

Counting the cost ... defending No Trumps

Its often said that you need to be good at maths to play bridge -not true of course but being able to count never hurt anyone.....

Lets take the role of a defender and see how counting might be revealing.
The opponents are in 3NT after the auction 1NT---3NT

	{dummy}
	J32
	843
{you}	KQJ10
K65	KQJ
Q1072	
876	
A75	

- 1)You start with the 2 Hrts . Partner plays the 9 hrts and declarer wins with the J Hrts.
- 2)Declarer leads the 3 Clubs to the dummy { and we will say} you play the Ace clubs.

Now at this moment you should have a good idea how the defence is to go if the contract is to be beaten.

There are two methods actually of working out how to beat NT contracts :-

(i) counting declarer's *likely tricks*

- a)Declarer won at trick1 with the J hrts AND also must have A hrts and K hrts { 3 tricks}
- b)Declarer didnt lead a diamonds at trick 2 -VERY significantly-why didnt she ?... because she has the Ace diamonds. So she has { 4 tricks in diamonds }.
- c)Declarer led a club, we won with the Ace which gives the dummy the K and Q clubs as tricks {2 tricks}.

Count declarer's tricks -she has 3 Hrts + 4 diamonds + 2 Clubs = 9 tricks.

Now if you know declarer has 9 tricks for the taking it will not be good enough just to keep leading your longest suit and idly hoping for the best .

What you **should** do as a defender is to try and take 5 tricks before declarer takes her 9 tricks . The only hope is to lead spades and hope partner's spades are as good as the AQ xxx. They might be. At any rate this is no time to play patacake with declarer; having counted up and deduced that declarer has 9 tricks you must switch.

This above method of counting declarer's tricks is quite easy and there is no reason why you cant learn to apply it. There is a second method noted below. This is much harder and you may prefer to leave this for another day perhaps. Here it is for interests sake.

(ii) - *counting declarer's points*

Remember -declarer opened 1NT showing 12-14 pts.

At trick 1 declarer won with the J hrts { and also has the A + K hrts} i.e 8 pts in hrts

At trick 2 declarer revealed they had the Ace diamonds { by not playing diamonds} ie 4pts

Thus we know 12 of declarers points. Partner MUST have the Ace spades. Lead a spade.

