Losing trick count - Summary Sheet

The Losing trick count

The Losing Trick Count (LTC) is another way of assessing the potential of an **unbalanced** hand **once a fit has been located**.

Counting losing tricks

Count 1 loser for each of the top 3 cards in a suit which is not the Ace, King or Queen;
or A or K in a doubleton;
or A in a singleton.
Count a Q as a loser unless supported by another honour or partner's bid.
Count AJT as 1 loser.

♠	K Q 5 4	1 loser
♥	Q 7 2	3 losers
♦	Q	1 loser
♣	A J 8 6 3	2 losers

Example hand

Partner has opened 1♠.
On the hand above you have an unbalanced hand and at least a 4-4 spade fit.
This has now become a 7 losing trick hand.

How do you use this figure

Assume that partner has a 7-loser hand for his opening bid of one of a suit.

Add your losing tricks to his - in this example hand the total = 14.

Take this total from 24 to assess the number of tricks you should hope to make;
(or from 18 to assess how high you should bid for a making contract).

In the example hand above either jump to 4♠, or force the bidding to 4♠ as you search for a higher contract.
(In this example you might bid 4♦ – an artificial bid, forcing, agreeing spades, and showing a shortage in Diamonds.)

Opener can also use this idea

Place responder with 9 losers for a first response at the 1-level or 8 losers for a first response at the 2-level.

♠	K Q 5 4	You opened 1♣ and partner responded 1♠.
♥	K 7 2	You now know of a spade fit in an unbalanced hand.
♦	Q	You have 6 losers – place partner with 9 – total 15
♣	A J 8 6 3	24 – 15 = 9. Bid 3♠.