

Teams Tactics - A Brief Summary

What follows is only a brief guide. [Click here](#) for a link to a website with more details.

Scoring at Teams – this needs to be understood as it determines the tactics

When you play teams, for any particular hand, the score that you get as (say) NS are compared with the score that your teammates get on the same hand as EW against the opposing NS pair. These scores are then added together to give your team's net score for the hand. This net score is converted into 'IMPS' (international Match Points) using a standard conversion scale that is printed on the bottom of the centre pages of your scorecards.

Example 1

You bid and make 4S NV (score +420). Your teammates (sitting EW) play opponents who only bid 3S but making 4 (score -170). The sum of the scores is +250 which converts to 7 IMPS – your team's score for that hand. (The opposing team scores -7 IMPS). If both sides had bid and made 4S the net score would have been 0 (+420-420) so the score for that hand would have been 0 IMPS.

Key point – bid 'thin' games (45.5%) – the game bonus really matters at teams.

Example 2

You bid and make 4S V (score +620). Your teammates' opponents bid 3S making 4 (score -170). The sum of the scores is +450 which converts to 10 IMPS – your team's score for that hand.

Key point – bid 'even thinner' (37.5%) vulnerable games for the chance to gain more IMPS.

Example 3

You bid and make 4S V (score 620). On the same hand, your teammates play against a pair that makes an overtrick (score -650). The net score for that hand is -30 which converts to -1IMP.

Key point – overtricks are not worth anywhere near as much as the game bonus so don't risk going down in a game contract in order to get an overtrick. Just concentrate on making your game.

Example 4

You bid and make 4S with two overtricks V (score +680). Your teammates play against opponents who bid and make 6S (score – 1430). Your net score is -750 which converts to -13 IMPS – VERY BAD!

Key point – bid slams with a 50% chance of success.

Teams Tactics

Pairs is a frequency game, the margin by which you beat your opponents is irrelevant and each hand is equally important.

On the other hand, Teams scoring is cumulative, and it is the aggregate amount by which you beat your opponents on each hand that counts.

The IMP scale is not linear so very large gains/losses are relatively less important. A 1000 point loss costs 14 IMPS but a 500 point loss is worth 11 IMPS so two losses of 500 (1000 in total) cost 22 IMPS which is significantly more than the single loss of 1000 points

Dos and Don'ts

- DO - Bid games if they have a chance of making, particularly if you are vulnerable.
- DO - Bid slams that have a chance of making
- DO -Take risks to make your contract

- DO - Take risks to defeat a contract
- DO - Aim for the safest slam, game or part score
- DO - Be careful when sacrificing – they are bidding thin games and may not make their contract anyway plus if they double you it could be expensive
- DO - Compete to the level of the fit
- DO – Take care dealing with pre-empts – bad breaks are likely, they may go off – remember you are aiming for a positive score.
- DON'T - Double your opponents into game and give them a 'free' game bonus!
- DON'T - Make risky overcalls, especially when vulnerable – a score of -800 is a disaster!
- DON'T - Sacrifice against vulnerable games – your opponents are bidding thin games so will often go off giving you a positive score anyway.