



## Lesson 30 Teacher's Notes

### More on Hand Evaluation

#### Aims

- To refine how we decide the strength of our hand
- To introduce the concept of distributional strength

#### Content

- 1 Revise the Milton Work point count.  
This is as good a method as any of deciding the value of a hand that will be played in *no-trump*, but it is a very rough and ready yardstick for suit play.  
We have already seen that when we are considering an overcall we count Playing Tricks, not points. Now we should look at other ways of evaluating the strength of our hands. Sometimes we must evaluate our hands more optimistically or more pessimistically than the point count suggests. There are other factors to be taken into account
- 2 Consider the importance of the *Location of High Cards*  
It is impossible to allocate extra points accurately for these features, but bear in mind that a hand has more *trick-taking potential* when its honour cards *support one another*.  
***Honour and intermediate cards in long suits*** have greater trick-taking potential than singleton and doubleton honours.  
When you are not sure whether your hand is minimum or maximum ask these questions:  

Are my honour cards in my long suits?	(plus)	or my short suits?	(minus)
Are my honour cards supporting one another?	(plus)	or all alone?	(minus)
Do I have <i>intermediate cards</i> with my honours	(plus)	or only little cards?	(minus)
- 3 Illustrate how the value of a hand can change during the bidding  
Imagine you hold  $\spadesuit K2$ .  
If *partner* bids diamonds the king *supports partner's honours* and will help develop tricks.  
If *no-one* bids diamonds you make a trick when the ace is on your right, or if partner has ace or queen  
If *LHO* bids diamonds it is likely that the ace sits over the king, decreasing your chances of making a trick: you should *devalue* the king.  
If *RHO* bids diamonds it is more likely that he holds the ace, so your chances of making a trick with it increase. You can *upgrade* the king of diamonds  
Run through this again with  $\heartsuit AQ4$ , examining the usefulness of the queen  
In general, honour cards in *suits bid by our side* are *plus values* – they help us develop our Work Suits. Honour cards in suits bid by opponents are better in *defence* – they stop opponents developing their Work Suits.
- 4 Illustrate the value of extra trump, and how to add points for **distribution**  
When we have found a trump fit (at least 8 cards) we can add points for distribution:  
**NB we add points for distribution only when we have found a trump fit: they are 'fit' points**  
This is because the extra values are *ruffing values* – we can make tricks with our small trump by ruffing  
A *void* in a suit partner has not bid is worth 3 extra points – *distribution* or *fit* points  
A *singleton* in a suit partner has not bid is worth 2 extra points  
A *doubleton* is worth 1 extra point.  
For each extra trump over and above the minimum we need for our bid – we add 1 point.  
***We add points for extra trump length when deciding what to bid.***  
***But we add points for distribution, (voids singletons and doubletons) only when we have found a fit.***