

Brief Introduction to Scoring

Spades and Hearts are the *Major* suits, Clubs and Diamonds are the *Minor* suits.

If you bid and make game, you score a bonus of 300 or 500 points.

In a major suit, game is 4H or 4S. If you bid up to game and you make 10 tricks (or more) you have made a game and get a bonus.

In a minor suit, game is 5C or 5D. If you bid up to game and you make 11 tricks (or more) you have made a game and get a bonus.

In no trumps, game is 3NT. If you bid up to game and you make 9 tricks (or more) you have made a game and get a bonus.

The question is how do you know whether your side's combined hands are good enough to make enough tricks to make a game or should you stop in part score?

Hand Evaluation

One method of valuing is based on *High Card Points (HCP)*.

An Ace counts 4 points

A King counts 3 points

A Queen counts 2 points and

A Jack counts 1 point

So how many points are there in these hands (x = any card 2-10)

1) ♠ QJx ♥ Kxx Points : _____ ♦ Axx ♣ QJxx	2) ♠ xxx ♥ AQJ Points : _____ ♦ Kxx ♣ Kxxx
3) ♠ Kxx ♥ Qxxx Points : _____ ♦ AJxx ♣ AJ	4) ♠ AJx ♥ Kxx Points : _____ ♦ Kxx ♣ Kxxx
5) ♠ xx ♥ Jxxx Points : _____ ♦ Jxx ♣ Axxx	6) ♠ AKx ♥ AQxx Points : _____ ♦ Axxx ♣ KJ

As well as HCPs we should consider the *Distribution* of the cards in the suits when valuing our hand.

A hand is considered *balanced* if the distribution of the cards in the suits is one of these
4 3 3 3 or 4 4 3 2 or 5 3 3 2

What is the distribution of hands 1-6 above?

Distribution and *Point Count* are important concepts. Balanced hands lend themselves to NT contracts.

What is the point count and distribution of the hands shown here.

7) ♠ Ax ♥ KJxx Points : _____ ♦ QJxxx ♣ Qx	8) ♠ K ♥ AQxxx Points : _____ ♦ Axx ♣ xxxx
9) ♠ Kxxx ♥ A Points : _____ ♦ AKxxx ♣ xxx	10) ♠ Kxxx ♥ Kxx Points : _____ ♦ ♣ AKxxxx

Note that a suit containing two cards is called *Doubleton*, a suit containing only one card is called a *Singleton*. No cards in a suit is called a *Void*.

- Hand 7 contains two doubletons (spades and clubs),
- Hand 8 contains a singleton (spades),
- Hand 9 contains a singleton (hearts) and
- Hand 10 contains a void (diamonds)

Bidding

When you bid you are telling your partner about your hand. The "conversation" between you and partner should establish your best contract:-

Bidding should determine

- Which suit is best for trumps (or No Trumps) and
- If the hands are good enough to make game (3NT, 4H, 4S, 5C, 5D) or if only a part score can be made.

For example an opening bid says "Partner, I have 12 - 14 points and a balanced hand.

1NT is a *Limit Bid* : that is it limits the hand to a given point range and distribution.

11) ♠ QJx ♥ Kxx Points : _____ ♦ Axx ♣ Qxxx
12) ♠ xxx ♥ Qxxx Points : _____ ♦ AJxx ♣ AJ
13) ♠ KJxx ♥ Kxx Points : _____ ♦ xxx ♣ AK
14) ♠ Jx ♥ AKQJ Points : _____ ♦ xxx ♣ Jxx

Count the points for each of these hands and note their distribution.

All these hands contain 12 – 14 points and are balanced.

All these hands should be opened 1NT.

When you open with a limit bid, you do not have to bid again.

In fact you should not bid again, unless your partner responds with an *invitational bid*.

That is partner invites you to bid again. In which case you can:-

- Refuse the invitation and pass or
- Accept the invitation and bid again.