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An Introduction to the Law
and Auctions over 1 of a
major followed by double





An introduction to the law of
total tricks followed by a
system of bids over 1 spade
double

The Law of Total Tricks

- ▶ The Law should really be called The Guide of Total tricks since there are a number of reasons for the law to not apply.
- ▶ The number of tricks available in total is the sum of the number of cards in the NS hands best fit added to the number of trumps in the EW hands
- ▶ This is easiest to see with an example.

Both sides have an 8 card fit.

A digital bridge hand interface on a green background. It features four hand boxes: North (top), West (left), East (right), and South (bottom). Each box displays the player's name and their 13 cards by suit. A central yellow button prompts the user to click and play. A blue menu icon is in the top right.


N North	W West	E East	S South
♠ KJ5	♠ 876	♠ AQ32	♠ 1094
♥ AQ108	♥ 543	♥ K6	♥ J972
♦ QJ10	♦ 983	♦ K42	♦ A765
♣ K42	♣ AQ106	♣ J987	♣ 53

Click Play to enter bidding and play sequence

How Many Tricks Available

- ▶ We make 9 tricks in Hearts, losing 2 spades, 1 heart and 1 club.
- ▶ They make 7 ticks in clubs losing 1 spade, 1 heart, 3 diamonds and 1 club.
- ▶ The law is right, there were indeed 16 tricks. They were divided 9-7.
Change the king of clubs into partner's hand and now the tricks are 8-8

Swap Even More



	N North ♠ KJ5 ♥ AQ108 ♦ QJ10 ♣ K42	
W West ♠ AQ32 ♥ K6 ♦ K42 ♣ J987	Click Play to enter bidding and play sequence	E East ♠ 876 ♥ 543 ♦ 983 ♣ AQ106
	S South ♠ 1094 ♥ J972 ♦ A765 ♣ 53	

Guaranteed Fits

The 8 card fit

- ▶ Each Side has 26 cards.
- ▶ Let's Assume that we have an 8 card fit in spades and that is our only fit of more than 7 cards.
- ▶ That means that the opponents have exactly 5 cards in spades and 21 in the other 3 suits.
- ▶ It is definitely possible that the opponents have, between the 2 of them, 7 cards in Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs.
- ▶ Thus the Law says that there are 15 tricks available.
- ▶ Let's see another couple of examples.

Fit for Us but Not Them

Hand editor



N North

♠ KJ4
♥ AQ108
♦ QJ10
♣ K42

W West

♠ 876
♥ 543
♦ 853
♣ AQ106

**Click Play to
enter bidding and
play sequence**

E East

♠ AQ32
♥ K6
♦ K942
♣ J98

S South

♠ 1095
♥ J972
♦ A76
♣ 753

The 9 card fit

- ▶ Let's assume that we have 9 cards in spades. That means the opponents hold only 4 spades and therefore 22 cards in the other three suits. They cannot be divided into 7 Hearts, 7 diamonds and 7 Clubs, because that only adds up to 21.
- ▶ This means that the opponents have at least an 8 card fit in Hearts, Diamonds or Clubs.
- ▶ The law now says something very different now. If you add our 9 card fit to their 8 card fit, it now says that there are 17 tricks available.
- ▶ So that one extra card for us implies 2 more tricks according to the law.

What are the Ramifications

- ▶ With 17 tricks available, one of the sides has to be able to make something at the 3 level.
- ▶ This is behind such conventions as Bergen raise and splinters which are designed to get you to the right level which is the 3 level or above.
- ▶ Remember that the law does not say how this 17 tricks are divided.
- ▶ Again an example.

When Does the Law Not Work?

- ▶ When both sides have double fits, then the number of tricks available can be much higher.
- ▶ If both sides have scattered honours then there may be less tricks available.
- ▶ If you want to read more about this, the best books are Larry Cohen's two books. To bid or Not to bid and Following the Law.
- ▶ https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00KWL8NME/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i7
- ▶ https://www.amazon.com/Larry-Cohen/e/B0034NVGLC?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1642316937&sr=1-1

Another Ramification

- ▶ The little bit of poetry that I give my students is:
- ▶ With 8 step on the brake
- ▶ With 9 try to climb.
- ▶ Intuitively you know this to be the case. It is much more pleasant to take 10 tricks with a 9 card fit than an 8 card fit. For one it is much less likely that trumps are going to split nicely.

Part 2 Auctions Over 1

Spade double

Definition of Total Points

- ▶ Firstly we need a few definitions.
- ▶ Total points using 4321, 321 and 531 evaluations.
- ▶ 4321 is just 4 for an ace, 3 for a king etc.
- ▶ 321 is just 3 for a void, 2 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton
- ▶ 531 is the adjustment we make to 321 if we have a good fit. 5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a double. Add these up and you get your total points.
- ▶ If you are playing with a robot at the table you will often see in the alert box 4-7 hcp for a preemptive jump to the 3 level. This is another case of following the law.

Definition of Raises

1. Bad raise, 4-7 total points, or as my friend Adele calls it a Tibetan Yak raise.
2. Normal Raise 6-9 total points
3. Constructive Raise 8-10 total points
4. Limit raise 11-12 total points (but I would include great 10 point hands here, especially with the 9th trump).

The Auction We Will Be Looking At

- ▶ Today's auction will be 1 spade by partner, takeout double on my right.
- ▶ There are 17 possible bids by you on this auction.
- ▶ Pass (my students will tell you I don't like one)
- ▶ Redouble
- ▶ 3 from NT bids- 1 nt, 2 nt and 3 nt.
- ▶ 12 suit bids, ie 2 clubs, diamond, hearts and spades and the 2 level, 3 level and 4 level.
- ▶ Do you know the meaning of all 17 in your system?

Caveat Emptor

- ▶ First of all you have to ask what you are giving up.
- ▶ Second you must decide in your partnership how much memory are you and your partner are willing to commit.
- ▶ All of the features (conventions) that I will be showing you can be applied in part instead of all together.

Prevalent South African Agreements

- ▶ Ignore the double. Not the worst thing to play in that you will not have any accidents in the bidding. Unfortunately, it doesn't take into account that you have a lot of information available from your RHO (Right Hand Opponent's double).
- ▶ One under raises. So, in our case after 1 spade doubled a 2 heart bid is a constructive raise with 3 trumps, 3 hearts is a constructive raise with 4 trumps. A bid of 2 spades is a bad raise with 3 trumps and 3 spades is a bad raise with 4 trumps.

Agreements Continued

- ▶ Many pairs are on very shaky ground if a 2 level suit bid is made after the double. So in our case 1 spade double 2 clubs by you. Is it forcing? Is it better that a long weak club suit?
- ▶ How about jumps to the 3 level. Like 1 spade double 3 clubs. Is that still weak? Can it be a 6 card suit? It might very well be “unlawful”. An example is 1 spade double 3 clubs on a six card suit. Give partner 6331 shape and you 1336 shape. You have reached the 3 level without even an 8 card fit. I don't like that.
- ▶ Is 1 nt forcing, constructive (8-10) or the old fashioned (6-9).
- ▶ How about redouble?
- ▶ How about 2 nt and 3 nt.

What Should We Add?

- ▶ I strongly recommend 1 under raises after the double.
 1. They come up all the time
 2. They help partner a lot
 3. They make it tougher on the opponents
 4. What we are giving up is the heart suit and that may not be that bid a deal since 9 times out of 10, the hand on your right is well equipped for hearts.

System Ramification

- ▶ Those 17 bids I mentioned are NOT enough.
- ▶ And maybe you don't want to give up the heart suit.
- ▶ Here is one common method to counteract that.
- ▶ Over 1 spade doubled, 2 spades is a bad raise with 3. 2 hearts is a constructive 3 card raise.
- ▶ 2 diamonds is a transfer to hearts. But what about the diamond suit?
- ▶ Ok then 2 clubs is a transfer to diamonds. What about clubs?
- ▶ 1 nt is a transfer to clubs.

Hold Your Horses Glen

- ▶ I get so many matchpoints when the auction goes 1 spade double 1 nt. I don't want to give it up.
- ▶ NOTHING IS FOR FREE
- ▶ Well now, if I am going to give up on my 1 nt free bid, then I better get more out of it than just being able to show a suit at the 2 level.
- ▶ You would be quite right. We will use the power of transfers.

Power of Transfers Over 1 Spade Doubled

- ▶ We will use the club suit for our examples, but diamonds and hearts are analogous.
- ▶ If I have 3, J95 , 943, KQT972 in clubs I transfer using 1 nt and when partner completes the transfer I pass. This is great. I don't have to go to the 3 level.
- ▶ If I have 3, A93, 943, AQT972 I transfer via 1 nt and then raise to 3 showing an invitational hand. Here I get to the 3 level, but my ultimate goal is to get to 3 nt.
- ▶ Anything else? Of course.

More Transfer Sequences

- ▶ Here are 2 hands where I bid 1 nt, partner completes the transfer and I now raise to 2 spades.
- ▶ This shows either clubs and spades so K93, K2, 954, QJ873 this is telling partner where their points are.
- ▶ Or it shows K93, T642, 954, AQ3. A spade raise with concentration in clubs.

Final bit for the transfers

- ▶ Here are the 4 hands again.
- 1. 3, J95 , 943, KQT972 transfer to clubs and pass.
- 2. 3, A93, 943, AQT972 transfer to clubs and raise.
- 3. K93, K2, 954, QJ873 and K93, T642, 954, AQ3, transfer to clubs followed by a raise to 2 spades showing a constructive raise with either a club suit or a concentration of values that would appreciate a club lead If partner ends up being on lead.

How do I Alert This Mess?

- ▶ Your explanation should be:
- ▶ 1 nt is a transfer to clubs. Partner has either a club suit, to play or invitational, or a constructive raise in spades with some club feature guaranteeing at least 3 cards in clubs.

Is it Worth the Memory Work and What You Give Up?

- ▶ I think it is. I don't think it is as tough as remembering 5 way multi.
- ▶ You have to give up the 1 nt natural bid. I hate that, but think it is a reasonable price to pay.
- ▶ We now have 1 nt, 2 clubs and 2 diamonds each showing 4 possible hands.
- ▶ We still get our 1 under raises.
- ▶ We are up to 26 bids and continuations from our 17. The power of transfers.

What About Our 3 Level Suit Bids?

- ▶ Well, 3 hearts is already defined as a one under raise.
- ▶ How about 3 clubs and 3 diamonds? We are getting to the 3 level so it would be best to have a 9 card fit.
- ▶ These are now fit showing jumps showing 4+ spades and usually 5+ clubs and constructive values. Think of the one under raise bit with a 5 card minor.
- ▶ The alert should be “a fit showing jump with 9 cards in spades and clubs and at least constructive values”.
- ▶ These bids really help partner in judging when to bid more or become conservative. Especially at the game and 5 level.

What About the 4 Level?

- ▶ There are 2 nice options that are available.
 1. A fit showing jump with enough values for game, in which case those 3 level bids from before show only enough values to get to the 3 level.
 2. Splinters
- ▶ Note that all of these bids were with a known 9 card fit.

Are We Done?

- ▶ Of Course Not!
- ▶ We still have to define the meanings of 2 NT, 3 NT and Redouble.
- ▶ What hands do we still have to be able to bid?
 1. 3 and 4 card limit raises or better
 2. Choice of games
 3. A bid designed to penalize the opponents

The last 3 Bids

- ▶ It is suggested that you use 2 NT as a limit raise or better with 3+ trumps.
- ▶ Wait a minute you said you wanted to stay at the 2 level with only 8 trumps.
- ▶ You are RIGHT! But you can't get everything.
- ▶ For 3 nt, I prefer a choice of games. 13-15 with only 3 spades. For pairs already playing 3 nt as an unspecified splinter, this works as well.
- ▶ Finally, the redouble. Well for one thing partner does not have 3 spades. Afterall, he does have 14 ways of showing different fits! He won't have a good suit to transfer to and he needs a reason to bid. Thus, redouble is 10+ points (some people play 9) and implies no fit. Usual K93, T642, 954, AQ3 ly he wants to be double at least 2 of their suits for penalty.

What Order Should I Add Them?

1. 2 NT showing a limit raise or better and 3 or more trumps.
2. 1 Under Raises
3. 3 NT choice of games
4. Transfers to the 2 level over the double
5. Redouble implies no fit
6. Splinters
7. Fit showing jumps at the 3 and/or the 4 level.



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Thank You

