

## 2: Better hand evaluation

### Hand evaluation review:

High card points (HCP): A = 4, K = 3, Q = 2, J = 1

Length points: Add 1 for each card beyond 4<sup>th</sup> in suit Dummy points: 5/3/1

Now we will refine our methods of evaluating your hand (after Marty Bergen)

1. HCP: A = 4½, K = 3, Q = 1½, J = ¾, 10 = ¼

Rather than memorizing fractions, just remember that a hand with lots of aces and tens should be upgraded; a hand with lots of Qs and Js (“quacks”) should be downgraded.

2. K, Q or J in short suits – downgrade. Subtract 1 for singleton K, Q or J. Same applies for doubletons: QJ, Qx, Jx. Also downgrade slightly singleton A and doubleton AJ, KQ, KJ.

3. Better to have your honors in your long suits than in your short suits.

e.g. AKJxx xx KQxx xx is way better than xxxxx AK Jxxx KQ

4. When partner has support for your suit, count 2 length points for each trump beyond 5. So a 6-card trump suit has 3 length points, a 7-card suit has 5 length points, etc.

5. When you have trump length, shortness in side suits is also a plus – it gives you control of those suits. Add 2 points for a singleton, 3 for a void. Add 1 point for 2 doubletons.

6. If your two longest suits total 10 or more, upgrade by one more point.

7. Honors in a suit bid by partner should be upgraded.

Recall these N/S hands, all with similar HCPs:

<b>1 NORTH</b>	<b>2 NORTH</b>	<b>3 NORTH</b>	<b>4 NORTH</b>
♠ Qxxx	♠ Qxxx	♠ Jxx	♠ Qxxx
♥ x	♥ x	♥ x	♥ K
♦ Kxxx	♦ xxxx	♦ Kxxx	♦ xxxx
♣ xxxx	♣ Kxxx	♣ xxxxx	♣ xxxx
<b>1 SOUTH</b>	<b>2 SOUTH</b>	<b>4 SOUTH</b>	<b>4 SOUTH</b>
♠ AKxxxx	♠ AKxxxx	♠ Axxxxxxx	♠ Axxxxx
♥ xx	♥ Ax	♥ xx	♥ xx
♦ AQx	♦ Qxx	♦ AQx	♦ Kxx
♣ xx	♣ xx	♣ —	♣ AQ

Old point count method:

1 15 + 8 = 23      2 15 + 8 = 23      3 14 + 7 = 21      4 15 + 8 = 23

How many tricks could/should be made in a spade contract?

- 1 10
- 2 8, 9 or 10
- 3 11 or 12
- 4 7, 8 or 9

New point count method:

- 1  $17 + 8 = 25(+)$
- 2  $17 + 8 = 25(-)$
- 3  $21 + 8 = 29$
- 4  $17 + 7 = 24(-)$

These point counts are much better at predicting the trick-taking potential of the hands.

Another example: Partner opens 1NT (15-17). You hold

♠ xx ♥ KQ97432 ♦ xx ♣ xx

Hand valuation?:

Bid game/invite game/partscore?

Last Friday:

	N ♠ AQ754	
	♥ K9732	
	♦ 5	
	♣ Q3	
♠ KJ8		♠
♥ 65		♥ Q84
♦ AK10984		♦ 32
♣ 102		♣ AKJ97654
	♠ 109632	
	♥ AJ10	
	♦ QJ76	
	♣ 8	

N/S in spades have 19 HCP. Total points:

Can make 4 spades

E/W in clubs have 21 HCP. Total points:

Can make 5 clubs

**“Quick tricks”** are another useful adjunct in hand evaluation:

AK = 2, AQ = 1½, A = 1, KQ = 1, Kx = ½

A hand that opens 1 of a suit usually has at least 2 quick tricks

e.g ♠ 63 ♥KQ43 ♦ AQJ4 ♣ 752      2½ quick tricks: open 1 diamond

♠ AJ ♥K643 ♦ Q643 ♣ Q52      1½ quick tricks: pass

**Counting losers** Only the first three cards in a suit can be losers, and in a 3 card suit or longer, A, K and Q are never losers.

So ♠ AKQxxx ♥ xx ♦ AKxxx ♣ \_\_\_ is a 3-loser hand, i.e. a 10-winner hand, and should make 10 tricks in spades, even if partner has nothing more than the diamond queen, or a ruffing value, or a trick in hearts. But your hand has only 19 points using the traditional counting method. With a hand like this, you need to bid game. Open 2♣, and don't allow partner to pass until you are at least in 4 spades!