

# Swiss Teams Boot Camp



Aug 13, 2025 – “Mechanics”

Aug 20, 2025 – Strategy

- TODAY = Strategy



Play, Laugh & Learn!

# First – card play (declarer and defense) is SUPER-important

Dana and I played a hand online on Aug 16 2025

The hand was played 17 times

Look how much 1 extra trick helped !!

Board	Result
10	3NTW+3
10	3NTW+2
10	3NTW+1
10	3NTW=

1

7

6

3

% score for N-S

94%

71%

32%

6%

+ 23%

+ 39%

+ 26%

+ 1.2%

+ 2%

+ 1.3%

Taking just ONE extra trick usually moves your FINAL score up by 1 to 2.5%

*... what if you did it 2 or 3 or 4 times ?*

In a 20-board Pairs game, each board is 5% of the total, so this is the impact on the FINAL score

# Upcoming Team Games

## Santa Clara Regional

- **EACH DAY Tues Aug 26 – Sun Sept 1**

“Bracketed Teams” each day

→ there will be many brackets, including **ones with limited masterpoints**

## Teams at the Club

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month**
- **“Pro-Am” in Sept ... date TBD**

## Sectionals at Palo Alto Bridge Center

- **Sun Oct 5**
- **Sun Oct 26**
- **Sun Nov 2**

Regional & Sectional events are  
2 sessions (morning & afternoon)

Club events are 1 session  
(4 matches of 6 boards each)

# How do you form a Team?

## Ask friends

## Ask people you enjoy sitting with

- “Hey, would you like to ...”

- They’ll be flattered
- You’ll have fun!

## Partnership Desk

- Regionals often have people in search of Teammates

# TODAY

- Review scoring

• Scoring rules drive the strategy

- Strategy:

- **Play your game! Don't worry!**
- **“Stretch to bid Game”**
- **Avoid huge swings** (avoid crazy pre-empts, don't “double them into game”)
- **“Take the plus score”** when you can (if you're pretty sure their **3♦** is going down, don't risk **3♥**)
- **Play safe to make your contract**
- **OK to take risks to set their Game contract; and OK to bid Slam**

# REMINDER: Scoring

Your scorecard will look something like this

1 Write in the Board numbers – as you play, add the contracts, and the scores

2 When you get together, write in the other table result

International Match Points	Board No.	Contract	Score		IMP's	
			Plus	Minus	Plus	Minus
Pts. Diff. IMP's						
20 - 40 1	1	4S N +1	450			
50 - 80 2	2	4H N	620			
90 - 120 3	3	4H E		620		
130 - 160 4	4	1NT E		120		
170 - 210 5	5	3S E +1		170		
220 - 260 6	6	3D E -1	100			
270 - 310 7						
320 - 360 8						
370 - 420 9						
430 - 490 10						
500 - 590 11						
600 - 740 12						
750 - 890 13						
900 - 1090 14						
1100 - 1290 15						
1300 - 1490 16						
1500 - 1740 17						
1750 - 1990 18						
2000 - 2240 19						
2250 - 2490 20						
2500 - 2990 21						
3000 - 3490 22						
3500 - 3990 23						
4000+ 24						

Board No.	Contract	Score		IMP's	
		Plus	Minus	Plus	Minus
			450		
		100		12	
		170		10	
		90		1	
		420		6	
		110		5	
				23	11

3 Convert to IMPs

Vulnerable "Game swings" are BIG

An overtrick is SMALL

Accurate Part-score bidding can match a non-Vul game swing

3 Add up the totals ... You won by 12 IMPs ...

... which becomes 15 VPs (Victory Points) – the other team gets 5 VPs

ACBL 20 Victory Point Scale

20 Point Scale	
IMPs	VPs
0	10-10
1-2	11-9
3-4	12-8
5-7	13-7
8-10	14-6
11-13	15-5
14-16	16-4
17-19	17-3
20-23	18-2
24-27	19-1
28+	20-0

# Key Takeaways

- Bidding Game (when it makes) is BIG

• IMP scoring drives the strategy

→ Vulnerable Game swings are HUGE

- Overtricks don't matter much

+1 IMP

- Play safe to make your contract (don't try for an overtrick, if it risks going down)

- Play solidly !!
- Play your game !!

In a Game contract:

- +1 overtrick is only +1 IMP
- Down 1 (if making at other table) is -10 to -12 IMPs

# Stretch (a little) to bid Game (page 1)

- The Game Bonus is BIG
  - General advice: “Stretch to bid Game if you are close” particularly if vulnerable

Suppose you stretch to bid 4♠ as N-S **vulnerable**, and the opponents stop in 3♠

Case 1 –  
4♠ makes

### Your N-S table

Contract		Score
4♠ (N-S)	Make 4	+620

### Your E-W table

Contract		Score
3♠ (N-S)	Make 4	-170

Net:

+450 ( +10 IMPs )

(+6 IMPs if non-Vul)

Case 2 –  
4♠ goes down

Contract		Score
4♠ (N-S)	Down 1	-100

Contract		Score
3♠ (N-S)	Make 3	-140

-240 ( -6 IMPs )

(-5 IMPs if non-Vul)

# Stretch (a little) to bid Game (page 2)

- The Game Bonus is BIG
  - General advice: “Stretch to bid Game if you are close”
- What does that mean ??????

The only explanation that ever helped me:

- *Invite aggressively, and accept normally*

In your early ventures into Team Games, do NOT worry about this  
... reflect on it as you gain experience

# How Doubled contracts are scored

Redoubled contracts are SUPER-rare. Look up the score on the back of the XX card.

## If they go down:

This is why we sometimes sacrifice, particularly non-Vul vs. Vul. If Opps are making 4♥ vulnerable, it's -620 for you. If you bid 4♠ and take only 7 tricks, it's -500, which is better !!

Not Vulnerable		Vulnerable	
Down 1	-100	Down 1	-200
Down 2	-300	Down 2	-500
Down 3	-500	Down 3	-800
Down 4	-800	Down 4	-1100
Each additional trick	-300 more	Each additional trick	-300 more

## If they make the contract:

- Each contracted trick is 2x the usual value

You "doubled them into Game"

- If that makes the value  $\geq 100$ , then a GAME bonus is earned (else, 50 for making a below-game contract)
- Plus "50 for the insult"

Overtricks (RARE!) are 100 each non-Vul (200 each if Vul)

EXAMPLE: 3♠ Doubled, Vulnerable, making 3

Trick score =  $(3 * 30) * 2 = 180$   
 + Game bonus of 500  
 + "50 for the insult"

OMG ... just 140 if no Double

**TOTAL: 730**

# Don't make risky Doubles of Opps' Part-score contract ...

... particularly if you "Double them into Game"

This analysis assumes E-W is Vulnerable ... similar result if non-Vul

Suppose the Opps bid 3♠ as E-W, and you Double

### Your N-S table

Contract		Score
3♠x (E-W)	Make 3	-730

### Your E-W table

Contract		Score
3♠ (E-W)	Make 3	+140

Net:

-590 ( -11 IMPs )

Case 1 –  
3♠ makes

Case 2 –  
3♠ goes down

Contract		Score
3♠x (E-W)	Down 1	+200

Contract		Score
3♠ (N-S)	Down 1	-100

+100 ( +3 IMPs )

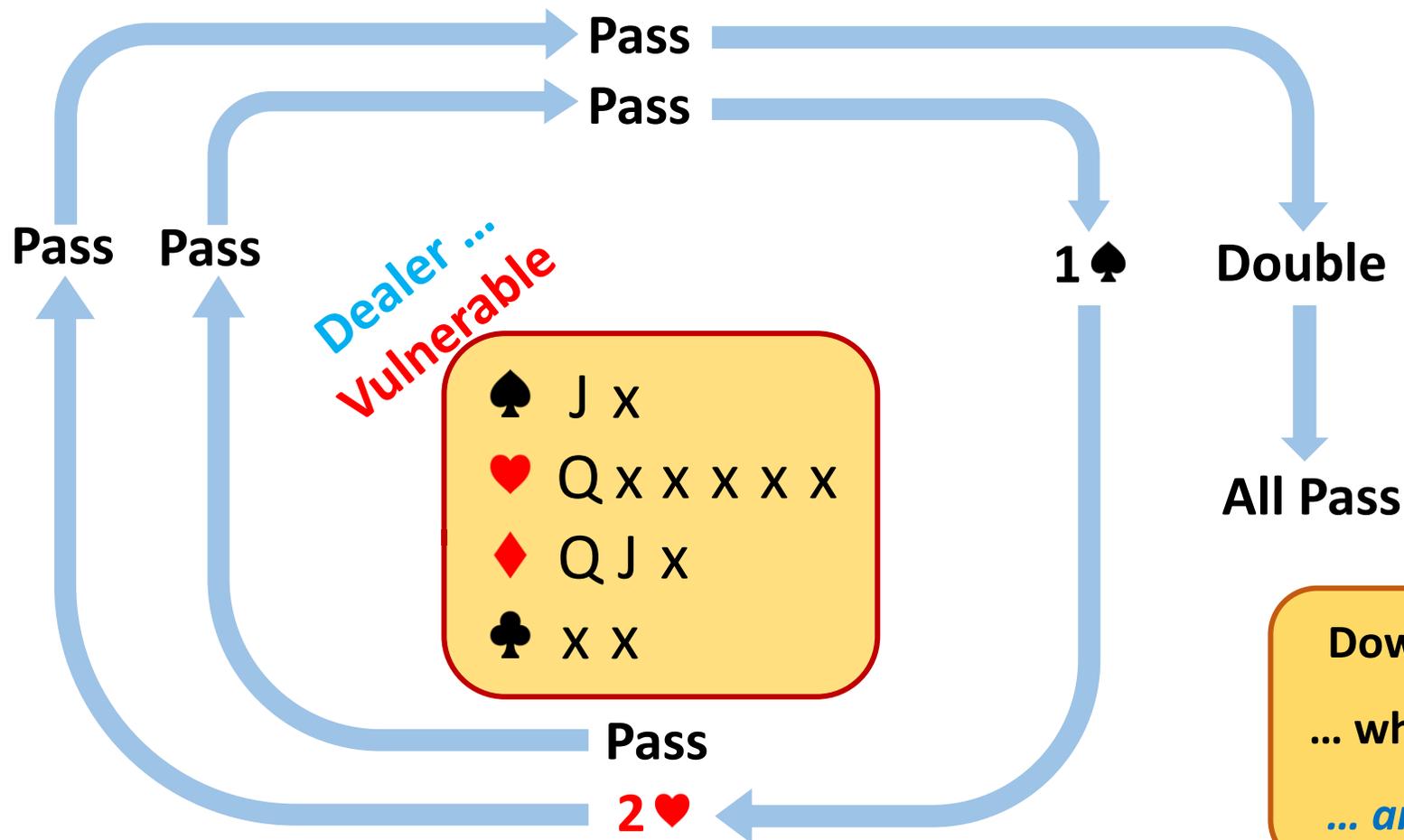
You'd have to be right 80% of the time for this to pay off ...  
... and even then, it'd be 4 small wins vs. 1 BIG loss

# Don't make risky Overcalls ...

... particularly when Vulnerable

Avoid HUGE swings

True story ☹️



Down 4 for -1100 ...  
... which was -12 IMPs  
*... and lost the match*

# Seek a PLUS score in part-score auctions (page 1)

“Take the PLUS”

In **Pairs** (matchpoint scoring), small differences are HUGE ...

... because all that matters is “rank order” (who did you beat?)

Your Contract	Making	Score	Opponents Down	Score (non-vul)	Score (vul)
1NT	1	90	1	50	100
2♦/2♣	2	90	2	100	200
2♠/2♥	2	110			
2♦/2♣	3	110			
1NT	2	120			

+120 is a TOP

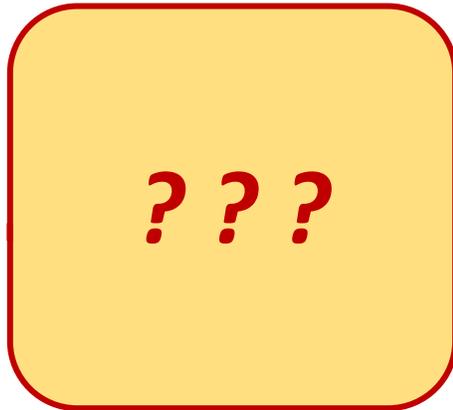
In **Teams** (IMP scoring), all these scores are comparable ...

- 120 vs. 110 is 0 IMPs
- 120 vs. 90 is 1 IMP

# Seek a PLUS score in part-score auctions (page 2)

“Take the PLUS”

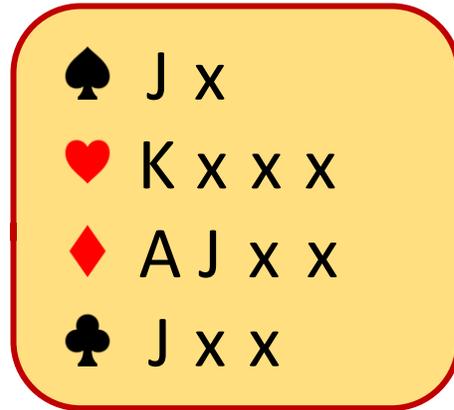
Partner



1♦

1NT

You



1♥

???

When the opponents are not bidding,  
and your side has limited strength,  
**SEEK a SAFE CONTRACT**

Team scoring (IMPs):

- safety is the most important thing
- strive to get a positive score

- In Pairs, you probably Pass, hoping to score +90 or (ideally) +120 ... but *you might go down*
- In IMPs, you are THRILLED to play in a safe 2♦ contract ... so bid 2♦ and score +90 or +110

# Seek a PLUS score in part-score auctions (page 3)

“Take the PLUS”

Consistently winning “part-score battles” makes a BIG difference

Be less aggressive than at matchpoints, particularly when vulnerable

- Any positive score (a “plus score”) is usually GOOD, so ...

- make **sound overcalls**
- **don't** make wild, preemptive bids
- **don't** balance as aggressively as in matchpoints
- **get out of auction earlier** at IMPs than matchpoints
- less incentive to “disturb the opponent’s 1NT”
- beware the “phantom sacrifice”

If you're pretty sure their 3♦ is going down, don't risk 3♥

- Be more conservative about sacrificing

# Play safe to make your contract (example 1)

Play to **MAKE** your contract

Contract: 3NT by South ... opponents lead a ♥

♠ X X X  
♥ X X  
♦ X X  
♣ A K Q X X X

♠ A K X  
♥ A K X  
♦ Q J X X X  
♣ X X

Count WINNERS: 2 ♠ + 2 ♥ + 3 ♣ = 7

In **Pairs** (matchpoint scoring), you try to run the ♣ suit and take 10 tricks

- Everyone else does the same
- Make 10 tricks when ♣ are 3-2 (68%)

Go down 32% of the time  
... like all the others

In **Teams**, win the opening lead and duck a ♣

- Ensures 9 tricks if Clubs are 4-1 or 3-2 (96%)

- Missing the overtrick costs only 1 IMP
- Going down is **HUGE**

# Play safe to make your contract (example 2)

Play to **MAKE** your contract

Contract: 4♠ by South ... opponents lead a ♦

♠ K Q x x  
♥ A J 10  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x x

♠ A J x x x  
♥ x x  
♦ A K x  
♣ A x x

Count LOSERS (from South POV): 1 ♥ + 1 ♦ + 2 ♣ = 4

In **Pairs** (matchpoint scoring), you plan to:

- Ruff a ♦ in North
- Finesse twice in ♥

- 75% of the time, this creates a winning ♥ on which you discard a ♣, making 5
- But 25% of the time, you lose 2 ♥ and 2 ♣, for down 1

In **Teams**, don't take the risk ...  
... just lose your 1 ♥ and 2 ♣

# It's OK to take a risk to set their contract

OK to take a RISK on Defense

Dummy

♠ K Q J x x  
♥ x  
♦ x  
♣ K Q J x x x

You

♠ x x x x  
♥ x x x x  
♦ A x x x x  
♣

Contract: 4♠ by South

Partner leads ♥A

... and switches to a ♣, which you ruff

YAY Partner !

You could cash your ♦A,  
and they'll make 4  
(probably a good score in Pairs  
– other people might not get the ruff)

In teams, maybe underlead your ♦A  
... if Pard has the ♦K, she gives you  
another ruff to set the contract

# Don't be afraid to bid Slam ...

... but be judicious

This analysis assumes Vulnerable ... same result if non-Vul

Suppose you stretch to bid 6♠ as N-S, and the opponents stop in 4♠

Case 1 –  
6♠ makes

## Your N-S table

Contract		Score
6♠ (N-S)	Make 6	+1430

## Your E-W table

Contract		Score
4♠ (N-S)	Make 6	-680

Net:

+750 ( +13 IMPs )

Case 2 –  
6♠ goes down

Contract		Score
6♠ (N-S)	Down 1	-100

Contract		Score
4♠ (N-S)	Make 5	-650

-750 ( -13 IMPs )

So, if you bid all your 50-50 slams, you come out even in the long run

# Recap

- Scoring rules drive the strategy
- Strategy:
  - **Play your game! Don't worry!**
  - **"Stretch to bid Game"**
  - **Avoid huge swings** (avoid crazy pre-empts, don't "double them into game")
  - **"Take the plus score"** when you can (if you're pretty sure their **3♦** is going down, don't risk **3♥**)
  - **Play safe to make your contract**
  - **OK to take risks to set their Game contract; and OK to bid Slam**