

Losing Trick Count Presentation 1 - Introduction

LTC is an assessment to work out the trick making capacity of two hands.

Used for limit raises when there is at least 8-card trump fit.

More than 14 losers = Part

14 losers = Game try

12 losers = Possible Slam

Method

The method requires that you first have established that there is an 8-card trump fit, so then you can:

- 1 - Count your losers**
- 2 - Add your partner's losers**
- 3 - Subtract the total from 18**

The answer is a good estimate of how many tricks you expect to make

For example: if the answer is 14 you can bid for Game
($18-14=4$) so bid 4♥/♠

For example: if the answer is 16 then ($18-16=2$) so Pass and hope to play in 2♥/♠

Application

Partner opens with 1♥/♠ you assume he has 7 loser hand

So after partner opens 1♥/♠

Responder can bid:

- 2♥/♠ has 9 loser hand
- 3♥/♠ has 8 loser hand
- 4♥/♠ has 7 loser hand

Opener (knowing his own exact LTC and also now his partner's exact LTC) can then Pass or bid on accordingly

The first step is how to count losers, this is my method:

- Only the first three cards in a suit can be losers
- Only the A, K and Q are counted as winners
- Droppable winners count as losers - “K singleton” or “Q x”
- Other than the trump suit, Q is only half a winner except when supported by A, K or J
- A hand with no Ace or void you could treat less favourable and add half a loser
- If you have a half total then round it up
- You can be more aggressive (like relaxing the Ace and Queen rules) when the vulnerability is **Love All** or to bid Game when you playing in a **Teams** competition
- You can make up your own variations on the theme if you want

So here are some examples

♠ A K 2
♥ J 6 3
♦ K Q 6 3
♣ 7 6 5

8 losers

♠ A K 4 3
♥ Q
♦ K Q 6 4 2
♣ 7 6 5

6 losers

♠ A K 5 4 3 2
♥
♦ K Q 4 3 2
♣ 6 5

4 losers

♠ A K 2
♥ A K 2
♦ A K 3 2
♣ A K 2

4 losers

In the last two examples both are valued as '4 Losers' but one has 12 HCP and the other has 28 HCP but both have similar playing potential . Adding Shape to Points illustrates the value of the Losing Trick Count

Now look at these two hands

♠ Q 4 3 2
♥ Q 4 3 2
♦ Q 4 3 2
♣ 2

7 losers

♠ A 4 3 2
♥ A 4 3 2
♦ A 4 3 2
♣ 2

7 losers

Obviously the Q is overvalued

This is why we count an unsupported Q in a non-trump suit as only half a winner

Here are some more examples:

♠ A Q J 9
♥ A 10 7
♦ 8 7 6 5 3
♣ 3

7 losers

♠ K Q 6
♥ A Q 5 4 3
♦ 6 4
♣ Q 4 2

6.5 losers

♠ Q 8 7 3
♥ Q J 8 2
♦ A 8 7
♣ Q 2

8.5 losers
8 losers when ♠ is the agreed trumps

♠ K 4 2
♥ K Q 3 2
♦ A J 4
♣ 10 9 6

8 losers

♠ Q J 4 2
♥ 8 4 3
♦ Q 7 4 2
♣ A 9 6

9.5 losers

♠ J 6 5 2
♥ A 10 4 3
♦
♣ K 5 4 2

7 losers

The following is an example hand and an analysis of the result outcomes

20th Feb 17 - Hand 1

	♠ 10 8 7 5	Dealer E Vul None
	♥ A J 8 2	
	♦ A Q 10 7 2	
	♣	
♠ Q 4 3	♠ A 9	
♥ 9 6 4 3	♥ K Q 10	
♦ 4	♦ J 9 8 3	
♣ A K Q 9 8	♣ J 10 5 3	
	♠ K J 6 2	
	♥ 7 5	
	♦ K 6 5	
	♣ 7 6 4 2	

11
11 11
7

Actual Outcomes for this hand

The hand was played 15 times

Double Dummy Predictions

N/S have 9 tricks available in Spades and 8 in Diamonds

E/W have 9 tricks available in Clubs and 8 in NT

Actual Results

8 N/S Pairs bid 2♠ or 3♠ for 78%

1 N/S Pair bid 4♠ minus 1 for 33%

1 E/W Pair bid 3♣ for 86%

1 E/W Pair bid 4♣ for 100%

3 E/W Pair bid 5♣ off 7%, 36%, 43%

1 E/W Pair bid 2NT and made 93%

Losing Trick Count Presentation 2 – Wed 1st March 17

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Only the first three cards in a suit can be losers
- Only the A, K and Q are counted as winners
- Droppable winners count as losers - “K singleton” or “Q x”
- Other than the trump suit, Q is only half a winner except when supported by A, K or J
- A hand with no Ace or void you could treat less favourable and add half a loser
- If you have a half total then round it up
- Be more aggressive at **Vul Love All** or **to bid Games in Teams**
- You can make up your own variations if you want

AFTER A ONE LEVEL BID

When you have 8-card trump fit

So you have 4+ of the suit (or 3+ if you play 5-card-Majors)

Partner opens with 1♥/♠ you assume he has 7 loser hand

Responder can bid:

2♥/♠ has 9 loser hand

3♥/♠ has 8 loser hand

4♥/♠ has 7 loser hand

Opener (knowing his own exact LTC and also now his partner's exact LTC) can then Pass or bid on accordingly

AFTER AN OVERCALL

When you have 8-card trump fit - so you have 3+ of the suit

Partner bids 1♥/♠ **overcalling opponents** you assume he has an 8 loser hand. If the next hand Passes you can bid:

- 2♥/♠ with 8 loser hand
- 3♥/♠ with 7 loser hand
- 4♥/♠ with 6 loser hand

Opener (knowing his exact LTC and now yours too) can then Pass or bid on

AFTER A STRONG BID

8-card trump fit (you have 2+)

If Partner bids a strong hand showing ♥/♠ you assume he has a 5 loser hand

Given the opportunity you can bid:

- 3♥/♠ with 10 loser hand
- 4♥/♠ with 9 loser hand

Opener (knowing his exact LTC as well as yours) can then Pass or bid on

Example 1

16th Feb 17 Hand 12

	♠ K J 10 9 8	Dealer W N/S Vul
	♥ 8 5	
	♦ Q 10	
	♣ Q J 7 2	
♠ A 5 3		♠ 4
♥ J 9 7 6 3 2		♥ A K Q 4
♦ A J 8		♦ 9 6 4
♣ A		♣ 10 9 8 4 3
	♠ Q 7 6 2	
	♥ 10	
	♦ K 7 5 3 2	
	♣ K 6 5	

9
14 9
8

Outcomes for 16th Feb Hand 12

This hand was played 11 times

Double Dummy Predictions

N/S 8 tricks available in Spades

E/W 11 tricks available in Hearts and 9 in NT

Actual Results

6 E/W Pairs bid 4♥ and made 11

3 E/W Pairs bid 5♥ (pushed maybe?)

1 Pair bid 6♥ - 1 off N/S got 100%

1 N/S Pair bid 4♠x – 1 off N/S got 95%

Only a maximum of 4 N/S pairs found the good Sacrifice bid? **Why is this?**

Can E/W make it harder for N/S to find the Sacrifice?

2 Pairs made 12 tricks and achieved 95% - defenders kept the wrong cards or lead is a Diamond at trick one? **Is there anything West can try?**

Example 2

14th Feb 17 Hand 14

	♠ A K Q 8 6 3 2	Dealer E Vul None
	♥ J 7 4	
	♦ 8	
	♣ A 9	
♠ 10		♠ J 4
♥ K Q 10 9 6		♥ A 5 3 2
♦ A J 7 4 3		♦ Q 9 2
♣ J 7		♣ K 5 4 3
	♠ 9 7 5	
	♥ 8	
	♦ K 10 6 5	
	♣ Q 10 8 6 2	

14
11 10
5

Outcomes for 14th Feb Hand 14

Double Dummy Predictions

N/S 10 tricks available in Spades

E/W 11 tricks available in Hearts

Actual Results

2 Pairs bid 4♠ and made 11- N/S 70%

1 Pairs bid 5♠ - 1 off and E/W got 80%

1 Pairs bid 5♠x - 2 off and E/W got 100%

1 Pair bid 6♥x - 5 off and N/S got 100%

1 Pair bid 3♠ – +1 and gave E/W 60%

One N/S Pair bid 3♠ - didn't use LTC!

One East may have bid 3♥ and this has enabled W to bid 5♥ or 6♥ as a Sacrifice? 6♥ should be good – the declarer must have gone to pieces!

Is there anything N might do different?

Losing Trick Count Presentation 3 – Wed 8th March 17

7th Feb 17 : Hand 10

♠ 7 4 3 2

♥ A K Q 5

♦ 9

♣ K 6 4 3

Dealer E

Both Vul

♠ Q 10 9

♥ J 6 2

♦ A 10 7 3 2

♣ 9 2

♠ A 8

♥ 10 8 7 4 3

♦ K 6 5 4

♣ Q J

12

7 10

11

♠ K J 6 5

♥ 9

♦ Q J 8

♣ A 10 8 7 5

Outcomes for 7th Feb Hand 10

Double Dummy Predictions

N/S - Clubs 11, Spades 10, NT 9

Actual Results

One played 4♠ made 11 for 100%

One played 4♠ made 10 for 83%

One played 3NT made 9 for 67%

One Pair played 3♠ made for 33%

Two played 4♠ made 9 for 8%

If South gets to open 1♣ an auction could go

Pass 1♣ Pass 1♥

Pass 1♠ Pass 4♠

When East Opens first with 1♥ it is harder for N/S to find their best place

Key to success in both Spades or NT contracts is how you play the Spades with such poor high cards. Here are some suggestions:

With 5 cards out you plan for 3,2 distribution (68% probability) here are some imagined E/W splits and how to deal with them.

Dummy ♠ K J 6 5

♠ A Q 10

♠ 9 8

Play J, cover Q with K, play low on A

♠ 9 8

♠ A Q 10

Play J

♠ Q 10 9

♠ A 8

Play J or cover Q with K

♠ A 8

♠ Q 10 9

Play J or play low over the A

Declarer ♠ 7 4 3 2

To avoid 3 losers never put up the King unless you are covering the Queen

Second possibility above is 3 losers anyway

Losing Trick Count Presentation 4 - 15th Mar 17

21/22nd Feb Hand 9

	♠ J 7	Dealer N E/W Vul
	♥ K J 8 4	
	♦ 10 8 7 6 5	
	♣ K 9	
♠ A 8 6 5 2		♠ Q 10 9 4 3
♥ 7 5 2		♥ 10 3
♦ 2		♦ K Q 9
♣ 10 8 7 3		♣ Q 6 2
	♠ K	
8 4 9 19	♥ A Q 9 6	
	♦ A J 4 3	
	♣ A J 5 4	

Outcomes for 21/22nd Feb Hand 9

Double Dummy Predictions

N/S 11 tricks available in Hearts or

N/S 11 tricks available in Diamonds

N/S 8 tricks available in NT

E/W 7 tricks available Spades

4 Pair bid 4♥ and made 11 – 83%

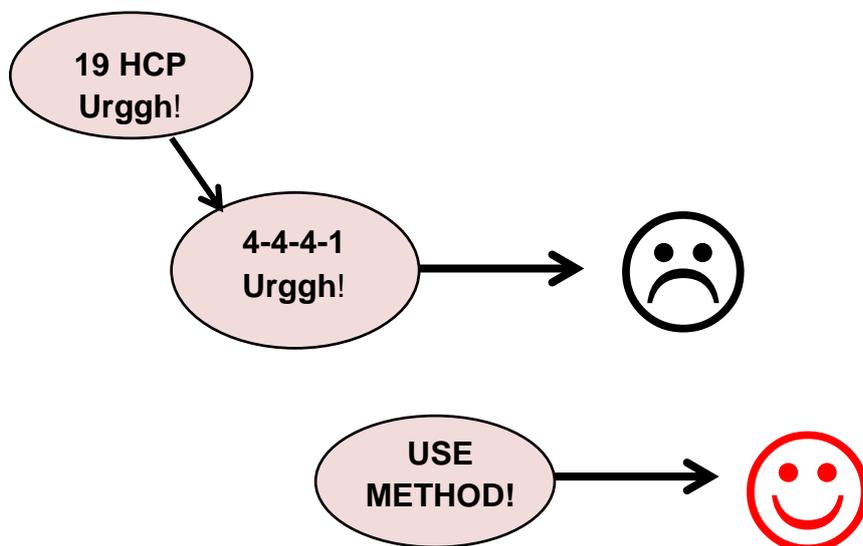
4 Pair bid 4♥ and made 10 – 39%

2 Pairs bid 3♥ and made 11 – 6%

Only 2 Pairs played North (both bid 10 and made 11) (Tues night)

How should South bid this hand?

Using classic 4441 style then applying losing trick count the auction is simple enough **even** if East overcalls 2♠



A proposed bidding method

Opener use classic 4441 style and bids 1♦ (with black suit singleton open the middle of the other three 4-card suits)

With a 4-card Major North bids 1♥ (he expects South to assume he has at least a 9 loser hand)

South then jumps to 3 because with a 6-loser he expects to make 9 tricks when partner has a 9-loser

North raises to Game because his hand is better than his previously promised 9-loser

Disciplined use of 'Losing Trick Count'

The auction should be simple enough **even if East overcalls 2♠**

The E/W Perspective

East has a sensible overcall of 1♠.

West has an 8-loser and should expect his partner to be no better than an 8-loser for his overcall. He can also foresee that N/S have good HCP and a probable Game.

Are you prepared to bid 4♠ and risk being doubled for a nasty penalty? NO! -so don't bid 3 either.

There is no point pushing N/S into their seemingly obvious Game just for the sake of it. You'd just be helping them out. Bidding to the 2 level you have frustrated their initial attempts and given them enough doubt that they may fall short of it themselves if they are not careful.

Losing Trick Count Presentation 5 – 22nd Mar 17

	♠ 6 2	Dealer E Vul None
	♥ 8 6	
	♦ J 9 8 7 6 4 3	
	♣ 10 5	
♠ K 9 8 5 4 3	♠ A Q J 10	
♥ A Q 7 4	♥ 10 9 5 3	
♦ A 2	♦	
♣ 3	♣ A K 8 4 2	
	♠ 7	
1 13 14 12	♥ K J 2	
	♦ K Q 10 5	
	♣ Q J 9 7 6	

Outcomes for 28th Apr 15 Hand 17

The hand was played 7 times

Double Dummy Predictions

**E/W 13 tricks available in Hearts or
E/W 13 tricks available in Spades or
E/W 13 tricks available in NT or
E/W 10 tricks in Clubs**

N/S 7 tricks available Diamonds

1 pair bid 6NT made 13 for 100%
1 pair bid 6♠ and made 12 for 83%
1 pair bid 4♠ and made 13 for 67%
3 pairs bid 4♠ and made 12 for 25%
1 pair bid 5♠ and made 12 for 25%

1 pair seem to have been pushed to 5♠. perhaps South got into the auction with a 1♦ overall and North couldn't believe her luck

Potential bidding sequences

If N/S are kind enough to stay out of the fray then this auction is easy

North	East	South	West
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠(1)	Pass	6♠(2)

- (1) A 5-loser opposite partner's promised 9-loser
- (2) Now re-evaluated as a 4-loser opposite a probable 5-loser so this is now an easy slam bid

But because we are at 'love all' lets assume South squeezes a diamond bid in and that N/S then bid aggressively.

E/W will now have to have a degree of nerve and confidence

North	East	South	West
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♠
4♦(1)	4♠(2)	5♦(3)	6♠(4)

- (1) Pre-emptive expecting minus 2 (-300)
- (2) A five loser hand expecting partner to have 9 losers so Game is easy to bid
- (3) Partner has raised to 4 as a probable pre-empt but with a fit in Diamonds this is worth another bid
- (4) After East's support for Spades this hand is now re-evaluated as a 4-loser and therefore worthy of a slam bid. **You could expect partner to be at least as good as 7-loser but perhaps he will be unsure about your strength.** Bid immediately to 6♠ because if you bid 5♠ partner is likely to Pass.