KLEINMAN POINTS OR [YOUR] POINTS

The September 2001 *Bridge World* contains a letter from Doug Bennion of Toronto that defines a new point-count, *Little Jack Points* (LJP), as A = 6½, K = 4½, Q = 2½ and J = 1, which Bennion's research confirms as being superior to the usual 4-3-2-1 provided an adjustment is made for honor synergy: add ½ for any two of these cards working together in the same suit *except* a queen-jack combination.

You may notice that (a) ♠A92 ♥K8 ♦J743 ♣Q653, a seemingly "average" hand, contains 14½ LJP. That won't do, for one of the points of using point-count is to have a *common unit of measure* that partners and opponents can understand. If you're filling out a convention card that has a space for the range of a 1NT response to 1♣, it is unacceptable to write "11½ to 14½ LJP" (the approximate equivalent of the standard "8 to 10" HCP).

To create the necessary commensurability, we might transform the scales, multiplying all values by 10/14.5 and rounding to the nearest tenth. This yields the point-count: A = 4.5, K = 3.1, Q = 1.7 and J = 0.7, *all in HCP terms*.

However, we can do better still.

(1) Double all of Bennion's values, producing A = 13, K = 9, Q = 5, J = 2 and whole-point adjustments instead of halves. Now the "average" hand appears to contain 29 of the new points.

(2) Notice that (a) is not an "average" hand but a poorer than average hand, and an *atypical* "10-HCP" hand at that. The probability that a hand with one ace, one king, one queen and one jack has *no synergy points* turns out to be exactly the same as the probability that it has *two synergy points*. Therefore *on the average*, synergy adjustments give it *30* of the new points, not 29. A more typical "10-HCP" hand is (b) ♠A92 ♥KJ84 ♦73 ♣Q653.

(3) Restate the synergy adjustment as: *add 1 point for every picture-card that is accompanied by an ace or king*.

The changes introduced so far yield *Double LJP*. However, Bennion did not make some adjustments that I recommend to reflect my judgment, which is very close to the judgment of Edgar Kaplan as implemented in "Four C's" (*Bridge World*, October 1982). So, to reflect my judgment and Kaplan's more accurately:

* Add for 10s when *accompanied by* 9s or higher honors: add 1 for one such "companion" in the suit, 2 for two or more companions.
* Subtract 1 for any suit whose lowest card is higher than a 10.
* Subtract 1 for *unguarded picture-cards* (e.g. ♠K, ♥Qx or ♦Jxx).
* Subtract 2 for a flat hand (4-3-3-3 distribution).

After making these adjustments (or any others you like) …

(4) Divide the resulting count by 3 to get the equivalent HCP ("Kleinman Points" or "[Your] Points" depending on *which* adjustments you make) using the customary scale. If there's no remainder, you have a "bad" hand for its point-count, e.g. 45/3 = a "bad" 15 HCP. If the remainder is 1, you have an ordinary hand for its point-count, e.g. 46/3 = an ordinary 15 HCP. If the remainder is 2, you have a "good" hand for its point-count, e.g. 47/3 = a "good" 15 HCP. This terminology is consistent with the usage of "good" and "bad" for point-counts that we have seen in *The Bridge World* for decades (but may soon be changed to "weak" and "strong").

Bennion researched only the values of high cards *when balanced hand faces balanced hand*. So even when contemplating *notrump* bids, you should assign more weight to aces and less to queens and jacks … to reflect their relative values in the suit contracts you may reach when *partner* has an *unbalanced* hand.