

Losing Trick Count

Using the “Losing Trick Count” enables you to see at a glance if you should be in game or not, or even a slam – something that less experienced players can be “scared” to bid.

It isn't 100% accurate – nothing is, but the percentages of getting the correct level of bidding is dramatically improved when using it.

What is “Losing Trick Count”?

It can **only** be used when you can support your partners opening suit bid. If you play 5 card openers, you can have 3 of their suit, otherwise it's 4 of their suit for 4 card openers – this is the most common type of bidding in the UK.

To establish your losing trick count, (*not used in NT*), look for the missing A,K,Q's.

Example: AKxxx is one losing trick (missing Q)
Axxx is two losing tricks (missing K,Q)
A bare is zero losing tricks.
K bare is one losing trick
Qxx counts as 2½ losing tricks
Void is no losing tricks

Add up the total losing tricks in your opening hand (just as a guide). If you have 7 or less, then you can probably bid (you will need at least 11 points upwards)

Eg: S AKQx, H Qxx, C AxQ D xxx is 6 ½ losing tricks – zero losers in spades, 2 1/2 losers in hearts no K or A), 1 losers in clubs (no K) and 3 losers in diamonds (no AKQ) – total 6 1/2 losing tricks.

As a responder, if your partner opens a suit and you have four of his/her trumps, “Losing Trick Count” comes into its own. **Don't use it unless these facts are true!**

DO NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT POINT COUNT WITH 4 CARD SUPPORT (or 3 for 5 card openers).

It's important to have 4 (or 3 if you play 5 card openers) of their suit. If they repeat their suit showing 5 or 6 and you have 3, then you can use the losing trick count on the second round.

Count your losers (as responder). Assume your partner has 7 losers, add yours to theirs and deduct the total from 18. If you have 7 losers, the total between you both is 14. Take it from 18 and you get 4. When your turn to bid comes round, jump directly to 4 of his/her suit.

If the total between you, after deducting from 18, is 3 (you have 8 losers), bid 3 of the suit. The same with 9 losers, you bid 2.

Important note: None of the bids above have to be shutout bids.

If you jump to 4 in your partners' suit and he/she has 5 losers, you have shown 7 losers, shown by your bid, then your partner will add your 7 losers to their 5, and come up with 12. 18 - 12 is 6. They now know a slam is probable and can start asking for aces with some certainty that a slam is on.

The above system takes a little getting used to but if you persevere, you will get into better contracts.

Important note: Using Losing Trick Count, in general, does not worry about point count and you can frequently make game with less than the recommended number of points.

DO NOT USE WITH NO TRUMPS