

Lesson 6 – Re-evaluating Using Dummy Points

Experienced players will continually evaluate and re-evaluate the strength of their hands as the bidding progresses. Distributional points can upgrade hand strength considerably. When you have found an 8-card fit between you and partner AND this will be the suit for trump AND your hand will be the dummy hand, re-evaluate your hand counting dummy points (shortness in side suits other than the trump suit).

Reminder of goals for bidding:

- 1) Try to find a fit (8+ cards) in a major suit.
- 2) Next goal is to attempt to find a safe NT contract if you are continuing to bid higher. You will need stoppers in all suits if you bid as high as 3NT.
- 3) A minor suit contract is your last option, but sometimes the only good option.

Do not count dummy points (shortness) in a NT contract, so ... until you know for sure you will be in a suit contract, do not count shortness because you will still be searching for the possibility of a NT contract. Shortness is not an advantage in a NT contract; long suits and stoppers are.

Always count HCP. When opening the bidding, add points for length. When responding, consider points for length, too, but not as much. Once you know you will support your partner in a suit, however, switch to counting shortness in side suits other than the trump suit. Dummy points can be used by the opener or the responder; it depends on who bid the suit first (who will be the declarer and which hand will be the dummy hand).

Here are two examples to show when dummy points can make a difference:

- 1) Your partner opens 1♥. You have 3 hearts to support and fewer than 6 points. You have found your 8-card fit in a major suit. Before you pass, count dummy points. You may now have at least 6 points to respond.
- 2) You open 1♦ but you also have 4 spades. Your partner responds 1♠, promising at least 4 spades. You have found your 8-card fit in a major suit. Switch from counting length and now count dummy points before you respond to partner.

Short suits are worth extra points because your partner will be able to trump from your dummy hand as soon as that hand is void in a side suit.

To count Dummy Points:

- 1) As always, count HCP for honor cards (Ace, King, Queen, Jack).
- 2) Do not count points for length in a suit.
- 3) Instead, count Dummy Points in side suits other than trump – **4-5** points for a void, **2-3** pts for a singleton, **1** pt for a doubleton. (Many beginner books suggest 5 pts for a void, 3 for a singleton, 1 for a doubleton. For a beginner, it might be wise to be slightly more cautious and use 4/2/1 pt count as it is more conservative. Overall, use your judgment.)
- 4) Dummy points can be used for a minor suit as well, once the suit has been supported (rebid by partner), a major suit 8-card fit is not found, and NT is not a good option.

5) Consider adding 1 extra point for each trump card above the 8-card fit.

Example: Partner opens 1♠ and you have 4 spades (a 9-card fit). Consider adding 1 more point to your hand for the 9th card in trump.







How much should responder raise their partner's suit when they have found an 8-card fit in a major?

With 6-9 points (minimum), responder bids 2 of the major.

With 10-12 points (medium), responder bids 3 of the major.

With 13+ points (maximum), the contract should be in Game. Responder bids another suit first (forcing), then jumps to 4 of the major (Game Level) in next round.

How would you re-evaluate your points and respond to partner's opening bid with these hands? (Answers below.)

<p>Example 1: Your partner opens 1♥.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 1</p>	<p>Example 2: Your partner opens 1♠.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 2</p>
<p>Example 3: Your partner opens 1♥.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 3</p>	<p>Example 4: Your partner opens 1♥.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 4</p>
<p>Example 5-1: Partner opens 1♥.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 5</p>	<p>Example 5-2: Partner opens 1♦.</p>  <p>Dummy Pts Ex 5</p>
<p>Answers: Ex. 1 – 2♥ (3 HCP + 3 dummy points for singleton = 6 pts) (9 trump cards)</p>	<p>Ex. 2 – 2♠ (5 HCP + 1 dummy pt for the doubleton = 6 pts)</p>
<p>Ex. 3 – 1♠ (9 HCP + 4-5 dummy pts = 13 pts, forcing bid), jump to 4♥ next round</p>	<p>Ex. 4 – 2♥ (3 HCP + 2 or 3 DPs for singleton, 1 DP for doubleton = approx. 7 pts, enough to respond) (9 trump cards)</p>
<p>Ex 5-1 – 3♥ (9 HCP + 1 DP for doubleton = 10 pts) (9 trump cards)</p>	<p>Ex. 5-2 – 1♥ (9 HCP; do not count DPs until a fit in a suit has been found; first goal is to find an 8-card fit in a major).</p>

A change of suit by responder in the first round is forcing.