

Stamford Bridge Club : Teams Bridge – Some Information

(Wednesday, 9th January 2013)

Basic

You play as a team-of-four which means that if you sit as North-South your teammates sit as East-West (or vice versa). Although the performances of the other teams influence how well you do, the only score you compare with, when scoring up, is the result obtained by your teammates at the other table.

Scoring

You score the *contract* just as you do when playing match-pointed pairs. In order to obtain the *team* score on each board add together the contract results of your two pairs and convert to international match points (colloquially known as imps) using the scale shown at the bottom of your scorecard. Most teams events are scored using imps.

You will see that each imp score corresponds to a range of added-together (team) scores. For example if you made 4hearts vulnerable (+620) and your teammates defeated the same contract by one trick (for +100), your team's board score is +720. This is a score in the range 600-740, converting to plus 12imps.

Another example : you concede 300 points when declaring 3spades doubled and your teammates defend a making 1notrump for a further minus 90. That's an overall minus of 390 points : it's in the range 370-420 and converts to minus 9imps.

Scoring Jargon

If the overall board score is in the range 0-10, the imp score is zero. That's known as a *flat board* or a board on which there has been *no swing*. All other scores converting to non-zero imps are boards showing *swings*.

Teams Approach to Declarer Play

Teams bridge is similar to rubber bridge in its purity since the overriding objective is to make contracts and not to concede large penalties.

If you are in a standard contract, when playing match-pointed pairs, your aim is to score as many tricks as possible. When playing teams, however, your thinking is geared towards a more pessimistic view of the world. That means that a match-pointed pairs "hell-for-leather" approach is replaced by more circumspect reasoning. You should ask yourself such questions as "Can I make this contract if the hearts break 4-1?" and "Will I succeed if both black suits break badly?"

This thinking is determined by the imp scale. If you fail in a making vulnerable 4hearts (trading +620 for -100) you lose 12imps. If you make +620, playing safely, when your opponents make +650 you lose just 1imp. Overtrick imps can mount up but they are of secondary importance.

Teams Approach to Defence

As the flip side to the above, your objective when defending is to beat the contract. You should be willing to risk the odd overtrick in pursuit of this goal. This contrasts with match-pointed pairs where such thinking may be too fanciful and result in score-sapping overtricks for your opponents. These do little for your match-point percentage.

Teams Played at Home

If you like playing rubber bridge at home, why not invite four more friends to play teams? The club is very happy to make up sets of boards (plus hand records) for home use.