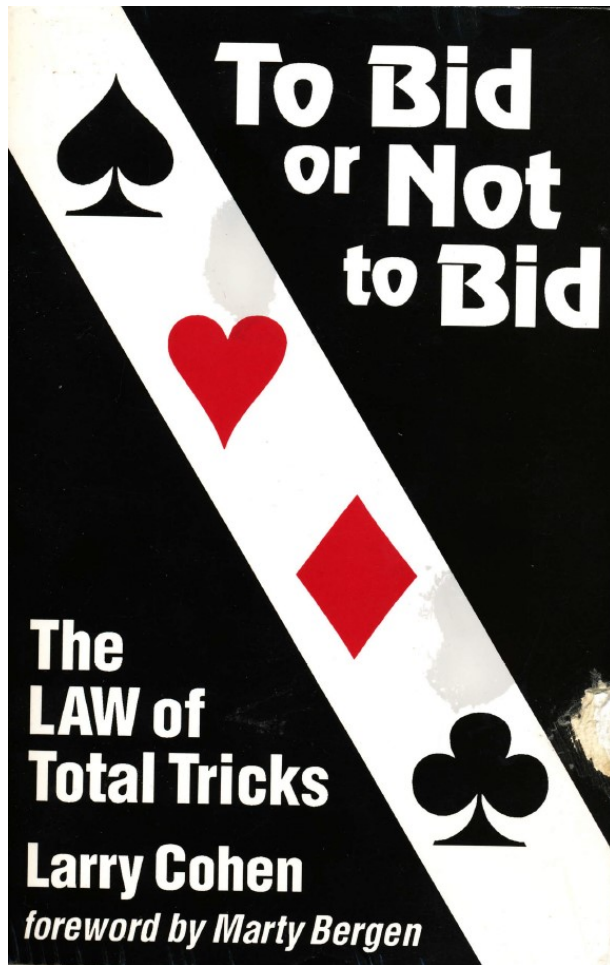


# The Law of Total Tricks - Revisited

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## The Law of Total Tricks Larry Cohen – 1992

Marty Bergen read a bridge article written in 1969 by a French mathematician. Marty “devoured” the article and taught his partner Larry Cohen the “LAW”. It formed the basis of many bidding enhancements and Larry went on to write a couple of well-received books



## THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS

*“The total number of tricks available on any deal is equal to the total number of trumps”*

Counting the number of trumps between you and your partner is as important as counting the number of high card points



# Bids based on LOTT

Many bidding systems and conventions focus on telling the number of trumps

- 1.) Bergen raises
- 2.) Jacoby 2NT
- 3.) Pre-emptive raises in competition
- 4.) Responding to Jacoby transfers
- 5.) Pre-empting
- 6.) DON'T
- 7.) Support doubles
- 8.) Michaels
- 9.) Sandwich NT
- 10.) Two-Way Drury



# Principles of “The Law of Total Tricks”

- Strive to bid to the level of your side's number of trump. This is the essence of LOTT
  1. With eight trumps, bid to the two level
  2. **With nine trumps, bid to the three level**
  3. With ten trumps, bid to the four level

For example: Partner opens 2♥, and you have:

♠ 8 3 2   ♥ K 10 2   ♦ A 9   ♣ 9 8 6 5 3



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♠ Q 8 7 5   ♥ 8 6 5   ♦ 10 9 6 4 3   ♣ 2

Partner opens 1♠ and your RHO doubles. Your call?



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♠ 97643 ♥ 7 ♦ 8632 ♣ 832

Partner opens 1♠ What is your call?



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♠ A 5	♥ A 10 7 6 5 3 2	♦ 3	♣ K 10 9
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♥	3♦	1♥ ???

Bid 4♥. Your 7 hearts + partner's 3 = 10. Sometimes, bridge is an easy game. Also, if E-W have spades, you want to make it tough for them to find their fit.





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♠ 9 7 6 4 3 2	♥ 7	♦ 8 6 3 2	♣ 8 2
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♥	Dbf	4♥	???

You are South. Both sides are vulnerable. Your call?



# Some Principles of “The Law of Total Tricks”

Contract: 4♠ Dbl  
Lead: ♣K

*North*

♠ A Q 8 5  
♥ 8 2  
♦ A Q J  
♣ 10 7 5 3

*West*

♠ K J  
♥ A Q 6 5 3  
♦ K 9 5  
♣ K Q J

*East*

♠ 10  
♥ K J 10 9 4  
♦ 10 7 4  
♣ A 9 6 4

*South*

♠ 9 7 6 4 3 2  
♥ 7  
♦ 8 6 3 2  
♣ 8 2



# Don't Let them play at the two level

If possible, try to not allow the opponents to play at the same level as their number of trump

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	???



# Don't Let them play at the two level

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	???

E-W found a heart fit, but had no interest in game. It's safe to assume that their total # HCP is 18-22, so your side has to have approximately 20 HCP. The # HCP in your hand is irrelevant. If you're weak, your partner must have a decent hand; but did not have the right shape to take action. Therefore, on the above auction, the following actions are clear-cut.

♠ 9 8 7 2	♥ 3	♦ K 10 7 5	♣ K 9 5 2	Double
<hr/>				
♠ K J 10 9 5	♥ 8 5 3	♦ J 8 5 3	♣ 8	Bid 2♠
<hr/>				
♠ 10	♥ 8 5	♦ Q 10 8 5 2	♣ K 7 6 5 3	Bid 2NT



# Principles of “The Law of Total Tricks”

Just to be clear the “LAW” is not absolute. In fact, no bridge rule or system or approach is absolute

You’ll be amazed as to how well LOTT works!



# Principles of “The Law of Total Tricks”

- Strive to bid to the level of your side's number of trump. This is the essence of LOTT
- If possible, try to not allow the opponents to play at the same level as their number of trump
- When your opponents have found a fit, strain to not allow them to play at the two level
- You hate to sell out at the two level, so be eager to bid "3 over 2" with an 8-card fit
- If the opponents are at the 3 level, it is usually wrong to bid "3 over 3" with an 8-card fit
- With a 9-card fit, try to bid "3 over 3" - with an 8-card fit - you need a good reason

