

Watson Bridge Index

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/bridge-index.htm>

Length Points

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/LengthPoints.pdf>

Milton Work points, commonly known as the 4321 High Card point system, are useful, but they flirt with becoming a crutch. They help a person get to the optimum contract most of the time, but high card points are just an estimate of a hand's worth. A person supplements this worth with differentiating hand qualities and listening to the bidding. He also considers a hand's ease of being bid and its playability.

A. ♠KJ2 ♥KJ3 ♦KJ4 ♣KJ32

B. ♠AKQJ1098 ♥KQJ10 ♦3 ♣2

Which hand would you prefer? They are both 16 HCPs but have extremely different playing strengths. Looking at dummy entries needed alone, hand A could need as many as six dummy entries to be played properly. Hand B needs none. Hand A is opened 1NT and hand B with ten tricks in spades is opened 2♣.

Length points do not solve all hand evaluation problems, but a player who does not use them is missing out on a useful guide.

Length points are:

- 1 for the fifth card
- 1 for the sixth card
- 3 for the seventh card
- 3 for the eighth card and every card after that

Ideally length points are used in the second round of bidding or when the hand is known to belong to the declaring side. Length points do not help when partner doubles a suit contract for penalty.

Length points in weak suits or weak hands are often not counted. The length cards must be developable and reachable.

C. ♠A32 ♥QJ2 ♦104 ♣AK1032

D. ♠A32 ♥QJ2 ♦AK ♣109876

Hand C is 15 to 17 and Hand D is a 1♣ opening. One length point is counted in C but not in D. A ten in a long suit like in C is certainly worth half a point or maybe more.

E. ♠KJ2 ♥QJ2 ♦K4 ♣AK1032

Hand E is too strong to open as 1NT showing 15 to 17. It has 18 effective points. It is treated as any hand with 18 to 19.

F. ♠KJ2 ♥KQ2 ♦K4 ♣AK1032

Hand F is opened 2NT showing 20 to 21.

G. ♠1082 ♥1032 ♦42 ♣AK1098

H. ♠10872 ♥103 ♦42 ♣AK1098

If partner opens 1NT showing 15 to 17, are G and H invitational?

G is a pass and Stayman is used with H because of its potential of growth with a possible spade fit. G is counted as 7 HCP, and H as 8 HCP.

A Bidding Note for H When Stayman is used to Invite without a Four-Card Major

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♥	P	2♠
P	4♠	all pass	

If a player is playing that 2NT directly over a 1NT opening is not invitational than the above sequence shows an invitational hand with four spades. The following is an invitational hand without a four-card major.

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♥	P	2NT
P	3NT	all pass	