

Counting losers and then .....

You have mastered the art of counting losers in trump contracts { *well* just about anyway }.  
So , in 4Sp

KQJ54	10987
K32	J94
AQ3	876
32	AKQ

You know that you have a *potential* loser total of 6 losers  
ie 1Sp { the Ace } ; 3 Hrts { the Ace + Queen + 10 } ; 2 diamonds {the King + Jack}.

Now the counting of losers isnt supposed to be some glorified party trick with no useful application. It is a first move to try to gauge whether the contract is easy and "laydown".  
ie if there are only 3 losers then 4Sp will be made in straightforward fashion , drawing trumps and the like.

If the loser count is higher than three { in 4Sp } then the declarer must look at each of the potential losers in turn and try to find a way to play so that those particular losers will not in fact ,lose.

Something like this..... in 4Sp

KQJ54	10987
KJ2	974
AQ3	876
32	AKQ

Spades: the loser is the Ace of spades -well no amount of hope/skill or prayer is going to magic that loser away. Your initial count of 1 loser in spades was correct and nothing can alter that.

Hearts : the loser count was 3 - that particular figure may strike you as unduly pessimistic. It assumes that neither the King , nor Jack nor 9 will make even 1 trick. It is not that that figure is wrong but you should always try to find ways of playing that *might* reduce the number of losers.

e.g *Leading the 4 towards the J would be a fair start when you play Hrts.*

*The Jack may even win ,or ,failing that , if it loses , it may lose to the Ace promoting the King. Even if the Jack does lose to the Queen, next time you play the Hrt suit you can try leading the 7 towards the King. It is possible that the King will win. { And while all that is going on it may be that the 10 Hrts falls anyway making the 9 a winner }.*

Diamonds : Here we counted on 2 losers but clearly if the diamond finesse "works" then the losers in diamonds will only be 1. We thus pencil in trying the finesse.

Clubs : There were no losers here but we can play the club suit to throw a loser in another suit. e.g play A + K + Q clubs and throw the 3 of diamonds away.

All this above is to try and show that counting losers should be the spring board from which we work out methods of play . If your first count is shall we say ,*disappointing*, then specific plans have to be formed to deal with the loser count in each suit with the hope of reducing it.

