

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ LOSING TRICK COUNT ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

♠A ♥AKQJ9765 ♦76 ♣42

PURPOSE

- To estimate the **playing strength** of a hand, particularly distributional hands
- Useful when a trump suit has been established
- Not particularly useful on balanced hands

COUNTING LOSERS

- Count only the first 3 cards in each suit (maximum losers per hand = 12)
- A loser is any card except A, Kx, Qxx
- Void – no losers
- Singleton suit: one loser, unless A
- Doubleton: two losers, unless AK (0), Ax (1), or Kx (1)

Examples:

A8765 = 2 losers

KJ4 = 2 losers

94 = 2 losers

KQJ93 = 1 loser

KQ4 = 1 loser

K4 = 1 loser

J8765 = 3 losers

973 = 3 losers

97654 = 3 losers

AKQ65 = 0 losers

AK = 0 losers

A = 0 losers

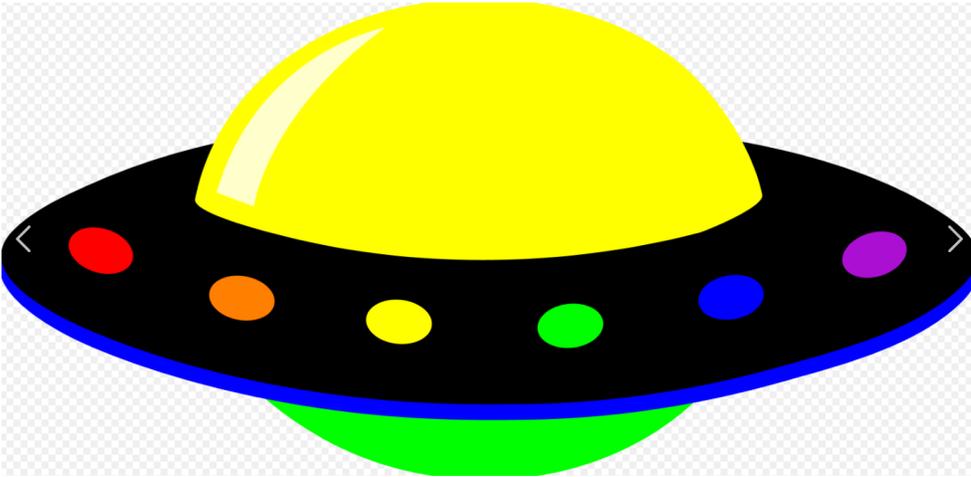
EXPECTED LOSERS FOR FOLLOWING HANDS:

- 9 losers – 6-9 points (minimal response)
- 8 losers – 10-12 points, limit raises, weak 2 openings, overcalls
- 7 losers – 12-14 points, minimal opening hand
- 6 losers – 15-17 points, medium opening hand
- 5 losers – 18+, strong hand
- 3 losers – 22+, 2C openers

HOW TO USE THE INFORMATION:

Count your losers, add partner's expected losers, **deduct the total from 24 (or 18)**. The result is the trick-taking potential of the combined partnership's assets.

U F O



U is for **UNBALANCED HAND**. (If your hand is balanced, just bid as you normally would, based on your point count).

F is for when you have found a **FIT** with partner.

O is for when you are the **OPENING SIDE**, i.e., don't use it when the opposition has opened and your partner has overcalled.

Example 1

Opener (West)

♠ 6 2
♥ A 7 4 2
♦ Q 9 7 5 4 2
♣ A

Opens 1♦ (1)

Raises to 5♦ (3)

Responder (East)

♠ 7 3
♥ K 3
♦ A K 8 6
♣ J 7 6 5 3

Responds 4♦ (2)

(1) Only 10 points, but a “rule of 20” light opening bid. Too strong for a weak two opener.

(2) 5-4-2-2, so semi-balanced. $2 + 1 + 1 + 3 = 7$ LT's. Add to partner's assumed 7LT's = 14. Take 14 from 24, so bid 4 diamonds (10 tricks).

(3) $2 + 2 + 2 + 0 = 6$ LT's. One fewer than partner assumed. So bid one more. The 5 game makes 11 tricks, with only 21 HCP between the two hands.

Example 2

Opener (West)

♠ K 6 5 2
♥ A K 3
♦ 2
♣ A K 10 7 3

Opens 1♣

Raises to 4♠ (1)

Responder (East)

♠ A Q 7 4 3
♥ 8 7 6 2
♦ 4 3
♣ J 4

Responds 1♠

Pass (2)

(1) $2 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 5$ LT's. Add to partner's assumed 9 LT's for his/her 1 level response, = 14. Take 14 from 24 = 10, so bid 4 spades.

(2) $1 + 3 + 2 + 2 = 8$ LT's, one fewer than partner has assumed for their 4♠ bid.

Note:

You can use Losing Trick Count **even if your partner is unaware of it.**

- Track the difference between the points you have and the losers count – modify your bidding accordingly.
- Use the estimate of your partner's losers to help place the level of your game.