THE LOSING TRICK COUNT

POINTS AREN'T EVERYTHING

When you have a trump fit of eight cards (or better), then

Jacks and Queens aren't worth as much as they were (they might get trumped)

and

voids and singletons are worth their weight in gold (as you make ruffing tricks).

1. Count your losing tricks

Provided that you know of a trump fit of at least eight cards in the suit in which you wish to play

count 0 losers in any void suit
count 1 loser for any singleton which is not an ace
count 1 loser for each card in a doubleton which is not a K or an A
count 1 loser for any of the top three cards in a suit which is not an A a K or a Q.

Add up the total losers in the two hands.

♠	K T 5 4	Partner opened 1♠ - you have at least an eight-card fit.
♥	A T 9 4	Spades - 2 losers Hearts - 2 losers
♦	Q J 5 3	diamonds - 2 losers Clubs - 1 loser
♣	7	This is a 7 loser hand - total 14 losers = 10 likely tricks.

2. Using the losing trick count

Assume that opener has a seven-loser hand.

Add your losers to opener's seven.

Take the total from 24. This gives an excellent estimate of the total number of tricks you are likely to be able to make.

(alternatively take from 18 to see how many to bid.)

Example

Partner opens 1 of a suit.
You have a trump fit in an eight-loser hand.

8 + 7 = 15 24 - 15 = 9

You hope to make 9 tricks.

Raise partner's suit to the three-level.

DO

USE THE LOSING TRICK COUNT

when

your side opened the bidding

and

your hand is unbalanced

and

you have at least a 4-4 or a 5-3 trump fit.

DO NOT

USE THE LOSING TRICK COUNT

when

your side overcalled

or

your hand is balanced

or

you do not have a trump fit.