LOTT FACTORS
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The Law-Of-Total-Tricks (LOTT) says, in general, to bid to the trick level that you have the total number of trumps in. So, for example, if you have 10 trumps, bid to the 10 trick four level. Here are some factors to consider when to deviate from that guideline.

➢ 4-3-3-3s are awful hands to LOTT raise with, since there is no ruffing value in the short trump hand, so reduce the LOTT level by one trump – if you have 4 trumps raise as if 3 trumps to the LOTT level, and if you have 3 trumps raise treat as 2 trumps for a LOTT raise.
➢ Rarely raise above game in the trump suit – if you just bid game the opponents don't know if you are bidding game as an LOTT effort or you have the points to make it – if you jump above game the opponents know they must have the points.
➢ To make a LOTT raise above game in the trump suit you must be very weak outside the trump suit, and quite long in the trump suit, and have a singleton or void somewhere.
➢ If you have a hand with a lot of defensive type values, such as kings, queens and holdings like QTx or KJ3 in suits etc., bid to one less of the LOTT level if you are unlikely to make the LOTT level contract and the opponents are unlikely to make a game in anything.

LOTT Factors - Examples

a)

♠ AK8753	♠ QT62	2♠-3♠	With a 4-3-3-3 treat the 4 trumps
♥ 43	♥ QJ7		as 3 – so raise to 3♠ and not 4♠
♦ 852	♦ AT7		
♣ J2	♣ KT3		

b)

♠ AK8753	♠ Q62	2♠-Pass	With a 4-3-3-3, treat 3 trumps as 2
♥ 43	♥ QJ72		for LOTT purposes and just pass
♦ 852	♦ AT7		2♠ - notice how the lack of ruffing
♣ J2	♣ KT3		value makes a bad dummy

c)

♠ AK8753	♠ QJT62	2♠-4♠	With 5 trumps the LOTT level is
♥ 43	♥ QJ72		5♠ (11 trumps = 11 tricks) but just
♦ 852	♦ AT7		settle in game on most hands.
♣ J2	♣ 3		

d)

♠ AK8753	♠ QJT62	2♠-5♠	With 5 trumps and a weak hand
♥ 43	♥ QJ72		outside the trump suit and a
♦ 852	♦ T73		singleton/void in a suit raise to 5♠
♣ J2	♣ 3		to jam the opponents.

e)

♠ AK8753	♠ QT62	2♠-4♠	Typical LOTT 4♠ bid – no factors
♥ 43	♥ J7		apply here.
♦ 852	♦ AT73		
♣ J2	♣ KT3		

f)

♠ AK8753	♠ T642	2♠-3♠	Here the ♠ raise hand has lots of
♥ 43	♥ QJ92		defensive values – so raises just to
♦ 852	♦ KT7		3♠ since opponents are unlikely to
♣ J2	♣ KT		make game in anything.