

Fifth Chair



Game Tries

Tony Forrester, in his *Secrets of Success*, recommends that one visualize partner's hand, placing him with two key cards totaling 6 hcp (ace and queen or two kings).

If game is now virtually certain, then a game-try is warranted. This approach means that game tries are restricted to five-loser hands.

In his book *The Modern Losing Trick Count*, Ron Klinger recommends that game should be invited on all 6 loser hands and on five loser hands with a side suit that contains three losers.

Forrester's approach is perhaps a tad too conservative, while Klinger's is perhaps a tad too aggressive. The following two rules are for intermediate players.

(1) Bid game directly with five loser hands, unless the hand has one suit with three losers. In that case, invite game, perhaps with a help suit try.

(2) With a six loser hand, invite game if partner can be visualized as having a perfect minimum that makes game very probable. A perfect minimum is defined as four trumps, a doubleton facing one's 4+ card side suit (thus restricting the maximum number of losers in that suit to two), and two key cards totaling 6 hcp (ace and queen or two kings).

It is rule #2 that is perhaps the more problematic of the two. Consider how it would apply to the following 6 loser hands:

Jxxxxx AKx KQ K2 1S-2S-?

Here Rule #2 clearly disallows game invitation. If we place the ace and queen of spades in partner's hand, and a doubleton in hearts, game still depends on making both the spade and club finesse.

Axxxx AK xxxx KJ 1S-2S-?

Here rule #2 would seem to disallow a game invitation. Give partner KQxx xxxx xx xxx, and game still depends on the club finesse. Give partner Qxxx xxxx xx Axx and we are still dependent on a finesse in spades.

xx AQJxx A2 Axxx 1H-2H-?

Here a game invitation is appropriate. We envision partner with the following magic minimum: xxxx xxxx Kxx Kx. Game is now cold. Perhaps a help suit try of 3C would be appropriate.

For those who are wondering to what kind of hand Rule #1 applies, consider the following 5-loser hand:

x AKQxx xxx AJxx

With this hand, it would probably be wiser to make a help suit try in diamonds rather than directly jumping to game.