

Evaluating a Major Suit Fit

By Neil H. Timm

Responding to the bid of 1M playing 2/1, most responders divide their “fit” points into four regions: 0-6; 7-9; 10-12; and 13+ where the bid of 1NT=7-12 and a 2/1 bid shows 13+ fit points.

However, many use honor points defined: A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1 and 10=0 where Q's and J's are overvalued and the A and 10 are undervalued. The more accurate values are:

A=4.5, K=3, Q with honor = 2, J with honor=1, Qxx=1.5, Jxx=0.5
10 with K= 0.5, 10 with Q/J=1, J10x=2, 10 with A=0.

With an 8-card fit one adds +1 fit point, with a 9-card fit +2 fit points and a 10-card fit 3+ fit points. Also +1 point is added if responder has a major fit with an honor count in the bid suit is < 4 points (e.g., a K, KJ, QJ, K10, J10, Q10, J10).

Most do not add for an 8-card fit or honor cards in fit suit.

Without a fit (a semi-fit), one adds +1 for a Kx, Qx, Jx, J10 in partner's bid major suit.

Without a fit most ignore semi-fit points.

With a fit one also adds **distribution points** 4=void, 3=singleton, and 2=doubleton with 4-trumps. With 3-trumps the values are 3,3,1 and with 2 trumps they become 2,1,0.

Length: add+1 for 5-card suit with Q, J, K and +2 points with a 6-card suit, 7+card suit +2 points for each card past the 7th.

One must also consider **suit quality** for all suits adding +1 for a 5-card and +1 for the 10 or the 4th honor in the suit; add+2 for a 6-card suit and +1 for the 10 or 4th honor in the suit

Many ignore suit quality with honors

Are their negatives with a fit? yes subtract -1 with 4333 hands, -1 for no King, -1 for no Queen, -1 for QJ doubleton, -1 for singleton honor; Qx/Jx=-0.5; -2 honor doubletons (AK, AQ, KQ, QJ).

Are their positives? yes, add +1 for 3-Kings., +2 for 4-Kings, +1 for 4-Queens.

Many ignore the negative and positives in their hand evaluation.

In the above we evaluate Honors, Length, Distribution, Fit, Semi-Fit, and suit quality!

There is more to “FIT EVALUATION” than HCP, LENGTH, and DISTRIBUTION!

Without the proper evaluation of fit, conventions like “Bergen in a competitive auction” and “Jacoby 2NT” are worthless for evaluating whether one should be in 2/3M, 4M, 6/7M.

Having defined “fit” points, how do we evaluate the points of the opening bidder with NO FIT (e.g., the Precision 1♣* or the weak 1♣* bid maybe short as 2 with 8HCP or Rule of 17?

Now we have only Honor, Length, Distribution, Suit Quality, and Suit Length.

A=4.5, K=3, Q with honor = 2, J with honor=1, Qxx=1.5, Jxx=0.5
10 with K= 0.5, 10 with Q/J=1, J10x=2, 10 with A=0.

Honor point deductions no Ace=-1, no King=-1, No Queen=-1

Length: add+1 for 5-card suit with Q, J, K and 2 points for a 6-card suit, 7+card suit +2 points for each card past the 7th.

Suit quality for all suits adding +1 for a 5-card with 3 honors and +1 for the 10 or the 4th honor, with a 6-card suit +2 and add +1 for a 10 or 4th honor.

Distribution: void=4 points, singleton= 2 points, 2 doubletons = 1 point 1 doubleton =0 and 1- for 4333 distribution.

Positives? add +1 for 3-Kings. +2 for 4-Kings, + 2 for 4-Queens.

Negatives? subtract -1 with 4333 hands, -1 for QJ doubleton, -1 for a singleton honor; Qx/Jx=-0.5; -2 honor doubletons (AK, AQ, KQ, QJ), and -1 for NT contract.