

Team Bridge

NOT → **FOR**
DUMMIES

by
Al Berg
Wachusett Bridge Club

A Word

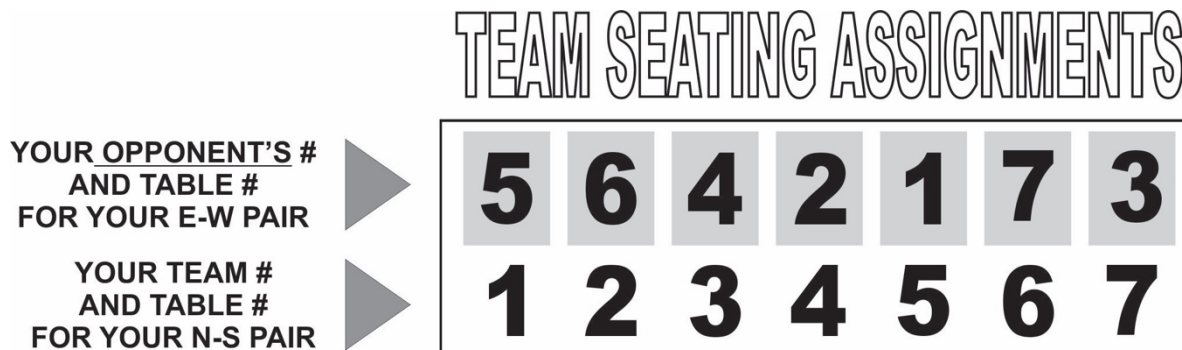
Hey! It's just bridge, it ain't rocket science. You've played hundreds of duplicate bridge hands, so why is it that some folks begin breaking out in a cold sweat and shaking at the knees whenever someone suggests that they play in a Team of 4 event? Is it the movement? Is it the scoring?

Some might argue that team play is the best and fairest form of duplicate since there's very little room for luck. Remember the last time that you were so proud to have stopped in 3 Spades which is all that can be made, only to have some pair at another table overbid to 4 Spades, and find that their idiot defenders allowed them to actually make it? Well, that's not going to happen in team play. *It's just you and your teammates.* Each board is played once by your N-S pair and once by your E-W pair. Other teams, playing other matches, aren't even playing the same hands as you. So, no "fixes," just a good test of bridge.

That's the sales pitch. So now let's take a look at some of those aspects relating to the "mechanics" of team play which might tend to intimidate the first-time team player. All are easily solvable.

Let Me Tell You Where to Go!

How often have you wanted to tell certain players just that? But here's how your Director, is going to do that in a polite and efficient way. It's the **Assignment Board**.



In a large team event, the Assignment Board (usually located near the Director's table) might contain the space for dozens of teams, and might assign pairs to various tables and sections (A2, B4, C6, etc.) But in smaller team events, such as CMBA Unit Games, you might see only one section. In that case, **your team number is also the table number at which your North-South pair will play.** The number above it (on a colored background) will be **both the team number of your opponent as well as the table at which your East-West pair will play.** Simple, huh?

Your Director will post assignments for subsequent matches as soon as ALL teams have reported results for the current match.

The Dreaded Paperwork

We can't avoid the elephant(s) in the room any longer. There are no Bridgemates to help you calculate scores for each contract AND the scores must eventually be converted to IMPs. And, "No," IMPs are not little devil-like creatures from fairy tales, but are International Match Points. So, let's deal with these one by one.

First of all, the numerical score for any contract can be found in either of two places. On the reverse side of the bidding box card for 4 Spades, as an example, are the scores for 4 Spades making 4, 5, 6 or 7 whether vulnerable or not, and showing the scores for doubled and redoubled contracts as well. Scores for *defeated* contracts can be found on the back of the PASS, X, or XX cards. The same information can be found on the reverse side of the table mat at each table.

As an aside, it's a good idea to know the correct score for at least all common contracts. Knowing the potential for scoring while the auction is in progress can sometimes help with decisions such as whether you should continue one level higher in a competitive auction, or whether you might benefit from sacrificing against a game contract already bid by the opponents.

Once each match is over, you and your teammates are going to get together and calculate IMP scoring. That's going to begin by adding *algebraically* the scores for each board that your team played – that is, adding two positive or negative scores, or finding the difference between one positive and one negative score. Next, just look at the table of International Match Points **which is shown on every scorecard** in order to convert that number to IMP's.

If, for example your team had a -150 on a board at one table, and a +600 at the other, your total is 450 and the IMP table yields a result of 10 IMPs.

Incidentally, your opponents will be doing the same math, but will arrive at a **minus** 10 IMPs for that board.

Follow the procedure for all boards that you played, and the calculations might look something like the following:

THE DREADED MATH								
BOARD	YOUR NORTH - SOUTH PAIR		YOUR EAST - WEST PAIR		YOUR NET	YOUR IMPs FROM IMP TABLE		←
						+	-	
7	-150	+	600	=	450	10		
8	630	+	-420	=	210	5		
9	-650	+	620	=	-30		1	
10	-200	+	-140	=	-340		8	
11	-150	+	400	=	250	6		
12	1370	+	-600	=	770	13		
TOTAL						34	9	
YOU WIN !! NET + 25								

The following page shows how your scorecard should look after completing this process and, at the bottom of that page, shows the way in which your team captain will report the results to the Director. We'll deal with that next.

Incidentally, you'll notice that this match consisted only of Boards 7-12. What happened to the others? Well, in this case the Director has decided upon six-board matches and it doesn't really matter which six, as long as the boards are consecutive in numbering. Boards 7-12 were in exclusive use by your match, but Boards 1-6, 13-18, 19-24, etc. were likely in use by other matches having absolutely nothing to do with yours. Depending upon the number of teams in an event, and whether the event is one session or two, the number of boards in a match might range anywhere from four to twelve.

ACBL Team Private Score

Team Number
3

Bd. No.	Contract	Score		IMPs		Bd. No.	Contract	Score		IMPs	
		+	-	+	-			+	-	+	-
7	1NE +2		150	10							
8	3SXN +1	630		5							
9	4HW +		650		1						
10	4SS -2		200		8						
11	1NW +3		150	6							
12	6CN =	1370		13							

Match # 1 Vs. 4 Match # _____ Vs. _____
 Result: We 34 They 9 Result: We _____ They _____

Sample from your North - South pair

ACBL Team Private Score

Team Number
3

Bd. No.	Contract	Score		IMPs		Bd. No.	Contract	Score		IMPs	
		+	-	+	-			+	-	+	-
7	3NE =	600		10							
8	4S N =		420	5							
9	4HW =	620			1						
10	3S S =		140		8						
11	3NW =	400		6							
12	5CN +1		600	13							

Sample from your East - West pair

Your team number here

TEAM NUMBER
3

N/S _____
E/W _____

What round?

ROUND RECORD
1

PLAYED AGAINST
NO. **4**

Against whom did you play?

Result of match

RESULT: (Circle One)
WE: **WON** TIED LOST
NET IMPs **25**
(not VPs) + or -

Result of match

If 5 or 6 man team player sitting out this round

The Pickup Slip – Some Work for Your Captain

Near the bottom of the previous page is a pictorial of what is called a Pickup Slip. The Director will usually have a number of these placed on each table before the event begins.

Team captains should fill out the Pickup Slip with the information shown and the captain of the *winning* team should then:

- Show the completed slip to the opposing captain in order to verify its accuracy, and allow initialing by that player
- Bring the completed and verified Pickup Slip to the location specified by the Director

*As a very useful tip for team captains, be sure that all scoring and completion of the Pickup Slip has been accomplished before you allow your team to begin any discussion of hands. Team events must be rigidly timed because subsequent matches cannot be assigned by the Director until the results of **all** current matches have been processed. In a large event (or even a smaller one for that matter) Directors simply cannot allow one team to delay the entire event and, for that reason, **late penalties will be applied without exception**. You will find that the time allowed for matches is sufficient for play and scoring but NOT for “post mortems” or any other diversions prior to the Pickup Slip being delivered to the Director.*

Odd Teams

No, we’re not casting aspersions on your team or any other. But since team matches involve one team versus another, you may have wondered what happens when there are an odd number of teams in an event. Sitouts? Send somebody home? Nope.

The Director has ways of handling that which are best not explained in detail here. But if you happen to hear the Director mention a Round Robin or a Three-Way match, then chances are there are an odd number of teams involved. In that case the Director will issue any special instructions to the teams involved which may include sitting in a different section, or even playing two matches before getting together with your teammates to score either one!

Don’t worry about it! A competent Director’s staff will get you to the right table and have you playing the correct boards. Just be sure to

listen carefully about whether or not you should shuffle the boards, or when you may be allowed to return to your home table.

Let's Relax and Review

That pretty much covers the “mechanics” of team play. So, let's review a match from start to finish with perhaps just a couple more tips and comments.

1. Sit where assigned. North-South pairs should sit at their home table, and East-West pairs should sit at their opponents' home table *unless instructed differently by the Director*.
2. Begin each match by shuffling the boards on the table **if instructed to do so by the Director** (in smaller events, the boards might be pre-dealt in which case the Director may instruct players NOT to shuffle any boards).
3. Play each board. The boards for each match are distributed partly to the table at which you are seated, and partly to the table at which your teammates are seated. Once you have finished with the boards at your table, ask a caddy or Director to exchange the boards so that you can complete the match. **Never approach the other table yourself while the match is in progress.**
4. Be sure that one player in each pair accurately records contracts and resulting scores (and it's best if both do). **Don't forget to accurately record the board number that you have actually played, since you will often not be playing the boards in order.** After you have completed all boards, be sure to **check the numerical result of each board with your opponents before you, or they, return to the home table.**
5. All players then return to their respective home tables and complete the scoring of the match as has already been explained.
6. The results of each match will be scored by the Director in terms of Victory Points (VPs), of which there are *exactly 20 available in each match*. For a match tied in terms of IMPs, each team will receive 10 VPs. Winning by a small margin of IMPs might earn the winning team, say, 12 VPs and the losing team 8 VPs. Winning a match by 28 IMPs or more will earn the winning team all 20 VP's. Victory Points are simply a way of insuring that every match has the same weight as any other in the overall scoring of the event. **VPs should have no bearing on your strategy for bidding or play.** They will be calculated *by the Director*. For the curious, there is a Victory Point table on all scorecards.

. . . And a Closing Word (or Two)

Team play can be among the most rewarding experiences in competitive bridge. If you are tournament bound, team play offers the best potential for earning masterpoints, with small awards made for every match won, and with far more substantial awards for placing overall among all teams.

We hope that the advice given here helps players who are new to team play in avoiding the following situation:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} ? & & ? & & ? & & ! \\ \text{SCORE} & \rightarrow & \text{IMPS} & \rightarrow & \text{VP'S} & = & \text{Cartoon Monster} \end{array}$$

But if not . . . please review this material just one more time and then go forth and enjoy team bridge. **Good luck!**