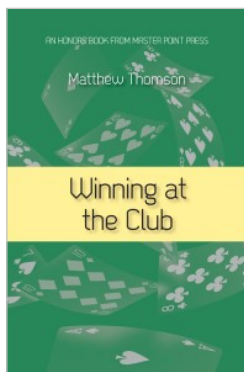


## Book Reviews by Paul Lavings

# Winning At The Club

Don't be bound by rules based on point count, use judgement and imagination



### Winning At The Club

by Matthew Thomson  
(An Honours Book from Masterpoint Press, Toronto, Canada, 2021, soft cover, 220 pages )

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**W**hen covid arrived club players started playing online, the big difference being that anyone could view not only every bid but also every card. While running online games Matthew Thomson had the opportunity to follow how a myriad of club players performed. He quickly saw that they were bound by rules based on point count rather than judgement and imagination.

Over 120 selected deals plus two extra chapters the author reports not only what happened but also what could happen by thinking “tricks” and not “points”. He also analyses the card play in depth, counting your winners in notrumps and your losers in a suit contract and then formulating a plan.

Deal 113 is typical of what you can expect. You open 1♠ with AJ10983, 952, 8, AKJ and partner raises you to 2♠. Don't count points but evaluate your hand. A spade honour opposite will likely mean no spade loser and with AKJ you could well have no club loser. If partner can cover one of your four red losers you should make 4♠. Don't torture partner with 3♠, go directly to 4♠:

Dealer E | Vul Nil

♠ 652			
♥ AQJT3			
♦ T73			
♣ 65			
♠ Q74	N	♠ K	
♥ 86	W	♥ K74	E
♦ AKJ62	S	♦ Q954	
♣ T94		♣ Q8732	
		♠ AJT983	
		♥ 952	
		♦ 8	
		♣ AKJ	

West leads ♦A and continues with ♦K. Before playing count your possible losers, 1 or 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 club=5 losers. You can reduce your losers by first getting trumps out, then finessing in hearts and throwing ♣J on a heart. Rather than finesse twice in spades just bang out the ace and when the ♠K falls you can play ♠J and later draw the last trump. The heart finesse loses but you throw ♣J on a good heart and end up just losing a spade, a heart and a diamond.

In the club game no one played the hand like this. The two successful Souths played on hearts before trumps but succeeded nevertheless. The other Souths started crossruffing diamonds and clubs and ran out of trumps, going down.

Winning at the Club is a novel approach with excellent advice, especially if you are a club player looking to improve your game by discarding bad habits and adopting good ones.

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