



Lesson 11 - teacher notes

Hand evaluation

The aim of this lesson is to provide guide lines about assessing the strength of a hand using methods in addition to the HCP system.

The method first learnt is the HCP method but this has weaknesses – it undervalues Aces and Kings and over values Queens and Jacks. It does not make any attempt to assess the shape value of the hand.

Two other methods are discussed

- 1 **Living in Sin** – high cards in **Long** suits, **Intermediaries** and **Sequences**
- 2 **Losing Trick Count** – Assume an opening hand bidding 1 of a suit has 7 LTC. Add the LTC of the partnership hands and subtract from 18 = number of tricks that should be won in that suit.

Warnings to emphasise

- 1 Only use the LTC once a trump FIT has been found
- 2 The LTC is useful in unbalanced hands
- 3 Only use LTC if your side opens the bidding – it is not helpful after overcalls.

Rule of 20 – When deciding whether to open the bidding you can use the Rule of 20 – “**Add HCP count to the total number of cards held in the two longest suits. If this is 20+ then you can open the bidding**”. This idea is helpful especially with very unbalanced hands.

Rule of 14 – Students are often told not to respond with a new suit at the 2 level unless they hold 10 + HCP. The Rule of 14 says “**Add your HCP to the number of cards in your long suit. If that is 14 or more you can bid your suit at the 2 level**”