

# Fitting Honors by Kevin Wilson

www.kevinbwilson.com

Imagine two suits: The top holding is the dummy and the bottom holding is your hand (declarer). How many combined tricks will do you think you take with each of the following examples?

Example 1:     ♠ AQx   ♥ xxx  
                 ♠ xxx   ♥ Kxx

Answer:        \_\_\_\_\_

Example 2:     ♠ AQx   ♥ xxx  
                 ♠ Kxx   ♥ xxx

Answer:        \_\_\_\_\_

In example 1, you probably said you would take two tricks on average or you might have answered that you don't know because it depends on the locations of the missing honors. In example 2, you said that you would take three tricks. Why is example 2 so much better than example 1? The reason is that the hands fit well together. The honors are working together. In Bridge, you want to use the bidding to help you determine when your hands are fitting well together and on those hands bid a little more.

When the hands aren't fitting together so well, be conservative in your bidding!

The encyclopedia of bridge does not define a 'fitting honor' but it instead describes 'good cards'. Good Cards is too broad to be useful to you, so I've come up with this term 'fitting honors' to help you understand an invaluable concept.

A fitting honor is an honor in a suit where partner is known to hold length. If partner opens 1♠ playing five-card majors, then any honor you hold in spades is more valuable because it's in a suit where partner is known to hold length.

You may find many more situations in which to use this evaluation technique, but for the purposes of this talk I will highlight four specific situations.

1. When partner has preempted and you are thinking about bidding a game.
2. When partner has made a natural and invitational bid like in Standard American or 2/1.
3. When partner makes a two-suited bid such as Michaels Cuebid or Unusual Two-Notrump.
4. When deciding about bidding a close slam.

Look at the following examples. Assume your partner has preempted 3♣ in 1<sup>st</sup> position.

You hold:

Example 3:     ♠ AQxx  
                 ♥ AQxx  
                 ♦ AK10x  
                 ♣ 9  
                 19HCP

Example 4:     ♠ KJ10  
                 ♥ Q109x  
                 ♦ AJx  
                 ♣ Axx  
                 15HCP

Partner's 3♣ opener:

♠ x  
♥ xxx  
♦ Qx  
♣ KJ10xxxx

Your bid over 3♣?

Answer:        \_\_\_\_\_

Example 3 has 19 HCP and excellent controls in all of the off suits. The one thing it doesn't have is a fit in clubs or any fitting honors in clubs. Your lesson about fitting honors is attempting to teach you to be conservative without fitting honors and aggressive when you have fitting honors. Do you think you could take nine tricks in 3NT in example 3? I highly doubt it. In example 4, you have only 15 HCP but you have an excellent fitting honor and some length in a suit where partner is known to hold length (clubs). This is a hand you should be aggressive on and try 3NT. The presence of a fitting honor or honors should make a huge difference in your evaluation.

#### CHOICE BETWEEN GAME AND SLAM:

Any cards in partner's long suits are fitting cards, but when heading to slams you really want the aces in the off suits and not the kings... fitting cards are great but slams also require controls

Partner	You
1♠	2♥
3♦	?

Rank the example hands from 1-3 in order of which hand is most likely to produce a slam in diamonds.

Example 5:	Example 6:	Example 7:	Partner's Hand
♠ Qx	♠ Qx	♠ QJ	♠ AK10xx
♥ Axxxx	♥ KQJxx	♥ AQJxx	♥ xx
♦ KQxx	♦ Kxx	♦ Q10xx	♦ AJxxx
♣ Ax	♣ KQJ	♣ KJ	♣ 10
15 HCP	17 HCP	16HCP	
Answer: _____	Answer: _____	Answer: _____	

Example 5 is the best hand of the three example hands if you are thinking about bidding a slam in diamonds. You have fitting honors in both of the suits where partner is known to hold length and in the suits where partner is short, you have aces and not wasted queens and jacks, This hand is perfect for slam and you should take over the auction and bid Blackwood or 4NT. Example 6 is the worst hand you could have for slam on this auction. Almost all your honors are in partner's short suits and the help you have for partner is mediocre. This is a hand in which you should try to be conservative and I recommend you bid 3NT with it. Example 7 is in the middle. You have a nice fit for diamonds but you have a lot of possibly wasted honors in hearts and clubs. The ♥QJ and the ♣ KJ are of dubious value to partner. I think you should be nervous about 3NT and you should bid five diamonds with the hand.

Contact Kevin for individual or partnership teaching and coaching, traveling to your club to present live seminars, or professional play both on the internet and in person:

Kevin Wilson [yourbridgepro@gmail.com](mailto:yourbridgepro@gmail.com) 865-679-6286