

HOW TO WIN TEAM GAMES

- Team Strategy is different from matchpoint strategy.
- Many fine matchpoint players are not good IMP players.
- One of the things that makes strategies for matchpoints different to that strategies for IMP's is the way the winners are determined.
- At IMP's the winner is determined by comparing the results using IMP scale one board at a time.

Swiss Teams

- Early in the match, try to avoid big losses.
- As the match goes into the last quarter, the state of the match influences your decisions.

Non Competitive Auctions

- When your partnership is left alone to determine its part score contract, the most important factor is safety.

Misfits

- One of the basic principles is when a misfit is discovered – get out as quickly as possible!
- The decision of whether or not to rebid your suit revolves around the texture and length of your suit.

Cardinal Rule of Partscore

- The cardinal rule of partscore bidding in IMP's is to arrive at a comfortable makeable contract without worrying about trick score.
- A plus is better than a minus.

Bidding

- The minors are the poor relations in pairs. In teams, play in them if that seems to be the safest spot. Always bid the safest denomination.
- Non-vulnerable game try – need to be 50+% certain that they will make because the relative reward for success is lower. Vulnerable game at about 35% (two finesses or the equivalent). A small slam about 65-70%. A grand slam virtually certain.
- Contest part-scores but don't push the opposition into game unless you trust your defence to be good enough to put them down.
- If you are going to pre-empt or carry on your partner's pre-empt, do so to the limit of your hand before your opposition know their assets.

Play

- If you can see danger in your contract, take your tricks and worry about over-tricks later. Never take a risk looking for over-tricks.
- Is there a safe way to play a suit, eg: KQ9xx opposite Axxx
KQ9xx opposite A10xx?
With the first holding, you are missing J10xx. You can guard against them all being under the KQ9xx by cashing the A first. With the second hand, you can guard against Jxxx in either hand by cashing the K first. (Try it!)
- If there has to be a favourable holding for you to make your contract, play for it; eg, AQ109 opposite xxx. You need four tricks – finesse the 9. Come back to hand – finesse the 10. This is your only chance of getting four tricks.
- After the opening lead declarer should pause to count their tricks and think about the order of play so that they don't end up in the wrong hand at the wrong time.

Defence

- If you have got the tricks to get them down – take them down. Don't be greedy.
- Whilst declarer is thinking about their play, you should take this opportunity to think as well. If you decide that partner has to have a certain card or distribution to cause declarer any problems, play for it to be so. If you are right you could pick up 11 or 12 IMPs against the risk of losing 1 or 2 for over-tricks.
- Slam defence – letting ops make a dodgy slam can be a match loser because of the different scoring mechanism.

Patience

- Often you will be dealt long sets of unexciting hands. Don't get bored and lulled into competing. Your team is playing the "good cards" at the other table. Keeping quiet can generate good swings if you remain disciplined. Trust your teammates to make the best of the hands, and focus on solid defence.

Accuracy

- You must compete soundly. Overbidding in duplicate is unpleasant but in a typical 26 board duplicate session one hand like this will lose you a few percent on your score, whereas in teams, it can take you out of the match.

Non-Competitive Auctions - Minors

W	N	E	S
	1D		1H
P	1NT		?

North:

1)	2)	3)
AKx	Txx	AT9
JT	KJ	Kx
KJxx	KJxxx	KQJx
Q9xx	KQx	KQx

South:

Jx
Axxx
A10xx
Jxx

Hand (1)

- At matchpoint, you would lean toward passing 1NT to get a higher score.
- At IMP's the potential difference is worth either 0 or 1imp.

Hand (2)

- After a 1H response, North was unable to raise or bid 1S, therefore he must have 4-5D.
- Barring ruffs, this hand will produce 9 or 10 tricks +110 or +130 in D.
- 1NT might go off. Assume S split 5-3, you could have made +110 in D and in NT you will lose 50. (lost 4IMPs)

Hand (3)

- After a 1H response, North was unable to raise or bid 1S, therefore he must have 4-5D.
- This hand will produce +120 in NT or +110 in D's.
- Again in NT the matchpoint result is a success.
- The IMP result is 0.

Non-Competitive Auctions – Majors

W	N	E	S
	1D		1H
P	2C		?

North:

1)	2)	3)
K9	QJx	AJ8
Xx	Q	X
AQTxx	KQTxx	Axxxx
Axxx	KQxx	Axxx

South:

9xx
AJ9xx
J9x
Jx

Hand (1)

- Any temptation to rebid your H suit should be suppressed.
- Your correct bid is 2D.
- With this hand North should be able to make 2D.
- 2H would be in jeopardy. It could easily go for -200.

Hand (2)

- This is about as good as South could expect.
- North's singleton honour is useful and the JC will keep opponents from shortening trumps.
- Even though it is possible to make 2H, it is very unlikely. Probably -100.
- A D-contract will likely produce +90 or +110.

Hand (3)

- This hand will likely produce a minus score for either H or D.
- Early trump leads might even lead to a -200 in D. But in D the contract may go down 1 or 2, in H would probably go down 3 or 4.

WHY

- Why have we spent so much time on innocuous looking hands?
- To illustrate that the common matchpoint strategy is a losing IMP tactic.
- The matchpoint player is to play hands in NT whenever possible.
- In IMP's it is exactly the reverse.
- The player who bids NT partial rather than an established suit fit is betting approximately 4-1.

Misfits

1)	W	N	E	S
				P
	P	1H		1S
		2D		?

South:

AQxxx

Jx

Xx

Q98x

- You know from the bidding partner has 9 cards in the red suits, this hand is likely to be a misfit.
- Partner is likely to have at most 2S so do not rebid spades.
- Your hand is not strong enough to bid 2NT.
- Bid 2H.

2)	W	N	E	S
				P
	P	1H		?

South:

KQxx

Q98x

Jxx

Xx

- You know from the bidding partner has an opening hand and a H suit.
- A 1S bid would be a mistake because you would find yourself without a convenient rebid. If you bid 1S first, and opener bids 2C or 2D, 2H would not describe your hand.
- Bid 2H first.

3)	W	N	E	S
				P
	P	1H		1S
		2D		?

South:

QJT98x

Xx

Kx

Xxx

- Even though your partner has at least 9 cards in the red suits and is probably short in S, your hand is much more valuable in S.
- You are much more likely to get a plus in S.
- Rebid 2S.

4)	W	N	E	S
				P
	P	1NT		?

South:

Jxxx

98xx

J9xx

X

- Your partner has a balanced hand with no singleton or void.
- Played in NT your hand is hopeless.
- If partner is lucky enough to hold a 4 card suit other than C, you have found an 8 card fit.
- Bid 2C stayman.

WHY

- In the above four hands, the recurring theme was getting a plus score.
- The hands were an economical auction coupled with safety.
- The decision of whether or not to rebid your suit revolves around the texture and length of your suit.
- A plus is better than a minus.