

Introduction to Counting: Lesson 2

BILLies Retreat

Thursday Oct. 2nd, 2014



(This is my rescue dog, Daiquiri!)

Reading the Opponents' Cards: Shape

As we continue to work on counting, we continue to count **SHAPE**. As we eventually move to counting High Card Points (HCPs), opponents counting declarer's hand, opponents counting each other's hands, the key to all, is **PLANNING!**. Note that typically in suit contacts we count losers and if our losers are say, one more, than we can afford, we determine if there is a way to collapse that loser. Counting can be key to this process.

At notrump, we typically count sure winners. We are in 3NT and can count 8 sure tricks. West is on lead and s/he plays the ♠5. As declarer we hold the spade ♠Axx and there are two spades in dummy. On the ♠5, East plays the ♠K, which we duck, and then East returns the ♠T, which we also duck, then the ♠2 is played by East, which we win.

How many spades do you think East has? If East knows how to give correct count, once he has played the King, s/he is left with the T2. **Remainder count** says you play high-low, just as you would if starting with two cards and giving count. By assuming East has three spades, declarer has 3 spades, 2 small spades in dummy, giving West five spades. We have a two way finesse in clubs to possibly pick up our ninth trick. With two losers already, take the finesse into East who we **presume** is out of spades. We may or may not make our contract, but if we finesse into West, and the finesse loses, we definitely lose the two spades from the lead, the club and two more spades which West holds on to. This is one of many examples how being aware of an opponent's play can potentially give us the best chance.

1) HOMEWORK ANSWER

NORTH	
♠	A873
♥	QT
♦	AJ82
♣	A76
SOUTH	
♠	QJT96
♥	963
♦	KT7
♣	K8

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West leads a heart and East cashes the ♥AK then leads the ♣Q.
 Note that over two hearts, 3♠ shows five spades (with six spades South would likely make a Texas Transfer bid of 4♥) and is forcing. For more information on Texas Transfers. See <http://www.bridgeguys.com/Conventions/TexasTransfer.html>.

Here is the full deal:

NORTH			
♠ A873			
♥ QT			
♦ AJ82			
♣ A76			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 5		♠ K42	
♥ 82		♥ AKT754	
♦ Q9643		♦ 5	
♣ 95432		♣ QJT	
		SOUTH	
		♠ QJT96	
		♥ 963	
		♦ KT7	
		♣ K8	

You start with two sure heart losers, West leading the ♥8 which East wins with the heart King and returns the heart Ace while West plays the heart two. West's high-low and East's bid of 2♥, certainly allows us to place six hearts with East. We start with two heart losers, and a potential trump and diamond loser. After winning the

club King, you play a spade and lose to the ♠K. You draw the rest of trumps, noting that West has only one trump, leaving East with three. After pulling trump, it is best to ruff a heart and a club, discovering that East started with three spades, six hearts and at least three clubs. S/he has at most a singleton diamond so you cash ♦K and finesse ♦J.

2)

NORTH	
♠	KJ865
♥	Q742
♦	A
♣	A93
SOUTH	
♠	AQT73
♥	AK93
♦	854
♣	6

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2NT	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	7♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

A 2NT overcall shows at least 5-5 in the minors. Be disciplined and do not make this bid with 5-4 and for sure not 4-4 in the minors. This convention is called **Unusual Notrump** and see:

<http://bridgeguys.com/Conventions/UnusualNoTrump.html>. 4NT is **Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)** and here ♠5 shows two Aces and the spade Queen. For more information on RKCB see:

http://www.bridgeguys.com/Conventions/roman_keycard_blackwood.html. Note that I turn to the online site, 'Bridge Guys': it is convenient; has a huge library of terms and conventions; and, gives interesting variations used by many bridge players. Thus when I want quick information on a convention, say RKCB, I use 'Bing' and type in Bridge Guys Roman Key Card Blackwood'. (Yes, I prefer Bing over Google and feel free to ask me during our next class :)

Here is the full deal:

NORTH		
♠ KJ865		
♥ Q742		
♦ A		
♣ A93		
WEST		EAST
♠ 92		♠ 4
♥ 6		♥ JT85
♦ KQJ93		♦ T762
♣ QJT54		♣ K872
SOUTH		
♠ AQT73		
♥ AK93		
♦ 854		
♣ 6		

Given West is most likely to have 5-5 in the minors, albeit s/he could be 6-5, we start with a lot of great information regarding West's shape and it therefore makes most sense to count the West hand. When West leads the ♦ K, you win with the diamond Ace, draw trump. West therefore started with a doubleton in spades, and at most a singleton heart. Lead to dummy's ♥Q and finesse the ♥9.

3)

NORTH	
♠ Q85	
♥ 75	
♦ KT64	
♣ AT83	
SOUTH	
♠ AK2	
♥ KT3	
♦ AQJ2	
♣ KQ7	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♥	3NT
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Here 3NT shows a strong balanced hand with hearts stopped. A 2NT bid over a weak two bid shows the equivalent of a 1NT opener, with a strong 15 to 18 (unlike the regular 15-17), balanced HCPs with the prior weak two bid suit covered. Here 3NT should show a 2NT opener (20-21 HCPs) or hearts stopped and a long running suit such, typically a minor, such as AKQJTxx. Or AKQJxxxx. A version of the Rule of Seven says

that your partner is *likely* to have 7 HCPs over a pre-empt and your values, hopefully filling in a stopper(s) where you may lack with the latter example of a 3NT bid.

Why not double? The South hand has a notrump shape of 3-3-4-3. West leads a heart. East wins ♥A and plays the ♥Q.

Here is the full deal:

NORTH		
♠ Q85		
♥ 75		
♦ KT64		
♣ AT83		
WEST		EAST
♠ JT974		♠ 63
♥ 84		♥ AQJ962
♦ 75		♦ 983
♣ J642		♣ 95
SOUTH		
♠ AK2		
♥ KT3		
♦ AQJ2		
♣ KQ7		

You have to decide if your clues thus far lead you to assume that RHO has 6 hearts. The weak 2 bid, and the high-low by LHO would lead one to believe that RHO started with 6 hearts. Always be cautious on this as some pre-empt with five. We know the count in spades and we play our diamonds, with East showing three.. If RHO started with 6 hearts, then he must therefore be exactly 2632. When you cash the KQ of clubs, RHO can't have any more clubs so it's a certainty that the finesse will work.

4)

NORTH	
♠ K8	
♥ AK7	
♦ QJT3	
♣ Q732	
SOUTH	
♠ A5	
♥ 653	
♦ A962	
♣ AK95	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
3♠	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West leads ♠Q. The ♠3 bid should show a pre-emptive 7 spades.

Here is the full deal:

		NORTH	
		♠ K8	
		♥ AK7	
		♦ QJT3	
		♣ Q732	
WEST		EAST	
♠ QJT9432		♠ 76	
♥ Q42		♥ JT98	
♦ 87		♦ K54	
♣ 6		♣ JT84	
		SOUTH	
		♠ A5	
		♥ 653	
		♦ A962	
		♣ AK95	

At notrump you count sure winners and plan how to develop more tricks. Here you **must** find a 12th trick and to start, diamonds are most promising. So you start with 2 sure spade winners; 2 hearts; 3 diamonds if you finesse and lose to the ♦K; and, 3 clubs for a total of 10 sure tricks.

If the diamond finesse is on, we are up to 11 tricks and if clubs come home we have 12. There is no choice how we have to play diamonds so we play that suit first. Good news, the finesse works and we are up to 11 tricks. We take the first three diamonds, finding West with 2 small diamonds,

Let's assume West has seven spades based on the bidding and count signal; therefore, we assume seven spades and know of two diamonds. If clubs are 2 with West and 3 with East, we can cash out. But such is not the case. With West having one club, we need to double finesse East against the JT84. But is there a way to tell? How do we get a count on hearts to know how to play clubs? **Think!**

The answer is to duck a heart! This lets us play three rounds of hearts before committing to clubs. If West follows to two hearts, clubs are breaking. But what if West follows to 3 rounds of hearts? Then West has 7-3-2-1 shape. So West should have a singleton club. How do we play clubs? **Think!**

If you start with an honour in your hand, then play low to dummy, you will pick up the singleton Jack or Ten **when you do not know the count**. Such is the correct way to play the suit when you do not know the count. **But we do know the count so it's right to start with the ♣Q in dummy**. This allows us to pick up the same singleton Jack or Ten, and also allows you double finesse East when West's singleton is a small card.

Why did we only cash three diamonds earlier? **Think!** Look at what happens if we cashed all four. When we play the ♣Q and then a low club, East can split his/her honours from JTxx and we don't have a way to get back to dummy to repeat the finesse. **By saving one high diamond, we have a re-entry to dummy when we need it.**

5) HOMEWORK

NORTH
♠ 53
♥ T97
♦ Q874
♣ A642
SOUTH
♠ J97
♥ AK
♦ AK65
♣ KQ93

West	North	East	South
			2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West leads ♠6. East takes ♠AQ then switches to a heart. You win the heart and play the ♦AK and East shows only one diamond. How do you make 3NT?

Notes from the Bridge World

a) Marty Bergen's website is at <http://www.martybergen.com>. A 10-time national champion, Marty has produced 36 booklets and 17 audio visual lessons as part of his "Secrets To Winning Bridge" series. You can check out his website at <http://www.martybergen.com/> They all contain great information that you will find nowhere else and are written in an entertaining and easy to read style. For more information, go to <http://www.bridgesights.com/hondobridge/audiolessons/mbaudiolessons.php>

b) Visit one of my favourite websites, Larry Cohen's at <http://www.larryco.com/> There are so many articles you will find enjoyable and educational. Larry is an acclaimed player and writer who retired from competitive bridge to write, teach and offer fantastic cruises. **Among many accomplishments, Marty and Larry are responsible for bringing the Law of Total Tricks to the bridge world.**

c) As founder of Bridge Forum, (www.bridge-forum.com), I am having the website completely revamped. Do you have ideas you would like to see on the site? A bookstore attached? A bidding panel for intermediates? All my notes from volunteer teaching? Guest stars' articles? Quizzes? You tell me and email me at epomer@outlook.com.