

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FROM:

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OPENING BIDS

The normal requirement for an opening bid is 12 HCP. Many look no further. The mathematician's favorite is the scale of 6-4-2-1 for A-K-Q-J. On this scale 15 points are a low requirement for an opening bid. The two scales will require different honor constructions for meeting the requirements, the 6-4-2-1 scale asking for more in primary controls and less in secondary controls. It is closer to an evaluation according to the Losing Trick Count (LTC) where the emphasis is on controls.

The following table shows combinations of honors for hands containing a nominal requirement of 12 HCP for an opening bid in first seat. To the right are given the number of 6-4-2-1 points for that combination. One sees that the requirement for an opening bid on this scale is not met for all 12 HCP combinations when six honors are held.

<u>Honors</u>	<u>~12 HCP</u>	<u>6-4-2-1 Scale</u>	<u>Honors</u>	<u>~12 HCP</u>	<u>6-4-2-1 Scale</u>		
3	AAA	(4)	18	6	AAJJJ	(6)	16
4	AAKJ	(96)	16		AKQJJ	(256)	15
	AKKQ	(96)	16		KKQQQJ	(96)	15
	AKKJ	(96)	15		KKKJJ	(16)	15
	AAQQ	(96)	16		KKQQJ	(216)	14
	KKKK	(1)	16		AQQQQJ	(16)	15
					AQQQJJ	(64)	14
					KQQQQJ	(16)	13

The numbers in brackets are the number of combinations possible given that each rank can occur in one of four suits. Thus there are 16 combinations of two cards of different rank: AK, AQ, QJ and so on. There are 64 combinations (4x4x4) of three cards of differing rank: AKQ, AQJ, KQJ. On this basis, 43% of the hands shown with six honors held would not qualify as an opening bid on a 6-4-2-1 scale.

How often one hears a player state, 'I didn't open the bidding as I held only the three aces and no stuffing behind them'. The equivalent statement with a 6-4-2-1 scale would be, 'I didn't open as I held only king, king, quack, quack'. A common holding of two kings, two queens and two jacks constitutes just 14 points. Both players may be justifiably cautious in their evaluation, but put the two hands together and one can compose many a good game.

The 4-3-2-1 scale favors scattered quacks that may prove helpful in a NT contract, whereas the 6-4-2-1 scale does not. The LTC has difficulty evaluating secondary honors that are largely defensive assets. In his book *The Modern Losing Trick Count*, Ron Klinger suggests adjustment when a queen in one hand matches an ace or king in the other. That helps during the auction, not when contemplating an opening bid.