



Bulletin

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Book Review

The Trick Ration Principle

Willie Jago, 246 pages
Self-published: 19 Curnola Ave, Doncaster, VIC 3108
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Many books on bidding list esoteric conventions for marginally improving bidding accuracy, claiming that your results will be MUCH better. In practice, moreimps are lost than gained, due to you or your partner forgetting a nuance, or the opponents gaining extra chances to make lead-directing doubles during artificial sequences.

Books on improving the technique of evaluating your hand, however, are system-independent. Three useful hand-evaluation methods are:

- The Law of Total Tricks (described by Larry Cohen in his book *To Bid Or Not To Bid*),
- The Losing Trick Count (described by Ron Klinger in his book *The Modern Losing Trick Count*), and
- In-and-Out Evaluation (described by Jeff Rubens in his book *The Secrets of Winning Bridge*).

But why buy three books when one will do? Willie Jago's book clearly describes the interaction of the above three techniques with plenty of illustrative deals taken from actual play. As a bonus, he also provides his own rule-of-thumb as to which side "owns" (and by how much) a competitive deal.

Furthermore, he describes simple, but useful, conventional tools which assist hand evaluation, such as:

- fit-showing jumps (which assist in evaluation of game potential);
- splinter bids (which assist in the evaluation of slam potential); and
- disciplined weak-twos (which assist in the evaluation of competitive potential).

Recommended for intermediate players.

Richard Hills

REVIEWS

The Trick Ratio Principle (An extension to the Law of Total Tricks) by Willie Jago

Reviewed by Richard Webb
From the Australian Bridge Federation Newsletter

A number of years ago I had the pleasure of working with Willie as his vision of 'The Trick Ratio Principle' was evolving. As a 'lawful' follower, he saw the connection between the Law of Total Tricks and the mathematics of what is now the 'Trick Ratio Principle.' You need not be a mathematician to follow Willie's unfolding of what this principle means and how it affects the partnership's combined values. I believe this to be new territory worthy of exploring. And I am grateful to Willie with whom I started my 'career' as an online bridge teacher.

- Caitlin

Willie Jago has produced his best book to date, very readable and containing many excellent tips and strategies in both contested and uncontested auctions. For example, he suggests you avoid defending at the 2 level, adding that the safest time to sacrifice is when the trump total is high. Jago initially restates the fundamentals of the Law of Total Tricks as outlined by Larry Cohen in *To Bid or Not to Bid*. One of the cornerstones is that if HCP are equally divided, the number of tricks that each side can make is equal to the number of trumps in each side's best fit.

Jago's discovery, which he calls the Trick Ratio Principle (TRP) is that this number increases by 1 trick for each extra 3 HCP that the partnership holds. The starting point is that if both sides hold 20 HCP and 8 trumps, they can both make 8 tricks, and consequently if one side holds 23 HCP they can make 9 tricks (reducing the opponents to 7 tricks), since the number of tricks available on the hand will remain at 16. Thus, with an 8-card fit, a pair would need 26 HCP for the major game (29 for minor game and 32 for small slam).

The adjunct to this is that for a number of HCP required for a contract will REDUCE by 3HCP for each extra trump that the partnership has a 9-card fit they need only 23 HCP for a major game (26 for a minor game, 29 for small slam) and thus if they have a 10-card fit 20 will be enough for the major game (23 for the minor game and a mere 26 will be enough for the slam).

Jago is at pains to point out the fine tuning required to enter for various factors such as suit texture, double fits, wasted honours and positive shape.

The book also deals with various conventions in some detail, such as Bergen Raises and Jacoby 2NT after major openings, Lebensohl, splinters, super-accepts, strong hand minor transfers, long suit trials, RKCB, and cuebidding to slams. Included are many instructive hands played by experts in major championships, as well as many hands from the hundreds of computer simulations that Jago used to confirm his ideas. The book is intended for intermediate plus level, contains numerous tables and outlines the mathematics behind the theories.

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