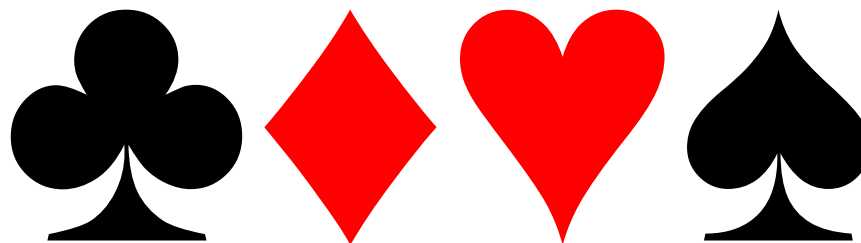




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Week 9 Losing Trick Count



Steve Bailey



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

During bidding, there are various ways of evaluating your hand.

The most basic is the “Milton Work Count” – *apparently named after someone by that name, though I have no details*. You all use this technique - allocating 4 HCP for an ace, 3 for a king, 2 for a queen and 1 for a jack.

There are modifications of this that evaluate “Points”, adding extra for long suits and in trumps for shortages.

Another evaluation technique is the “Losing Trick Count”.

LTC is its title and it has precise methods and results. Do not confuse what you do to work out your number of “Losing Tricks” with how many tricks you may lose!



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

LTC is not covered in Paul Mendelson's *Right Way to Play Bridge*.

There is much available about it on the web, but should you wish to study it further, I recommend Bernard Magee's *Bridge Hand Evaluation* (£14). Also good is Andrew Robson's *Bridge Lessons – Hand Evaluation and the Losing Trick Count* (£5).



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

LTC applies in suit contracts **once you have found a fit.**

The LTC makes a recommendation of the level of bid in your fitting suit that is appropriate.

Do not mindlessly bid its recommendation, but consider any other factors that may be relevant. This particularly applies to small and grand slam bids.

The LTC is based on evaluating how many of 12 tricks – 3 in each suit – you are likely to lose. Your partner does likewise, you add your results together and subtract from 24 (two lots of 12) to determine how many tricks you won't lose (ie will win) between you.

Because you don't bid how many tricks you will make but how many over the first 6 you will make, you subtract from 18 not from 24.



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

So if, having found a fit, you have 7LT and your partner has 9LT, you add them to get 16LT and subtract from 18. In this case the LTC recommends a bid of $18 - 16 = 2$ suit.

One small problem with this is that your partner isn't allowed to tell you how many LT he has.

So there are standard values that apply in various situations that you have to memorise. You can get away with remembering 2 values as a minimum:

Opener is assumed to have 7LT

Responder is assumed to have 9LT at the 1-level.



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

So that you are aware, this week I am covering “basic” LTC. There are several modifications that improve its accuracy, which I’ll cover next time.

Note that the shapelier the hand, the better the quality of the evaluation. AR recommends not using it with a balanced hand, even if you have a fit.

But this week just the basics.

And, no, I don’t understand why the evaluation works based on 12 tricks – what happened to the 13th? Somehow the LTC works whilst assuming that you will win that 13th trick. Should anyone understand it, please let me know.



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

Now the evaluation.

In each suit, work out how many of the top three tricks you will fail to win – that is how many of “ACE, KING, QUEEN” do you have.

If you have L3+ (that is L3 or more) in a suit, it gets the number missing from “ACE, KING, QUEEN”.

If you have L2 in a suit, it gets the number missing from “ACE, KING”.

If you have L1 in a suit, if it is the ACE it gets 0LT, otherwise it gets 1LT.

If you have L0 in a suit, you have no cards to lose. The suit gets 0LT.

Add the four suits together.



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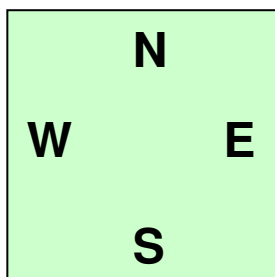


Week 9 Losing Trick Count

A sample deal, Dealer N, both vulnerable.

♠ A K 5 2
 ♥ A K 7 5 3
 ♦ 6 3
 ♣ Q 4

♠ 10 7 4
 ♥ 10 9
 ♦ Q J 8 7 5 2
 ♣ A 9



♠ Q J 6 3
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ A 4
 ♣ J 8 7 5 2

♠ 9 8
 ♥ Q J 8 4
 ♦ K 10 9
 ♣ K 10 6 3

First let's bid it using conventional techniques.

N	E	S	W
1H ¹	P	1S ²	P
3S ³	P	4S ⁴	P

1) 12..19HCP, L4+H

2) 6+HCP, L4+S

3) **FIT**. Jump with L4 fit & 16..18 HCP. Many would bid 2S.

4) 16+8=23, not enough for game. But adding points for the two L2 suits 4S is likely.



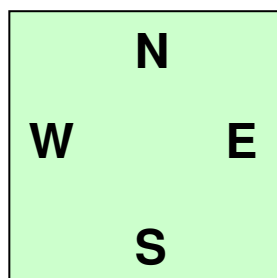
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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

A sample deal, Dealer N, both vulnerable.

♠ A K 5 2	♠ Q	1LT
♥ A K 7 5 3	♥ Q	1LT
♦ 6 3	♦ A K	2LT
♣ Q 4	♣ A K	2LT
	Total	6LT



♠ Q J 6 3	♠ A K	2LT
♥ 6 2	♥ A K	2LT
♦ A 4	♦ K	1LT
♣ J 8 7 5 2	♣ A K Q	3LT
	Total	8LT



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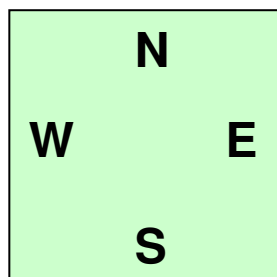
Week 9 Losing Trick Count

A sample deal, Dealer N, both vulnerable.

♠ A K 5 2
 ♥ A K 7 5 3
 ♦ 6 3
 ♣ Q 4

6LT

♠ 10 7 4
 ♥ 10 9
 ♦ Q J 8 7 5 2
 ♣ A 9



♠ Q J 6 3
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ A 4
 ♣ J 8 7 5 2

8LT

♠ 9 8
 ♥ Q J 8 4
 ♦ K 10 9
 ♣ K 10 6 3

Here we get the same bidding using LTC, but happier?

N	E	S	W
1H ¹	P	1S ²	P
3S ³	P	4S ⁴	P

1) 12..19HCP, L4+H

2) 6+HCP, L4+S

3) **FIT.** N does LTC.

6LT + presumed 9LT = 15LT.

18 - 15 = 3. Bid 3S.

4) **FIT.** S does LTC.

N bid 3S as S had 9LT.

S has 8LT. Bid one better, 4S.



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

LT evaluation

Note that these two hands both have **4LT**.

♠ A K 5 4 3 2	♠ Q	1LT
♥ -	♥ -	0LT
♦ K Q 4 3 2	♦ A	1LT
♣ 4 3	♣ A K	2LT
	Total	4LT

♠ A K 4	♠ Q	1LT
♥ A K 4	♥ Q	1LT
♦ A K 5 4	♦ Q	1LT
♣ A K 4	♣ Q	1LT
	Total	4LT



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

Presumptions

Opener at 1-level is assumed to have 7LT.

Responder is assumed to have 9LT at the 1-level, 8LT at the 2-level.

Other presumptions next time for strong openings, overcalls etc.



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count

Summary

Apply in a suit contract after finding a **FIT**.

Less useful with a balanced hand

In each suit, ignoring trumps, work out how many of the top three tricks you will fail to win - missing from "ACE, KING, QUEEN".

Add the four suits together.

- L0 gets 0LT
- L1 gets a maximum of 1LT
- L2 gets a maximum of 2LT

Opener at 1-level is assumed to have 7LT.

Responder is assumed to have 9LT at the 1-level, 8LT at the 2-level.

Questions?



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Week 9 Play

Play

Divide yourselves into pairs and then into tables.

This week I do not plan to ask you to move, in future weeks we shall.

NS have the pair number of their table.

EW have the pair number of their table plus 6.

When you have played a hand, pass it to the next numbered table in sequence. The highest numbered table passes to table 1.

And one last thing – **as part of the learning process** – I would like the partner of whoever has just bid to take whatever action is **standardly required** (announcing 1NT to be 12-14 points, ALERTing a conventional bid, ...) – **AND ALSO** to give a brief **description** to the other three players on what the bid means.

Any questions?

Tea & coffee.

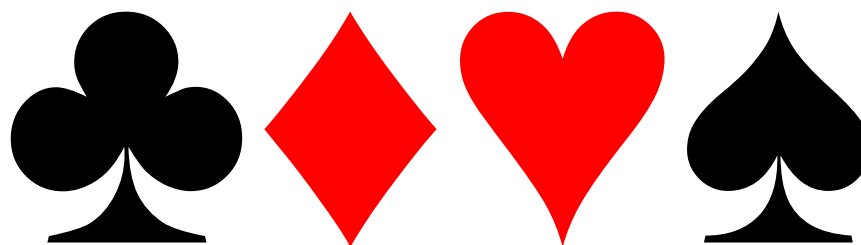
PLAY



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Week 9 Losing Trick Count



The end

(Set hand references follow.)



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Week 9 Set Hands

A discussion of each set hand. To see the content of each LTC hand, you will need to read the book.

Blue = Book result

Red = Group result from travellers.

A lower case n e s w suffix is used to denote declarer.

Scores are all given from NS perspective.

+ve is better for NS, -ve for EW.

Hand sources:

LTC = A Robson: Hand Evaluation and the Losing Trick Count

BHE = B Magee: Better Hand Evaluation (2 hands) + random deal

Each hand may be rotated with respect to the books. The hand positions can be determined by locating the A♠.



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dlr	Vul	Source	Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.	
1	N	None	LTC#6	4S=n	2S+2n
			A♠=S	+420	+170
				NS top	NS bottom

This deal was only played once and an instruction had been attached to it: "Read after bidding, before play"

"If contract is not a game contract, start bidding again."

So how did they play in 2S – they played well enough to make 4S.

Normally N opens 1S and S responds 3S.

Here with LTC, N opens 1S and S responds 4S.

Somehow S just responded 2S!



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dlr	Vul	Source	Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.			
2	E	N/S	LTC#7	4S+1e	3C=s	3S=e	3S+1e
			A♠=E	-450	+110	-140	-170
				EW top	NS top	poor	poor

This deal has W with a balanced hand and using HCP (W has 13HCP) determines the partnership has 25+HCP and bids game.

Had he used LTC, W with 9LT would only bid 2S. (18-7-9 = 2).
Choose to ignore LTC here.

How did the tables get to 3S?

One table chose to overcall at the 2 level with L5♣, 9HCP, 2 honour ♣ and a SQOT of 7. Normally this is insufficient to overcall.



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dir	Vul	Source	Dir = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.			
3	S	E/W	LTC#8	4S=s	4S-1s	4S=s	4S-1s
			A♠=S	+420	-50	+420	-50;
				top	bottom	top	bottom.

The book result says “4S=“ against ‘normal defence’ but “4S-1” against “good defence” - *though poor declarer play may produce the same result.*



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dlr	Vul	Source	Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.			
4	W	All	LTC#9	4H=w	4H-1w	3H+1e	3C=s
			A♠=E	-620	+100	-170	+110
				EW top	poor	poor	NS top

An instruction had been attached to this deal:

"West read before bidding"

"West, you have 6HCP and L5H. A 1-level response in H is fine, even if YOU would not normally bid it."

S's hand did not really have a 2-level club overcall – but it appears to have worked well despite that.

To make this 4H contract required ducking the K♠ lead. Not an obvious action.



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dlr	Vul	Source	Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.		
5	N	N/S	LTC#10	5C=s	2S-2n	5C-1s
			A♠=W	+600	-200	-100
				NS top	bottom	medium

An instruction had been attached to this deal:

"North read before bidding"

"N has 5LT. If S responds with a fitting suit at the 2-level, assume 8LT."

How did N get into a 2S contract with S having L1♠? I guess S responded in D or H rather than C, so the C fit wasn't found.

5C should have made.



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Week 9 Set Hands

#	Dir	Vul	Source	Dir = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.		
6	E	E/W	LTC#11	4S=w	3S+1e	1H=e
			A♠=E	-620	-170	-80
				NS top	poor	bad

3S: This is a session on LTC. Presumably it either wasn't used or was miscalculated.

1H: With 8HCP and L4S, how did W not reply to E's opening 1H?



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Week 9 Set Hands

Dlr Vul Source Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.

7	S	All	LTC#12	5D=n	5D-1s	3D=n
			A♠=N	+600	-100	+110
				NS top	ok	bad

5D-1 was the right contract that failed in the play. So a good attempt.
3D was the wrong contract, and even though it made, it was so far off the top that it is bad.

I have difficulty guessing how 5D-1 **by South** came to be played. /
just have to hope that it was a badly filled in traveller!

3D: I see no sign of LTC in use.



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Week 9 Set Hands

Dlr Vul Source Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.

8 W None BHEpg62p6

2S+1w 2S+1e 3S=w

+140 +140 +140

flat flat flat

N: SQ HQ9532 DK65 CKT94

E: SA862 HA6 DJT832 C86

S: SJT7 HKJT4 DQ97 CQ73

W: SK9543 H87 D14 CAJ52

2S+1 by East. Did W not open 1S with 12 HCP and L5S? *Bemused.*



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Week 9 Set Hands

Dlr Vul Source Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.

9 N	E/W	BHEpg76p1	2H-2e	1H=e	1NT-2w
			+200	-80	+200
			poor	top	poor

N: SA962 H965 DKJT8 CJ5	E: S7 HAK432 D65 CKQ976
S: SJT53 HQT7 DA72 CAT8	W: SKQ84 HJ8 DQ943 C432

This is an example of an occasion when the LTC was not involved.
And even the “shown preference” was too much.