

## **FOR THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.....**

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### ***June is the month to get your silver points!!!***

And Unit 174 is the place to be.... There are not one but TWO tournaments for our novice and intermediate players in June. June 11-13 the Nearly Summer Sectional will be held at the Stafford Center and play will commence Friday afternoon and continue Friday evening, Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning and afternoon. More information is available at [www.acblunit174.org](http://www.acblunit174.org). Just click on The Nearly Summer Sectional on the far right side of the page. The location is great and it is a very easy drive.

A second tournament for silver points will be held June 25-27 at the Bridge Club of Houston on FM 2920. If you want more information go to [www.bridgeclubofhouston.org](http://www.bridgeclubofhouston.org). Silver points can only be won at the sectional tournaments, novice tournaments, and the sectional tournaments at clubs (STACs). Both tournament venues are easy to reach and bridge carpools are always fun!

Members who joined before January 1, 2010, need to have at least 50 silver points to make life master and players who joined after January 1 need 75 silver points.

### ***Modern Losing Trick Count!***

Last month The Law of Total Tricks was reviewed. It is a good tool to use in evaluating your hand and determining whether or not to go to the next level. Another good tool for your toolkit is Losing Trick Count. Ron Klingman wrote Modern Losing Trick Count and it is a useful method to use as an alternative to point-count evaluation. Losing Trick Count is a very good tool to use when a good trump fit has been found, especially 5/4 or 4/4. One of the benefits of using LTC is that your partner doesn't even have to be using it too. LTC is the key to finding the 20 point game and the 25 point slam.

This is the LTC formula: 1. Count your losers

2. Add your partner's losers

3. Subtract the total from 24

The answer is the total number of tricks the partnership can expect to win if their suit is trump.

Count losers only in the first three cards of each suit. Count the A, K, and Q as winners and anything else is a loser. The fourth, fifth, and sixth cards in a suit are counted as winners.

With a two card suit, the A and K are counted as winners and anything lower is a loser.

With a one card suit, the A is a winner; anything else is a loser.

**THERE ARE NEVER MORE THAN THREE LOSERS IN A SUIT. THERE ARE NEVER MORE LOSERS IN A SUIT THAN THE NUMBER OF CARDS IN THE SUIT.**

**The Fundamental Principles are:**

As the points increase, the losers decrease.

As the points decrease, the losers increase.

The more unbalanced the hand, the fewer the losers.

The more balanced the hand, the more losers

Queens tend to be overrated, so deduct ½ point for every queen that is not balanced by an ace.

**Now assess your partner's losers:**

Minimum opening hand = 7 losers

One no trump opener = 6 losers

Take out X = 7 losers

2 No Trump opener=4-5 losers

2 Club opener= 3 or fewer losers

**Add up the losers and subtract the total from 24. That gives you an estimate of how many tricks you can expect. Try using LTC and read Modern Losing Trick Count by Ron Klinger.**

**Add the Law of Total Tricks, Losing Trick Count, and High Card Points to your Tool Kit to improve your bidding.**

*Back to the Basics—it's not just for school children:*

Never forget that you are playing with a partner. It pays to consider what things may look like from partner's point of view, particularly when you are privy to some information that partner isn't.

You cannot defend properly unless you remember the bidding.

You cannot defend properly unless you know what system the opponents are playing.

You cannot defend properly unless you watch the cards, particularly the little fellows.

“Watch the 2's”

You cannot defend properly unless you count.

You cannot expect your partner to defend properly if you make faces or show other signs of disapproval.

Keep one goal in mind: DEFEATING THE CONTRACT. Do not worry about overtricks unless you are defending a doubled contract or are playing in a tournament.

A player who hesitates during the bidding is likely to have a problem hand. If that player becomes the declarer, keep the hesitation in mind.

*Defense--you do it half the time*

The figure to focus on during the defense is the number of tricks you need at any given moment to defeat the contract. Defense is based on this figure.

Give your opening lead careful consideration. The fate of many contracts is determined by that one card. Use the bidding as a guide.

Make sure you and your partner are on the same wavelength concerning leads and signaling.

Don't compound a crime. If you or partner has made an error, do not lose your cool. Many contracts can still be beaten after one error but seldom after two.

The speed of the play may be a clue to declarer's problem. When playing in a 4-3 trump fit, play usually slows to a crawl.

Defend passively if side suit tricks can't get away; defend aggressively if they can.

Be on the lookout to double artificial bids (Stayman, Transfers, cue bids, Blackwood responses to help partner out on opening lead (E Kantar)

### ***Director, Please***

Mechanical errors in the bidding occur when your fingers pick up the wrong card from the bidding box. It's called a mechanical error because your fingers reached in and grasped the wrong card. It is not a mechanical error if you made the wrong bid and immediately recognized that you'd made a mistake. The crucial issue is did you make a slip of the fingers or was it a slip of the mind? A genuine mechanical error may be corrected if your partner has not made a subsequent bid. Call the director and the bidding can be backed up. If your partner has made a bid, you must continue the auction without making faces, gasping, or displaying other body language.

Please send comments regarding this newsletter to [jryan9620@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jryan9620@sbcglobal.net). If you would like to be added to the mailing list just give ACBL your e-mail address and you will get it automatically.

**See you at the tables**

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