
- Partner holds 6S and made a weak overcall. Therefore, declarer has 3S.
- Partner’s lead of 2C is usually from a 4-card suit, so declarer has 3 clubs.

**Conclusion: Declarer should have 3523 distribution**

(Source: Ana Roth)

LHO opened **1NT** followed by three passes. Your partner **leads** the **2** of **hearts**.

	xxx
	To
	QTxxx
	A
2H	Qxxx
	Xxx
	KJx
	Kxx

### What do you Know?

- . Partner led from a 4-card heart suit.  
There are 7 hearts between you and dummy, so declarer has 2H.
- . You and dummy have 4 clubs, so there are 9 missing clubs.  
Partner doesn't have 5 clubs because they led from the heart suit.
- . Declarer opened 1NT so they most likely hold 5 clubs.

**Conclusion:** Declarer's distribution is probably 3235. As play continues, refine your hypothesis.

(Source: [cindybridge.com](http://cindybridge.com))

	(1S) - (2D)
	(3D) - (4S)
Your Hand:	
A92	
2	
JT43	
KQT32	Did you take time to count or are you automatically going to lead the KC?

### What do you know?

- Opener has 5S.
- Responder made a 2/1 bid in diamonds.
- Opener holds 3 or 4 diamonds. Partner might only hold 1D.

### Defensive Plan:

Lead a diamond and if partner doesn't ruff, win the first round of trumps and lead a high diamond.

**Peter Hollands**



<https://youtu.be/qrnBiD32u-s>