## **LOSER COUNT - THE BASICS**

Loser count is only strictly valid (and most accurate) when you have a suit fit.

Loser Count can be particularly helpful in finding light games and slams that the point count might miss. This is how it works:

1. In working out the loser count of your hand, you look at the top 3 cards in each suit ie AKQ of the suit

If missing any one of these three cards it is counted as a loser Therefore:

- (a) AKQ76 0 losers
- (b) KQ2 1 loser
- (c) K876 2 losers
- (d) 9643 3 losers
- 2. If you have only 2 cards in a suit then the most losers you can have in the suit is two Therefore:
  - (a) AK 0 losers
  - (b) A6 1 loser
  - (c) 54 2 losers
- 3. If you have a singleton in a suit then the most losers you can have in the suit is one Therefore:
  - (a) A 0 losers
  - (b) 5 1 loser
- 4. Where the queen is not supported by the A or K, count Qxx as 2 ½ losers, unless the J or 10 is held. So, looking at the hand:
  - **♦** AK765 1 loser
  - **♥** 1094 3 losers
  - **♦** KO7 1 loser
  - **♣** 86 2 losers

7 loggra

7 losers

When you know the number of losers you have and know the number of losers partner has shown from his/her bidding, you add the 2 together and take the result away from 18. This will give you level show should be bidding to .

For example, if partner has opened the bidding (at least a 7 loser hand) and I have the above hand of 7 losers, 18 - 14 shows that we can possibly make a bid at the 4 level and we are in the game ballpark should our fit be  $\spadesuit$  or  $\blacktriangledown$ 

But how do know how many losers partner has? The following point counts or bidding ranges roughly correspond to the number of losers partner has:

6-9pts, minimal response 9 losers
10-12pts, invitational hand 8 losers
12-15pts, minimal opening 7 losers
16-18pts, stronger opening 6 losers
19-21pts, very strong opening 5 losers
23+pts, game force opening 4 losers or less

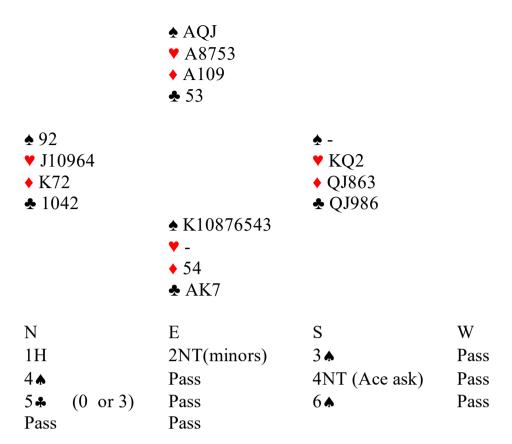
However, prior to a suit fit it can give you a ballpark idea of where you should be bidding the hand to. For example, if my partner opens with a 1 level bid (at least a 7 loser), and I have a 5 loser hand, 7+5=12 18-12 Shows that we are in a possible make a small slam.

If there is no suit fit or the hands are very misfitting, then the loser count is likely to be inaccurate and too optimistic.

If you have a lot of queens and jacks, the Loser Count can also be inaccurate and too optimistic.

The suits: A98 Q108 are both "2 losers" but while the ace almost always will be a winning trick, the holding Q108 might not win any and be 3 losers.

The Loser Count is most accurate when you have a suit fit and lots of pointy cards



Once partner raises 3S to 4S showing the fit, the hand revalues upwards sharply.

According to the point count, the hand is worth 10 HCPs + 5 points for the heart void + 1 point for the diamond doubleton = 16 points.

This suggests we are not in slam territory (12 points minimum for partner + 16 for us = 28 and not the 33 we need for small slam).

However, the Loser Count says our hand is a 5 loser opposite an opening hand (at least 7 loser) so 18 - (5 + 7) = 6. A small slam is possible 12 tricks.

The loser count is likely to be more accurate here as we have a big trump fit and lots of pointy stuff (aces and kings).

The problem with my hand is there could be 2 diamond losers off the top. So an Ace Ask is required. This says I have first round control (ace or void) or second round control (king or singleton) in clubs and am interested in slam but have a control problem in another suit. Partner bids 5D showing first or second round control in that suit, and I know we won't lose 2 diamonds straight away and am happy to bid 6S Partner finally has a long think about bidding 7S. I have just bid 6S missing SAQJ which partner holds and with 2 losers in diamonds and partner has DAK. A 7S bid would not have been unreasonable.