

# The “LAW of Total Tricks”

## Bergen Raises

### The LAW of Total Tricks

In part score bidding it's the age-old question: how high should I compete? The “LAW of Total Tricks” is a bidding approach developed by Jean-Rene Vernes and can be used to decide how high to bid using this approximation:

With 8 partnership trump bid to the 2-level

With 9 trump bid to the 3-level

With 10 trump bid to the 4-level

NOTE: it's more than just the familiar *9 trump prompts a 3-level bid*.

It's called the LAW because it works. It's not called the “GUIDELINE of total tricks”

Say you hold: Qxx xx Jxxxx Txx partner opens 1S and both your RHO and you pass. LHO now “balances” (makes a bid in the pass-out seat) and bids 2H, and it goes pass-pass to you. The LAW says bid 2S. You may not make 2S but it doesn't matter. If they can beat 2S then 2H is odds on to make and you will lose 110 or 140. Is -140 ever a good score?

You will often see” the LAW of Total Tricks” simply referred to as “The LAW.”

Should I use the LAW of Total Tricks? Yes, and not because it is being advocated here. Two of the best bridge minds / authors / teachers are Larry Cohen and Marty Bergen. Both are big promoters of the LAW which should be sufficient endorsement right there.

### Bergen Raises

Companion to the LAW of Total Tricks are Bergen Raises. Believing in The LAW, Bergen devised 4 card major jump raises to the 3-level, and they work like this. Partner opens 1 of a major in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> chair and you hold 4 of the major and between 6 and 11 hcp (or a bad 12 heavy in Qs and Js):

Jump to 3C with 6 to 9 hcp

Jump to 3D with 10 to a bad 12 hcp (3D replaces the 1major-3major jump limit raise)

Bergen then adds a 3<sup>rd</sup> bid: 1major-3major which is 4 trump and 5 or less hcp. But have 4-5 hcp if vulnerable.

**Conclusion:** The LAW of Total Tricks works as a tool to use in competitive part score bidding. Further, if you believe in The LAW, then seriously consider playing Bergen Raises.