



## Counting in Defence

The habit of counting is one that all good defenders must acquire. It is hard work - there is a lot to count!

### Counting Points

When you pick up your hand you sort it into suits, then you count your high card points.

When dummy comes down - count its points also.

The bidding should give you an idea of how many points declarer may have.

Add the total points of these three hands together and partner will have the rest.

This allows you to estimate which high cards you can hope for in partner's hand.

You cannot always rely on opponents' bidding, but some things are certain:

1. If someone bids 1NT or 2NT he usually has the number of points he has shown
2. If someone passes when they had the chance to open the bidding he has fewer than 12 HCP
3. If responder passes an opening bid he has fewer than 6 HCP

### Counting Tricks

When you declare a no-trump contract the first thing you do is count your Sure Tricks. In a suit contract you count your losers. When you are a defender you should try to count your tricks also.

You need 5 tricks to defeat 3NT, 4 to defeat 4♥/4♠, 3 to defeat 5♣/5♦, 2 to defeat a small slam.

As the play develops you may be able to count declarer's tricks: this may guide you to the winning defence.

### Counting the Distribution

As declarer you keep careful track of your trump suit so that you know when all the trump are drawn.

You also count your Work Suit so that you know how many length tricks you can win with small cards.

When you are defending you should try to keep track of the distribution of the suits also.

Whenever someone shows out you can work out how that suit was distributed among the four hands.

You know how many you had, you saw how many dummy had, and when someone shows out you know how many they had. Add these together and subtract from 13 – that is how many were in the hidden hand (Say you lead a 5-card heart suit against 3NT. Dummy goes down with three small hearts. You win an early trick and play a second heart. If partner discards he started with just one heart and declarer has four.)

### The Count Signal

We looked at the Attitude Signal where a low card encourages partner to continue the suit he has led. Or a low discard, which asks partner to lead that suit

**When declarer leads a suit** Attitude is irrelevant: why encourage partner to play declarer's Work Suit?

Instead we help partner to count the hand by signalling our distribution with a Count Signal.

**A high card** shows an *even number* of cards in the suit led; **a low card** shows an *odd number*

Signal clearly: play lowest from an odd number, the highest card you can afford from an even number

Eg      ♣832                      ♣63                      ♣9872                      ♣K72                      ♣Q1072

**Do not try to signal distribution with an honour card:** with eg 10x it is best to play the low card.



## Counting in Defence

**An example of counting – using clues from the bidding and play to reconstruct a South hand**

♠QJ4							
♥KQ8							
♦Q63							
♣KQ85							
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	E	S	
N							
W	E						
S							
	♠1083						
	♥96						
	♦AJ52						
	♣A642						
♠AK6							
♥AJ73							
♦1097							
♣J109							

South opens 1NT and North raises to 3NT.  
 West leads ♠7. *What does this say?* (He has no honour)  
*How many HCP has dummy?* (15) *Declarer?* (12-14) *Partner?* (2-4)  
*Which high cards might partner have?* (Either ♥A or ♦K)  
 Declarer plays ♠4 from dummy, you play ♠10 and South wins ♠K.  
 Declarer plays ♣J, partner plays ♣7, dummy ♣5.  
 You play ♣6, highest you can afford to show an even number.  
 Declarer continues with ♣10, partner plays ♣3.  
*How many clubs has partner?* (2) *And declarer?* (3)  
*How many tricks will South have when you take ♣A?*  
 (At least 9: 3♠s, 3♣s, 3/4♥s.)  
 If South has ♥AJxx 2 clubs will be enough for game, so win ♣A.  
*Can you see 5 tricks for the defence?* (Only if partner has ♦K)  
 So you win ♣A and switch to ♦2. On a good day partner wins ♦K and returns a diamond through dummy's queen.