

PLAYING THE ODDS IN BRIDGE

by Robert Locke

This page is not intended to be complicated; it is intended to answer such questions as, “What are the odds that my Partner and I might have a 4-4 FIT in the Majors? What about a 5-3 FIT?”

“What is the percentage of getting an Opening Hand, 12-21 HCP? How about its Invitational Partner, 10-12 HCP?”

“How about a 1NT Opening Hand, and its Invitational Partner, 8-9 HCP?”

This page takes statistics from much more complicated websites you can find if you google “bridge probabilities”, but this is nothing for the beginner to memorize, only to use as quick reference. Beginners should merely keep reminding themselves that with each new deal they are hoping to find an 8+ card Major Fit with 25 HCP.

Also with 25 HCP, you have a good chance of making GAME in 3NT, if you have the requisite stoppers in all suits.

For GAME in 5-of-a-minor, you need more like 28 HCP.

For SLAM and those big bonuses, usually 33 HCP. For GRAND SLAM, usually 37 HCP.

HAND EVALUATION IN HIGH CARD POINTS

A=4 K=3 Q=2 J=1 10 HCP in one suit 40 HCP in one deal

HCP SCALE

0	6			10	12				15	16	17				21	22+	25	GAME
			8	9		11		13	14						20			
.5%	6.5%		8.9%	9.4%		9.4%	8.9%	8%	7%	5.7%		4.4%	3.3%	2.4%	.6%	.4%	.2%	
PASS —	WEAK		—1 NT	Inv.—			—m-M	Inv.—		—Min. Open—			—1NT Open—			—2NT. Open—		

1-of-a-Major or 1-of-a-minor: 12-21 HCP=34.4%; **Inv.:** 10-11=18.4%; **Weak:** 5-9 HCP=38%; **Pass:** 0-5 HCP=22%

1 NT: 15-17=10% **Inv.:** 8-9=18.2% **Game-Going Values:** 10+

SIX MOST COMMON SUIT DISTRIBUTIONS

4432—22%; 5332—16%; 5431—13%; 5422—11%; 4333—11%; 6322—6% = 79%

MOST COMMON HOLDING IN A SUIT

3=29% 4=24% 2=21% 5=12% 1=8% 6=4% 7=.9%