Mini-Lesson 2: Balancing (cont.) And the Law of Total Tricks.

1. What is a fit? If the Opp's have an 8c fit at the 2 level, or a 9c fit at the 3 level, they are odds on to make their contract. Bergen Raises are based on the idea that it is safe to show the 9c fit at the 3 level right away. So the partnership has to go into action if the auction is about to drop when the Opp's have a fit at the 2 level.

But if the Opp's have less than an 8c fit at the 2 level, you don't need to get excited:

| W | Ν | Е | S | |
|------|---|------|---|---|
| (1D) | Р | (1N) | Р | |
| (2D) | Р | (P) | ? | balancing situation, and there may be certain times you want to compete. But not based on the principle we are discussing. Similarly |
| W | Ν | Е | S | |
| (1H) | Р | (1N) | Р | |
| (2D) | Р | (2H) | Р | |
| ? | | | | again, it is likely the opp's are in a 7 card, or worse, fit. |

2. Competing at the 2 level when the opp's have a fit and you have a fit

| W | Ν | E | S |
|------------|------------|------|----|
| (1H) | 1 S | (2H) | 2S |
| (P) | ? | | |

(P) ? With extra's (16+), you will explore whether you have enough for game by making another bid. This is not a balancing situation, so P is showing some values.

This is the other side of the hand we looked at last week with a 4 count and Hx support. As South in this sequence, you want to show at least 3 card support and constructive values, because your partner is entitled to rely on you having something when he has to make decisions about bidding on. With 4 card support, there are different considerations to be discussed below.

3. Balancing is a different situation:

KQ652 5 Q986 AK7

| | W | Ν | Е | S | |
|-----|--------|---------|---------|-------|---|
| | (1D) | Р | (1H) | 1S | |
| | (1N) | Р | (2D) | ? | it's hard to compete when you have their suit. You can't rebid |
| | | | | | your 5 card suit. And if you Double, P will most likely bid H's! |
| | | | | | So you pass, and the auction continues |
| | (P) | 2S | (3D) | ? | P's 2S bid was a balancing bid. (If P doesn't bid, then the auction |
| nog | ad out | and the | Onn'a r | lowin | their fit at the 2 level. You must page |

is passed out and the Opp's play in their fit at the 2 level). You must pass.

When you and partner agree that they Opp's cannot play at the 2 level if they have a fit, then you have to understand that P's bid doesn't promise many values. 3S would be a mistake - you've achieved what you set out to do - get the Opp's to the 3 level!

4. Law of Total Tricks

(a) 8 card fit?(b) 9 card fit?

(c) 10 card fit?

The principle at its simplest level - you can usually compete to the level of your combined trump. This is called "The Law".

With a 9c fit, it's usually safe to compete to the 3 level. This is when decisions get easier. If P overcalls, you assume P has a 5 card suit or better. If you have 4c support: Don't even think about it!

98 7654 J876 K4

W N E (1C) 1D (1H) ?

this hand should be thinking about getting to 3D one way or another. Best is if you agree that a jump raise is preemptive, because that takes away bidding room from the Opp's. But, if you don't have that agreement, then raise to 2D and, if the Opp's

continue to bid, rebid 3D.

But your P must not think that this bidding shows values! Similarly **J8743 4 9732 075**

W Ε S Ν (1H) X (2H) ?

S

using The Law, 2S might seem like a reasonable bid. P will probably have 4 card S's, in which case, you have a 9c fit and should be safe at the 2 level. Even if P has only 3 card S's, you have an 8c fit. But there's too much danger in misleading P about your values if you bid with such a weak hand. Best to pass, and wait to see what happens. If LHO passes 2H, P will make another move, such as double and you can bid 2S then.

What about when you have more values? A principle here is that in competitive auctions, 5. raises don't promise many values. They promise a fit. If both partners keep that in mind, no one will get carried away. But what about if you have more values? KOJ652 - O986 AJ7

W Ν Е S (2H) 2S (3H) 1S ? Here, you can't bid 3S - P will think you are just competing, not showing extras. You need to bid 4S.

| What about this hand? | K965 K93 A4 KQ84 | W | Ν | Е | S |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|----|------|-------|
| | | | (| (1D) |) Dbl |
| | | (1S) | 2H | (P) | Р |
| | | (3D) | P | (P) | ? |

6. Other ways of showing values when you have a fit: (a) cuebid raise (b) cooperative double