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MIT Intermediate
Bridge Lecture Series

THE LAW

Brian Duran

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Slide 2

The Law

The Law is short for The Law of Total Tricks. Some times abbreviated LoTT, LTT TNT(Total Number of Tricks).

- It is NOT a law, but a guideline

- It was discovered by Jean-Rene Vernes in 1968 (some say 1950's)

- Larry Cohen popularized The LAW in 90's in his book "To Bid or Not to Bid"

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Slide 3

Purpose

The Law is a guideline to help you make the right decision in competitive situation during the auction

The Law is not a convention, but can be treated as such

If your partnership actively follows The Law you should indicated it on your convention card

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The Law

Complicated Version

"The number of tricks your side can take, if you play in your best trump suit, added to the number of tricks the opponents can take, if they play in their best trump suit, is approximately equal to the number of trumps held by both sides"

Or

The Total Number of Tricks available on any deal is equal to the Total Number of Trumps

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Total Number of Tricks

Tricks available to both sides (assuming best play and defense) if they play in there best (longest) fit.

Deepfiness can tell you this on the hand records

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Total Number of Trumps

The combined total of cards in both sides' best trump fit.

If NS longest fit 4-4 in spade and EW longest fit is 5-4 in Diamonds, the Total Number of Trumps would be 8+9=17.

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When Does It Apply?

- Competitive Auctions when both sides have found a fit
- HCP are evenly distributed, your side has 17-23 HCP

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What Does the Law Estimates?

Tricks available, not if you can make given contract. If there are 17 Total Trumps one expects 17 Total Tricks. But the tricks could be divided: 11-6, 10-7, or 9-8.

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Adjustments

People talk about adjustments to The Law for better hand evaluation. Here is what Larry had in his book:

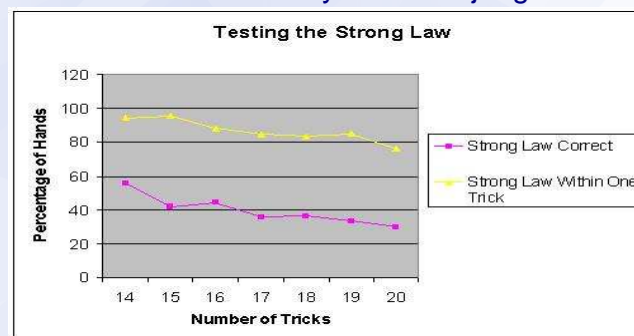| Positive Factor	Description	Negative Factor	Description
Positive Purity	No Minor honours in opponents' suits, good interiors in own suits	Negative Purity	Poor interiors in own suits, minor honours in opponent's suits
Positive Fit	Double/Double fit	Negative Fit	Misfits
Positive Shape	Extra Length or voids	Negative Shape	Flats

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Does it Work?

Maybe. I think so, but lots of others object to The Law. Let you be the judge.

Testing the Strong Law

Strong Law Correct

Strong Law Within One Trick

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Matchpoints

The Law is far more important in Matchpoints when going down 1 for minus 100 points is significantly better then minus 110 for the opponents making two of a major.

Worry less about The Law when playing IMPs.

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Applying The Law

The auction goes (1H)-1S-(3H – weak) – to you. You have three spades and 6 HCP.

Points are roughtly devided and you have a 8 card spade fit, the opponents have an expected 9 card fit for there are 17 total tricks available.

If they are making 3H, LoTT suggest you will go down one in 3S.

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Applying The Law

The most common Law situation is 1X-(1S)-2X-(2S); should your side compete to the three level.

Points are roughly divided and they have a 8 card spade fit, and you an 8 card X fit for 16 total tricks available.

If not vulnerable The Law highly suggests bidding 3X.

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Wise Words

Brian's priority of things to consider in competitive auctions:

- Quality of HCP (purity)

Double Fits (fit)

- Shape (shape)

- The Law

- Suit Quality (purity)

- Points

- Opponents Skill

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More Wise Words

If you are trying to decide whether to bid game

- Count points

If you are trying to decide whether to compete (outbid your opponents)

- Count trumps

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The Law

Help us decide when to bid on and when to pass in competitive auctions.

Simple Version – Count the number of trumps you think you and partner have in your best suit and bid that number of trick in that suit

- 8 trumps try for 8 tricks
- 9 trumps try for 9 tricks
- 10 trumps try for 10 tricks

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