

## DANNY ON DUPLICATE (8)

### Calvin Teams

Suppose a duplicate bridge club wants to hold a one-session team championship and has a limited time span in which to hold it. The currently popular format is Swiss Teams, with four short matches scored at IMPs in the session. To complete a session in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, it has been found necessary to limit matches to 5 boards, for a total of 20 boards for each team. Time is consumed reporting match results between rounds, waiting for table assignments for successive rounds, and making the boards for successive rounds. That is not very popular with players who want to play more bridge and spend less time waiting, shuffling and dealing. Starting sessions earlier and lengthening them to  $3\frac{3}{4}$  hours may permit 6-board matches to be played, but inconveniences players who have tight schedules and cannot easily arrive 15 minutes earlier.

For small numbers of teams, the usual Swiss format may be abandoned in favor of Round Robins. That has happened occasionally. For example, when 7 teams enter, a Round Robin may be organized by having stationary North-South pairs for Teams 1 through 7 at Tables 1 through 7 respectively. Each team plays six four-board matches scored at Victory Points.

During Rounds 1 and 2, each East-West pair plays at the table that is 1 less than its team number (mod 7), then brings the boards just played to its North-South teammates and moves to the table that is 1 more than its team number (mod 7).

During Rounds 3 and 4, each East-West pair plays at the table that is 2 less than its team number (mod 7), then brings the boards just played to its North-South teammates and moves to the table that is 2 more than its team number (mod 7).

During Rounds 5 and 6, each East-West pair plays at the table that is 3 less than its team number (mod 7), then brings the boards just played to its North-South teammates and moves to the table that is 3 more than its team number (mod 7).

A recent session highlighted the problems even with this seemingly fair format. At the end of the six-match session, three teams had won four matches, three teams had won two matches, and of course the other team had won three matches. Here were the final standings:

Team Numbers:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Matches Won:	4	4	3	4	2	2	2
Victory Points:	76	69	64	63	57	46	45

The fact that Team 4, despite winning four matches (as many as the first-place team), finished fourth, behind Team 3 (a team that Team 4 had beaten by a wide margin, 17 IMPs, in the match they played), which had won only three matches, was in part an artifact of Victory Point scoring, in which the margins of victories can outweigh the numbers of victories.

However, the details of Team 4's matches say a lot more about this format. The chart above suggests that Teams 6 and 7 were the weakest teams in this session. Each of these teams lost to Team 4 by 2 IMPs, an 11-to-9 margin in Victory Points. That can happen in any number of ways. For example, there might be two "pushes" and two swings: Team 6 bids a laydown small slam missed by Team 4 on Board 1, while Team 4 bids a laydown small slam missed by Team 6 on Board 4. Result: 13 IMPs to Team 4 on Board 4, 11 IMPs to Team 6 on Board 1, the difference arising from different vulnerability conditions. Each team had a chance to win the match by 24 IMPs, 19 Victory Points to 1, if its pairs had bid the slams while the opposing pairs had missed them.

That is not how the match between Teams 4 and 6 actually went. Each of the four boards they played produced a 1-IMP swing on an overtrick made at one table but not the other. Nor is it how the match between Teams 4 and 7 went. Teams 4 and 7 exchanged 1-IMP swings on two boards, a third board was a "push," and a 2-IMP swing on the fourth board provided Team 4 with its margin of victory.

The different boards played by different teams provided widely disparate opportunities for winning not only IMPs but also the Victory Points that reflect margins of victory. While Team 4 was earning 22 Victory Points in its matches against Teams 6 and 7, Team 1 was earning a total of 37 Victory Points (impossible to earn from "overtrick IMPs" and "undertrick IMPs" alone), in its matches against the same teams. Without that 15 Victory Point difference, Team 4 finishes ahead of Team 1.

Such "inequality of opportunity" injects a large dose of randomness into the results, which can no longer be expected to reflect the performances of the teams fairly. Having the same boards played by each team would reduce the randomness of the results and create a more level playing field.

An entirely different format is available: Board-a-Match Teams ("BAMT"). For BAMT, movements have already been worked out, so each board must be shuffled and dealt only once, at the start of the session (better still, pre-duplicated or copied from hand records). There is only one drawback: many players prefer **IMP** scoring to BAM.

Why not have both? Why not combine the desired feature of Swiss Teams (IMP scoring) with the efficiency of BAMT (no time wasted waiting for assignments and reshuffling boards)? To this end, I propose **Calvin Teams**, named in honor of Calvin Smith, an outstanding director who died a few years ago.

Calvin Teams uses the BAMT **movement** with IMP scoring (no need for "Victory Points"). The boards are made prior to Round 1, by each team at its home table. A team will not play the boards that it makes. Each team will play between 24 and 28 boards. More than 17 teams form two sections of equal or nearly equal numbers of teams.

**Odd Numbers of Teams:** To start each round, boards move down one table and East/West pairs move down two tables.

5 teams. Play 4 7-board matches.

7 teams. Play 6 4-board matches.

9 teams. Play 8 3-board matches.

11 teams. Play 8 3-board matches, **9 rounds**. Move for Round 1 but do not play the boards.

13 teams. Play 12 2-board matches.

15 teams. Play 14 2-board matches.

17 teams. Play 14 2-board matches, **15 rounds**. Move for Round 1 but do not play the boards.

**Even Numbers of Teams:** To start each round, boards move down one table and East/West pairs move down two tables, **with exceptions noted**.

6 teams. Play 4 7-board matches. Boards move down **two** tables for Round 4. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 2 and 4.

8 teams. Play 6 4-board matches. Boards move down **two** tables for Round 6. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 2 and 6.

10 teams. Play 9 3-board matches. Boards move down two tables for Round 7. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 3 and 7.

12 teams. Play 8 3-board matches. Boards move down **two** tables for Rounds 1 and 8. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 2 and 8, down **four** tables for Round 1.

14 teams. Play 12 2-board matches. Boards move down **two** tables for Round 10. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 4 and 10.

16 teams. Play 14 2-board matches. Boards move down **two** tables for Round 12. E/W pairs move down **three** tables for Rounds 4 and 12.

Pre-duplicated boards permit hand records to be distributed after the session and perhaps posted on a club's website. In clubs that used electronic scoring devices, computerized calculations of IMPs and (if desired) Victory Points) may be possible. If changes-of-round are announced at regular intervals, as in matchpoint competition, the games can be run more smoothly and quickly, with fewer delays between rounds.

Instead of multi-session Swiss Team Championships, tournaments may hold multi-session Calvin Team Championships.

Suppose, for example, 40 teams enter a 4-session Calvin Teams. With appropriate seeding, four 10-table sections can play Calvin Teams in the first session. The top 5 teams from each section can advance to the top bracket of the second session (two 10-table sections), with the bottom 20 teams from each section similarly playing in two 10-table sections of a "First Consolation"; for the third session similar partitioning of each bracket can generate four brackets for a "Second Consolation," each with one 10-table section. Finally, the fourth session can have eight 5-table sections of "Last Chance" Calvin Teams.

Odd numbers of teams can be accommodated by similar splits into sections and brackets. This scheme will have winners competing against winners and losers competing against losers just as in Swiss Teams. Net IMPs from early sessions may be carried forward at full value to later sessions, but if some sections play greater numbers of boards, net IMPs won or lost in those sections shall be scaled down in proportion to the number of boards played.

Or suppose 25 teams enter a 2-session Calvin Teams. With appropriate seeding, five 5-table sections can play Calvin Teams in the first session. In the second session, five brackets can be formed to play 5-table Calvin Teams, with the top bracket composed of the five first-place teams from the first session, and so on down the line.