

Tips for Swiss
Team Play (IMPs)
(The same mostly
applies to
Knockout play)

February 2020



Team (Swiss, Knockout) Play differs from Pair Play

| INTERNATIONAL MATCHPOINT SCALE | | Swiss (IMPs) | Matchpoints |
|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Diff. in Pts. | IMPs | Scoring is based on <u>how much you beat your opponent</u> in each hand | Scoring based upon how many people you beat, but not by how much you beat them |
| 20 – 40 | 1 | You have teammates at the other table playing the hands that your opponents are playing at your table | You are only compared to people sitting the same direction as you; It's all up to you and partner |
| 50 – 80 | 2 | | |
| 90 – 120 | 3 | | |
| 130 – 160 | 4 | | |
| 170 – 210 | 5 | | |
| 220 – 260 | 6 | | |
| 270 – 310 | 7 | | |
| 320 – 360 | 8 | Safety is important: your first priority is to <u>make your contract</u> | You should stretch for extra tricks if possible within reason |
| 370 – 420 | 9 | | |
| 430 – 490 | 10 | It can be dangerous to compete to levels where you might get doubled for penalty. | You want to compete so far as you think that there is a chance that your contract will result in a lower score for opponents or that the opponents will go down if they bid again |
| 500 – 590 | 11 | | |
| 600 – 740 | 12 | | |
| 750 – 890 | 13 | | |
| 900 – 1090 | 14 | | |
| 1100 – 1290 | 15 | | |
| 1300 – 1490 | 16 | | |
| 1500 – 1740 | 17 | | |
| 1750 – 1990 | 18 | You are rewarded for taking risks to set the opponents | You are penalized a lot if you take risks to set an opponent and they end up making extra trick(s) |
| 2000 – 2240 | 19 | | |
| 2250 – 2490 | 20 | | |
| 2500 – 2990 | 21 | | |
| 3000 – 3490 | 22 | | |
| 3500 – 3990 | 23 | | |
| 4000 and up | 24 | | |

Stretch to bid every game that has a reasonable chance of making*

- The game bonus, especially Vulnerable, can be worth a lot
 - If it is a close decision, **BID GAME**
 - If you bid/make game and opponents don't bid it, you will win between 6 (not vulnerable) and 10 (vulnerable) IMPs
 - If you make a game and they bid it but go down, the bonus is even higher at 10-14 IMPs
 - Two Hands from Monday, February 3: You should get to four hearts E/W on both hands
 - Try it with your partner

Board: 5
Dealer: N
Vul: NS

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| ♠K62 | ♠QT9843 | ♠7 |
| ♥KJT975 | ♥63 | ♥Q42 |
| ♦K96 | ♦53 | ♦A874 |
| ♣2 | ♣K65 | ♣AQJ73 |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | N | E | |
| | W | S | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | |
| N | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| S | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| E | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 13 |
| W | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 12 |

♠AJ5
♥A8
♦QJT2
♣T984

HCP

Board: 6
Dealer: E
Vul: EW

| | | |
|--------|---------|--------|
| ♠KQ654 | ♠T92 | ♠J3 |
| ♥JT982 | ♥Q5 | ♥AK73 |
| ♦5 | ♦Q7 | ♦AT632 |
| ♣J9 | ♣AQT873 | ♣52 |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | N | E | |
| | W | S | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | |
| N | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| S | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| E | 4 | 4 | | | 12 |
| W | 4 | 4 | | | 11 |

♠A87
♥64
♦KJ984
♣K64

HCP

* Some say bid a vulnerable game if it has a 35-40% and a non-vulnerable game if it has a ~45% chance, but it may be difficult to calculate these odds while bidding

Make your contract

- When dummy comes down think “What is the safest way to make this contract?”
- More IMPs are lost for going down than for any other reason
 - For game contracts, the penalty is high: lose 10-14 IMPs
- Do not try to make overtricks if they risk anything!
- Example

| | | | |
|-----------|--|---------|--|
| Board: 25 | | ♠AQ63 | |
| Dealer: N | | ♥K | |
| Vul: EW | | ♦A6542 | |
| ♠742 | | ♣A75 | |
| ♥AT65 | | ♠KT85 | |
| ♦T73 | | ♥J98 | |
| ♣Q93 | | ♦Q8 | |
| | | ♣J642 | |
| | | ♠J9 | |
| | | ♥Q7432 | |
| | | ♦KJ9 | |
| | | ♣KT8 | |
| | | 17 | |
| | | 6 HCP 7 | |
| | | 10 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ |
| N | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| S | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| E | | | | | |
| W | | | | | |

EXAMPLE:

South is in 3NT. The opening lead is five of hearts. You win with the King.

How many tricks should you get? How many do you need?

If you take the diamond finesse and it works and they split reasonably, then you have nine tricks off the top.

Our opponent played around and, before taking his nine tricks, took the spade finesse and went down.

Take Your Tricks and Make your Contract!

Don't double a part score without a powerful trump stack and certainty that you will set them

- If you double the opponents and they make it, the cost is high!
 - 2 Hearts (not doubled) making three is -140
 - 2 Hearts doubled, making three, vulnerable, is -870
 - The difference of 730 points is 12 IMPs!
- **Don't double a part score unless you have a trump stack with several tricks GUARANTEED and you KNOW your partner can provide the other tricks needed to set**
- Your partner opened 1NT and your RHO bids 2 Spades.
 - These trumps are NOT good enough to double with: **97642**
 - These trumps ARE good enough: **AJ854**
- Remember, greed is a vice, not a virtue.

Take a chance to set a contract

- In pairs, if you try something aggressive to set a contract and it doesn't work, it could cost a lot.
 - Minus 450 versus -420 might be the difference in an average and a bottom board
- At teams, if you try something aggressive to set a contract and it doesn't work, the cost can be small.
 - Losing 30 points (450 vs. 420) is 1 IMP
 - But setting the contract for +100 versus not setting it at -620 is 12 IMPS!
- Ask yourself:
 - What would it take to set declarer?
 - What does partner need to have and how should I play it?

• EXAMPLE:

♠ AJ10974
♥ 743
♦ K6
♣ 109

Auction

1♥ - 1♠ - 2♠ (Limit raise of better) - Pass - 4♥

The opponents are not afraid of your spades. Probably one has a doubleton honor or a singleton.

The 10 of Clubs is "safe", protecting your partner's holding. BUT the reward would be high for setting the contract.

Lead the ♦ K. If partner has the Ace, you get a ruff and can cash the ♠ A to set the opponents.

You would probably never lead the ♦ K at Matchpoints. Too risky.

Go with SAFE Contracts. Get a PLUS SCORE.

- If you have your choice of contracts, pick the safer

- Example:

| | |
|---|-------|
| ♠ | Jx |
| ♥ | Axxx |
| ♦ | A10xx |
| ♣ | Jxx |

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|----|
| W | N | E | S |
| | 1♦ | | 1♥ |
| P | 1NT | | ? |

- What do you do?
- At Matchpoints (Pairs) you probably Pass, since NT scores higher than other contracts
- At Swiss or KO, you bid 2 ♦ because it is SAFER than 1NT.

Be Frisky when raising early, especially non-Vulnerable versus Vulnerable. Put the pressure on the opponents.

- Your partner opens 1 ♠

- You have:
 - ♠ 974
 - ♥ 874
 - ♦ K6
 - ♣ J9752

- Raise to 2 ♠ : Make it difficult for the opponents
- If you pass, they find their diamond fit and you get into a bidding contest

- Fight to get a part score. Bid early!

Board: 26
Dealer: E
Vul: All

| | | |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| ♠ 74 | ♠ QJ85 | ♠ AKT2 |
| ♥ A9 | ♥ J64 | ♥ T82 |
| ♦ QJ86543 | ♦ A92 | ♦ 7 |
| ♣ 84 | ♣ JT6 | ♣ Q9752 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| N | ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | |
| N | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| S | 3 | 2 | 2 | | |
| E | | | 1 | | |
| W | | | 1 | | |

| | |
|---------|----|
| ♠ 963 | 9 |
| ♥ KQ753 | 7 |
| ♦ KT | |
| ♣ AK3 | 15 |

| | |
|-----|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |
| HCP | |

EXAMPLE: East passes, South opens one heart. What do you do with the West hand? Two diamonds implies an opening hand (vulnerable). Pass? Let the opponents have free reign? Bid three diamonds! Make the opponents guess. What will North do? Bid three hearts when it might make four? Bid 3NT with heart support? Make a negative double that could be passed? Make the opponents guess.

Is bidding a Slam worth the risk?

- Slams are worth the risk if they are relatively high probability
 - How high? **At least 60%-75% (opinions vary)**
 - If you bid/make slam and opponents don't bid it, you will win between 11 (not vulnerable) and 13/14 (vulnerable) IMPs
 - Example: 6 ♥ vulnerable making versus 4 ♥ making six.
 - ANSWER: $+1430 - 680 = 750 = 13$ IMPs
 - Example: 6 ♥ vulnerable making versus 4 ♥ making six.
 - ANSWER: minus -100 versus +620 loses 12 IMPs
 - Slams can end up in a lot of score going either direction
 - Go with the odds to be on the winning side.
- **Never bid a Grand Slam unless you can count 13 tricks during the auction.**

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| ♠ Q J 9 | ♠ K 10 6 5 4 3 |
| ♥ K Q 9 5 3 | ♥ A J 8 7 |
| ♦ 8 6 2 | ♦ ---- |
| ♣ Q 3 | ♣ A J 10 |

EXAMPLE:

- Heart Slam is almost 100% played by East: It risks a spade ruff, but you can later pitch clubs on Spades
- Played by West with a club lead, Heart slam is 50% or less. Not good.
- Spade slam is NOT very good. You are off an ACE and you have to take the club finesse (50%).

Don't Swing or make risky bids or plays just because you think you are behind in the match

- You go set 1100 on a hand where the opponents can only make game. OUCH! Your team might have lost 11 IMPs or more.
- Do you SWING to make it up?
 - Swing = open a bad hand, bid high with a bad seven card suit, double the opponents in a partial hoping to set them one trick, etc.
- **NO.** Do not make risky bids or plays.
- **Just play solid bridge: bid good contracts and make them, play good defense.**
- Your teammates may bring back some great scores
 - The partners at the other table may be +1100
 - Your partners may do something great
 - The opponents at the other table have a chance to do poorly
- As Curtis Cheek says: “I feel insulted when my teammates come back and say they lost 15 IMPs because they were shooting, trying to recover a big negative swing.”
- **Do NOT fret over a bad result. MOVE ON AND FOCUS ON THE GAME.**

Don't Sacrifice unless you are quite sure you are only going down One Trick

- A sacrifice is when you bid knowing that you cannot make your bid, but the cost will be less than allowing your opponents to play their contract
- In pairs, -500 may be a top versus -620.
- But in IMPs, you shouldn't gamble.
 - -500 versus -620 isn't worth it if it may actually be -800
 - It isn't worth the risk

Summary

- Bid early
- Stretch to bid games, but not slams
- Make your bid
- Don't double part scores without a certain set
- Be aggressive on Defense
- If something went wrong, forget about it until later: concentrate on doing your best on the current hand
- Don't take sacrifices without being quite sure they are correct