

Learning: When To Compete

In competitive auctions where both sides are bidding and the points are usually fairly evenly divided you have to make decisions about when to 'bid on' and when to pass and let the opponents play the hand. There are six things you should consider when making this decision.

1. How many trumps do you and your partner have between your two hands
2. What is your distribution
3. What is your trump quality
4. What is your holding in the opponents suit>
5. Do you have a two-suited fit
6. How many points do you and your partner have

When you and your partner have more than eight trumps between your two hands, usually the contract will play much easier and the less chance that you and your partner will have many defensive tricks. More Trumps – Bid On

Distributional hands (6-4-2-1, 5-5-2-1, 5-4-3-1) all take more tricks than 5-3-3-2 hands. Shapely hands – Bid On

If you have good trump quality (honor cards and good interior cards 10's and 9's) the less likely that the opponents will double you and the more likely that you will take more trump tricks. Good Trump Quality – Bid On If you have soft holdings in the opponents' suit, Q, J, K (if not well placed), then those are points that are not working for you and your partner. Those are cards that are defensive more than offensively oriented. Three small cards in the opponents suit, Ace, singleton are all good. Good Holding in the Opponents' Suit – Bid On

If you can tell from the bidding that you and your partner have two fits not just one, you may have a source of extra tricks if you play the hand and not many defensive tricks if you defend. Two Suited Fit – Bid On

If you and your partner have the majority of the points in the hand then it is probably your hand. Think about doubling instead of bidding on if you don't match many of the first five points