

### Counting as Defender Lesson

Counting points can be helpful as declarer, but it's essential for defenders. If you don't count points, you are travelling without a map. It can be done, but it's risky. Not only that, but counting points should be pretty easy for the most part. Declarer typically has a well-defined point range and adding that to what you and the dummy have will give you a total point count that you subtract from 40 (total points in a deck) to give you partner's points.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>How Many Points Does Partner Have? 1</b>  <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">D</span> </div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ J7 ♥ 432 ♦ A85 ♣ AJ754	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT	Pass			Pass
	West	North	East	South										
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT											
Pass			Pass											
<b>W West</b> (Empty)	♠ 5 <b>S South</b>	<b>E East</b> ♠ Q83 ♥ K8 ♦ J743 ♣ 10832												

Here, partner we see dummy with 10, us with 6, declarer with 16 +/-1. That gives us 32 +/-1 total leaving 8 points for partner.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>How Many Points Does Partner Have? 2</b>  <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">D</span> </div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ 974 ♥ A762 ♦ 5 ♣ J965	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
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Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT							
<b>W West</b> (Empty)	♠ 5 <b>S South</b>	<b>E East</b> ♠ Q83 ♥ K8 ♦ J743 ♣ 10832								

This time we have 6 and declarer still has 16 +/-1. Dummy only has 5, so we "see" 27 +/-2 meaning partner has 13 points. Not bad.

<b>How Many Points Does Partner Have? 3</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>N North</b> ♠ A974 ♥ A72 ♦ 52 ♣ Q5  ♣ A  <b>S South</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠	Pass			
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Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠											
Pass														
<b>W West</b>	<b>E East</b> ♠ Q83 ♥ K8 ♦ J743 ♣ 10832													

Here we see 10 in dummy, 6 in our hand. Declarer passed 3♠ so we can guess they have a minimum with 12-ish points. 10 and 12 and 6 is 28 +/-1. Partner has 12 points or so. The lead marks partner with AK of clubs. That's 7 points, but partner still will have some extra values. It's interesting that partner didn't choose to make a takeout double.

<b>Placing the Rest 1</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>N North</b> ♠ AJ65 ♥ QJ109 ♦ 65 ♣ Q76  ♦ J  <b>S South</b> ♠ K109843 ♥ 7 ♦ AQ3 ♣ 1043	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	4♠	Pass	2♠	Pass			
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Pass	4♠	Pass	2♠											
Pass														
<b>W West</b> ♠ Q7 ♥ 8652 ♦ K10 ♣ A985	<b>E East</b> ♠ 2 ♥ AK43 ♦ 98742 ♣ KJ2	4♠ South   NS 0 EW 0												

When declarer preempts, you can often figure out the limits of declarer's hand. Partner made an aggressive lead of the ♦ J and we see declarer win the Q. Declarer will also have the ace (partner wouldn't lead away from it). We see declarer win the King of spades as well giving declarer 9 points. For the preempt, they can't have the ♣A so when we get in, we switch to the ♣2.

**D** Placing the Rest 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

**N** North  
 ♠ 87  
 ♥ KQJ10  
 ♦ AKQ4  
 ♣ QJ5

**W** West  
 ♠ A10652  
 ♥ 8432  
 ♦ 65  
 ♣ K3

**E** East  
 ♠ Q93  
 ♥ A5  
 ♦ J10873  
 ♣ 942

**S** South  
 ♠ KJ4  
 ♥ 976  
 ♦ 92  
 ♣ A10876

3NT South | NS 0 EW 0

We lead the ♠5 and it goes low to the Q and K. Declarer crosses in diamonds and leads the ♣Q which we win. From partner's play of the ♠Q, we know they don't have the ♠J. Should we cash spades anyway? No! We know that partner has the ace of hearts. Declarer bid 1NT in response to 1♦ showing 6-10 points. They have the KJ of spades and presumably (from this play) the ace of clubs. That's 8, so the ♥A can't be in South. Play a heart so partner can go back to spades.

**D** Placing the Rest 2b

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	1NT
Pass		Pass	Pass

**N** North  
 ♠ 87  
 ♥ KQJ10  
 ♦ AKQ4  
 ♣ QJ5

**W** West  
 ♠ A10652  
 ♥ 8432  
 ♦ 65  
 ♣ K3

**E** East  
 ♠ J943  
 ♥ 95  
 ♦ J1083  
 ♣ 942

**S** South  
 ♠ KQ  
 ♥ A76  
 ♦ 972  
 ♣ A10876

4NT South | NS 0 EW 0

This time, the play is the same, but we know from the auction that declarer has 12 ish points. Partner can't have the ♥A this time. Cash the ♠A and hope for this layout. If this isn't the layout, you aren't taking any more tricks after the ♠A anyway.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Placing the Rest 3</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ AQJ2 ♥ Q42 ♦ K843 ♣ 105	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT	Pass			Pass
	West	North	East	South										
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT											
Pass			Pass											
<b>W West</b> ♠ 109873 ♥ 73 ♦ J2 ♣ 9876	<b>E East</b> ♠ K4 ♥ AJ109 ♦ Q965 ♣ Q32	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">3NT South</td> <td style="text-align: center;">NS 0 EW 0</td> </tr> </table>	3NT South		NS 0 EW 0									
3NT South		NS 0 EW 0												
	<b>S South</b> ♠ 65 ♥ K865 ♦ A107 ♣ AKJ4													

As East, we know partner doesn't have much. 12 in dummy, 12 in our hand, and 16ish in declarer. Partner might have a point. Don't switch suits! Keep on spades and force declarer to find their own tricks.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Placing the Rest 4</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	<b>N North</b> ♠ AJ102 ♥ J108 ♦ Q93 ♣ AJ7	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Dbl	4♥	Pass	2♥	Pass			Pass
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<b>W West</b> ♠ KQ54 ♥ 3 ♦ AJ65 ♣ K862	<b>E East</b> ♠ 863 ♥ A42 ♦ 872 ♣ Q1095	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">4♥ South</td> <td style="text-align: center;">NS 0 EW 0</td> </tr> </table>	4♥ South		NS 0 EW 0									
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	<b>S South</b> ♠ 97 ♥ KQ9765 ♦ K104 ♣ 43													

West leads the ♠K. We know declarer has 6-10 points. Declarer wins and plays the ♥J. We duck and win the second heart with the ace. What do we do? We know declarer has the KQ of hearts. We should also know that declarer has a diamond honor. Why? Partner led the ♠K instead of the ♦A. With AK of diamonds, that would have been the lead. We now "know" 8 or 9 points in declarer's hand. It's a safe bet that declarer doesn't have the ♣K. So instead of cashing your spade and setting up discards, knock out the club ace by leading a low club. You'll wind up taking one of each suit.

Placing the Rest 5

West	North	East	South
			3♠
Dbl	4♠	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

W West	N North	E East	S South
♠	♠ A42	♠ 1063	♠ KQJ9875
♥ A984	♥ J53	♥ Q1062	♥ K7
♦ K93	♦ QJ1065	♦ A872	♦ 4
♣ A109876	♣ Q5	♣ KJ	♣ 432

4♠ x South | NS 0 EW 0

Here we know pretty well from the auction that partner has some points. Does that mean we should try to get a club ruff or promotion when winning the ♦ A? No! Don't let declarer get any tricks with that dummy—play spades. Declarer will have to lose all of their cards outside of spades. You are always beating this contract, but the difference between down 1, 2, or 3 is the difference between a bad score, decent score and top score.