



Basic Bidding 4, Losing Trick Count

By Kitty & Steve Cooper

Before we continue with opener's and responder's rebids, let's discuss an alternate hand evaluation technique that can be very helpful for your rebid choices: losing trick count (LTC). Australian expert Ron Klinger wrote a whole book on the subject! While we do not recommend using LTC as your only form of hand evaluation, it is extremely accurate when you have a major suit fit. It is also a good method to use to resolve close decisions such as whether or not to open the bidding or bid a game.

Here is the technique; count the losers in your hand in each suit and then total them up. Losers are counted as follows: if you have a suit of three or more cards, all cards lower than the queen are counted as losers, but no suit can have more than three losers total. So from the fourth card on in a long suit, do not count any losers. Some examples are: 1) a suit of five small cards is three losers, 2) Qxxxx is two losers just the same as Axxxx or Kxxx or Qxx, 3) AQxx is one loser as is KQx or AKxxx.

What about shorter suits? With only two cards, the queen becomes a loser (but count AQ as no losers and KQ as

one loser). With only one card, just the A is not a loser. So Qx is two losers the same as xx but Kx is one loser as is the king or queen alone. Remember these are not real losers, just LTC losers as a form of hand evaluation. So how to apply this technique? An opening bid is expected to be seven losers. So if you have a marginal opener, look at your loser count to tip the decision. A limit raise is expected to be eight losers, so if you have a close decision use LTC to make up your mind.

Here are two important LTC numbers to remember. 1. If you and your partner have 14 losers and a fit, then you can make a major suit game. 2. If your combined assets are 12 losers and a fit, then you have a slam as long as you are not off two aces.

So if you have opened the bidding on a six loser hand like ♠AQxxx ♥x ♦Kxx ♣Axxx and partner gives you a limit raise (eight losers), your total is 14 losers so go ahead and bid a game. On the other hand if you have extra points but seven losers, pass the limit raise. For example, say you open 1♠ with ♠Axxxx ♥QJ ♦Kxx ♣AJx and partner raises to three. You have fifteen points but eight losers, so pass. The hand is only barely better than ♠Axxxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣AJx, which is

a hand that would not even consider bidding a game.

Another place LTC is helpful is when you have responded one of a major to partner's opening bid and they raise you to game (expected to be five losers). If you have seven losers, the partnership total is 12, so bid blackwood or make a cuebid to try for slam.

One proviso: hands with low loser count but mainly queens and no aces are worth a little less than their LTC value. An adjustment to consider is to count queens as half a loser when the hand has no aces. Or use some of the downward adjustment factors from the first article in this series, but subtract half a loser instead of a point.

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election for First BOD Alternate is resolved failed, but an action item was created to have the First and Second BOD Alternate elections at separate times, thus allowing a candidate for First Alternate who was not elected to run for Second Alternate.

- The 2016 operating budget which shows a deficit of \$61,534 passed; however, cost cutting measures are being explored.
- A motion passed which favorably affects D17 – the percentage of gold points awarded at Non-Life Master Regionals is increased from 10% to 25%. The players attending the Tucson NLM Regional, September 22-25 will be happy.

More on the Denver BOD meeting in the March *ScoreCard*.
Please do not hesitate to contact me at 719 593-0205 or email at bonnie@bonniebagleyd17.com See you at the Albuquerque Regional, January 18-24.

PUEBLO WINTER SECTIONAL

February 12, 13, 14, 2016
Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center
210 N. Santa Fe (exit 98-B off I-25)
Pueblo, Colorado

Friday—February 12, 2016

1:00 PM Stratified Pairs (Single Session)
Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

7:00 PM Stratified Pairs (Single Session)
Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

Saturday—February 13, 2016

10:00 AM Stratified Pairs (Double Session)
Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

3:00 PM Stratified Pairs (Double Session)
Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

Sunday—February 14, 2016

10:00 AM Stratified Swiss Teams (Two Sessions)

Stratified Events: A - 1500+ B - 750-1500 C - 0-750
99er Pairs: D - 100-200 E - 50-100 F - 0-50
Single Session Entries will be accommodated

Tournament Chair: Barry Roof (719) 544-6725
Partnerships: Barry Roof (719) 544-6725
Director-in-Charge: William Michael

Fees: \$10 per person per single session;
Non and Unpaid ACBL members \$1.00 additional
Swiss Teams Event: \$92.00 per team

Sanction #: S1602082

Snacks at all events - **LUNCH SUNDAY ONLY**

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MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY

SEDONA SECTIONAL

March 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 2016
(Thursday, Friday & Saturday)

Elks Lodge #2291 – 110 Airport Road, Sedona, Az.

Sedona Lodging:
Hampton Inn (928-282-4700); \$139 per night; Talk directly to the hotel office – do not contact 1-800 office as only the local hotel has the offer on file.

Super Eight (928-282-1533); Sun & Thurs (\$75+ tax), Fri & Sat (\$85+ tax)

Rooms are Limited – Please make reservations early!

Two Bracketed Knockouts!

Thursday March 3rd

Stratified Open Pairs - 9:00 AM, 1:30 PM, & 7:00 PM -Single Sessions;
199'er pairs - 9:00 AM and 1:30 PM
Strats (Average): A (1500+ MP), B (500+ to 1500MP), C (0 to 500 MP)
199'ers (0 to 50 MP, 50 to 100 MP, 100 to 200 MP)
Bell Rock Bracketed Knockout - 9:00 AM, 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM - 3 Rounds
Top Bracket may be handicapped;
Single Session Swiss – 7:00 PM;

Friday March 4th

Stratified Open Pairs - 9:00 AM, 1:30 PM, & 7:00 PM -Single Sessions;
199'er pairs - 9:00 AM and 1:30 PM
Strats (Average): A (1500+ MP), B (500+ to 1500MP), C (0 to 500 MP)
199'ers (0 to 50 MP, 50 to 100 MP, 100 to 200 MP)
Cathedral Rock Bracketed Knockout - 9:00 AM, 1:30 PM & 7:00PM - 3 Rounds
Top Bracket may be handicapped;
Single Session Swiss – 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 5th

Stratified Swiss Teams – Two Sessions 10:00 AM
Strats: A (1500+ MP), B (500+ to 1500MP), C (0 to 500 MP); 20 minute lunch break
199'er Swiss team – 10:00 AM single session

Daily - Sandwiches, Salads & Refreshments available for lunch – Free Coffee provided all day!

Tournament Chair: Darryl Helton
928-284-9245; marshahelt@gmail.com
Entry Fees: \$10 members, \$13 non and unpaid ACBL members
Sanction 1603072

Partnership Chair: Sonya Webber
928-284-0855 – sparky4921@gmail.com
Version (1)