



# Adventures in Bridge

Leaders in Bridge Entertainment and Education

[www.advinbridge.com](http://www.advinbridge.com)

## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(57) Evaluate and Keep Re-Evaluating**

© AiB

Level: 1

Robert S. Todd

[robert@advinbridge.com](mailto:robert@advinbridge.com)

#### **General**

Now that we have discussed how to approach our hand evaluation process and we have started to think about how to make use of much of the information that is available to us from around the table we want to put it all these things together. The most important thing we can do to practice good hand evaluation is to keep our mind active - we need to make sure not to get lazy. That means that we need to keep evaluating and re-evaluating our hand. Our “total points” will not stay as a fixed number throughout the auction. That number needs to float up and down as we learn more and more information. This is the essence of good hand evaluation.

#### **Hand Evaluation Process**

Let’s pull together the things that we have been discussing and put together a procedure to follow to help us evaluate and continue to re-evaluate our hands.

- Before the Auction Begins
  - We start by counting our *High Card Points* (HCP).
  - We then make adjustments for *Length Points* – upgrade for quality long suits.
  - We also make adjustments for *Short Honors* - downgrades.
- After the Auction Begins
  - We re-evaluate our cards as partner bids. We upgrade for *Fitting Honors* and downgrade for *Misfitting Honors*.
  - If we find a fit then we can upgrade for *Support Points* – shortness upgrade if we have the short trump (ruffing values.)
  - When the opponents bid we also consider our *Positional Values* – upgrades and downgrades for where our honors sit relative to the Opponents’ honors.

We also want to keep in mind the type of points we have and the location of those points. Certain honors need to be re-evaluated more than others.



## Notrump vs. Suit Contracts

To continue thinking about how different types of honors have different uses in different situations let's discuss how our hand evaluation changes in Notrump vs. Suit contracts.

When we have a Major suit fit we know that we are likely headed for a suit contract. In this situation, we will focus on our losers (in a suit contract we count losers.)

- Jacks are of far less value in suit contracts (they do not help us get rid of losers.)
- Queens may help us reduce our number of losers. It is not clear - sometimes they are useful and sometimes they are not.
- Aces and Kings are the most useful cards in suit contracts. These cards reduce our number of losers and are of the most value!

When we have a minor suit fit we will likely be headed to toward 3N (not 5-minor - if you find yourself frequently playing in 5-minor then you need to rethink your bidding philosophies and agreements.)

When we are focusing on playing in notrump we want to count our winners – 3N is a race.

- Jacks are not likely to help us take a trick (be a winner), but they will slow the opponents down. They help defend (stop) a suit and that helps us stay in the race.
- Queens are excellent cards at notrump. For being worth only two points, they do a great job of playing both offense and defense. A queen may take a trick in one of our suits (say, on a finesse) or a queen may be a slow stopper that prevents the opponents from taking too many tricks in their suit.
- Aces and Kings are always valuable cards. But most of their value in notrump comes from length points – helping us set up our long suit.

## Conclusion

All of the hand evaluation information we have been discussing here (and previously) is important. But the most important thing to take away from this is to keep working. Don't just evaluate your hand once. Develop an evaluation process and repeat it. It is easy to miss something, so repeating it will help you "double check your work" and allow you to consider all the new information that you have received. So work hard and keep thinking!