

Counting declarer's cards for better Defence

EBC Last revised: May 9 22

General principles

- As soon as dummy comes down, add up your HC points and dummy's, and then add declarer's expected points. Subtract all from 40 and you have partner's approximate point count. Most auctions will allow you to guesstimate declarer's points pretty well.

- Consider 1H (P) 1N (P)

2D (P) 2N (p)

3N AP

1N showed 6-10 HCPs, and 2N showed a maximum so 9/10 HCPs. So, if you have 8 points and dummy has 16, then partner has $40-8-16-10 = 6$ HCPs

<http://austinbridge.org/sbruce/lecture/Counting%20at%20Bridge.pdf>

Defender:

- As soon as you see the opening lead & dummy:
 - ♣ How many points are likely in partner's hand?
 - ♣ Based on bidding, what is declarer's likely distribution (& what is partner's)
 - ♣ Does the lead yield any information about what partner does or doesn't hold?
 - 2 is 4th best from a Four card suit. If 3 or 4 led, check for lower spots to determine partner's holding
 - Refine this information as the hand progresses and more information is available
 - ♣ Pay attention to partner's signals
 - o Watch spots carefully – sometimes a 7 or 8 is low! If you have 2 thru 6, it is
 - ♣ Pay attention to declarer's line of play
 - o Is declarer trying to set up discards or ruffs? If ruffs, defense leads trump
 - o Is declarer avoiding a suit?
 - o Is declarer not playing a suit you would expect her to play?
 - o Is declarer not taking "obvious" ruffs in short trump hand?
- Give partner as much help as you can by signaling (but be sure that it is information that partner needs to know – don't help declarer unnecessarily). Err on the side of being honest unless you are positive partner doesn't need the information.

Comment [S1]: Counting Declarer's Hand for High Card and Shape
Hand 1
Ht lead to Decl J, Decl - Count AKJ – 8
Club AK cashed – Count AK – 7
Declarer needs one more trick (Plays AS, ducks a spade to Q West knows 15 of Decl pts, decl cannot have DK. W underleads A D, to K, back thur Decl Qx

S AKTx

H 64

D T63

C Qxxx

S QJx

H QT75

D AJ84

C T5

S

H ?

D

C

S ?

Pts = 0

H ?

Pts = AKJ 8

D ?

Pts = ?

C ?

Pts = AK 7

Tot Pts so far = 15; hence no KD_____

Comment [S2]: Counting Declarer's Hand for High Card and Shape
Hand 1 Two Hands hidden
Hand 1b Four hands shown

West

North

East

South

Pass

Pass

1 N

Pass

2 N

Pass

3 N

All pass

Lead: ♥ 5

West leads the 4th best heart, East plays the H9 to declarer's J. Declarer has H A,K,J = 8 HCPs

Declarer plays CA, CK = 7 HCPs

Declarer cashes CQ. Declarer Plays SA, low spade, which W wins with the SJ

Total pts so far = 15

Who has the DK ?

What should W play?

Sometimes it will be easier to work out partner's hand, hence you now know declarer's hand. Other times, it goes the other way; easier to work out declarer's cards, hence you now know partner's cards

Comment [S3]:
 Counting Declarer's Hand for High Card and Shape
 Hand 2. Counting partner's hand, hence declarer's Rule of 40
 $40 - 10(\text{dummy}) - 15(\text{Decl}) - 10(W) = 5$ - for East
 East shows SA = 4, hence at most 1 J left.
 Solution: Exit passively with a minor and hope to wait for setting tricks

What is declarer's shape?

Consider the following auctions and list what you know about declarer's hand

1. 1D 1H
 2D

a) _____

Comment [S4]:
 Probably 6Ds (rarely 5)
 <4 H
 <4 S

You lead C3 club from KT53. Partner wins the Ace and returns a club which declarer ruffs.

Comment [S5]:
 Declarer has;
 1C 6+Ds 3-H 3-S
 Probably 3.3.6.1

C xxx

C KT53

C A

C x

C x

C ruffed

b) Declarer's Shape = ? _____

2. 1S 1N
2H 3C
3H

a) Declarer's Shape from bidding? _____

D xxx

D QTxx

D Axxxx

D x

D x

D K

You lead a low diamond from QTxx. Partner wins the A and returns a 2nd one to declarer's K. Declarer leads a low club towards the Kxx in dummy. What is declarer's shape?

b) _____

3. 1S 2C
2H 2N
3C 3S
4S

What is declarer's shape so far? _____

You lead the Club Q from QJT9. Partner plays 8, declarer wins and leads a low Diamond towards dummy's QJx. You have Axxx in diamonds before dummy, do you win the Ace?

C xxx

C QJT9

C K82

D Axxx ?

D ?

C A

D X

Comment [S6]:
5S 5H extra values or should have passed 3C

Comment [S7]:
5S 5H 2D hence 1C

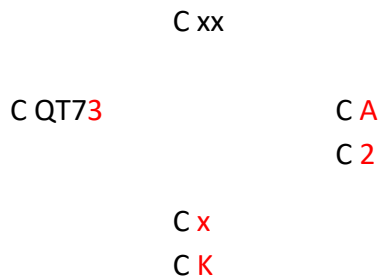
Comment [S8]: Partial H1
A very good 5S as partner is showing only 2S.
4H 3/4C 1 OR 0 Ds

Counting out declarer's shape

4. 1N 2C
 2H 3N
 4S

What is declarer's shape so far? _____

You lead 3C from QT73, partner wins the Ace, and returns the 2 of clubs. Declarer wins the K, dummy has 2 small clubs. What is declarer's shape?

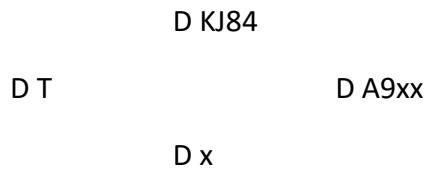


Comment [S9]: Clubs: 4, 4, 2, =3
 Shape is 4 4 2 3

5. 1N 2C
 2H 3N
 4S

What is declarer's shape so far? _____

Partner leads the T of Diamonds, dummy has KJ84, you have A9xx. Does partner have a singleton diamond, hence you should give the ruff? Or does partner have a doubleton and you should duck (maintaining communication)?



Comment [S10]: If singleton, declarer would have 4 Ds, and be 4441, so partner has 2

Answer: _____

6. 1D 1S
1N 3N

Dummy's shape info?

Comment [S11]: 4S, <4Hs

7. 1D 1S
1N

How many diamonds does declarer have? At least _____

Why? _____

Comment [S12]: 4+, with 3, would be 4432 and would support spades

Hands for Defensive Counting

Defensive Misc Good Hands {17}

- Hand 5: Counting Shape : 2H bid showed 4, partner has singleton, switch for later ruff --- good
- Hand 11: Counting Pts: Declarer has AKQ S=9 + HK=12, Pop AH and switch to D
- Hand 12: Opps in 6S, you have 8 count, partner has nothing, passive lead