Micro Bridge Lesson 32

Teams Scoring & Tactics

Rationale

In the previous lesson, we saw that the scores at *pairs* are dependent on the *rank order.* 430 can be far superior to 420 and 400. At *teams*, the *magnitude* is extremely important. Below could be *your* scoresheet from a head-to-head teams match. Head-to-head means that you sit NS at one table while your teammates sit EW at the other table. Your opposition team fill the other seats. The rest of the room has no impact on your match and you may not even be playing the same boards!

Board	Contract	This table	Other table	diff	+imp	-imp
9	*2HW8*	*–110*	*110*	——	——	——
10	*1NTS8*	*120*	*-90*	*30*	*1*	
11	*4HN10*	*620*	*–170*	*450*	*10*	
12	*3CW8*	*100*	*110*	*210*	*5*	
13	*4HW11*	*-450*	*420*	*-30*		*1*
14	*4HW*	*-620*	*-620*	*-1240*		*15*
15	*5CNX*	*-500*	*620*	*120*	*3*	
16	*2HN*	*170*	*–170*	——	——	——

- Board 9. They made 8 tricks in 2H for 110 to them. So, we write –110. The score from our view. Our teammates brought back +110. They were probably in the same contract with the same result. We call this board a "wash" and put a line through it. The board was "squared" and now contributes nothing to the final scoreline.
- #10. We made an overtrick in 1NT for +120. The score was –90 from the the other table. The opponents at the other table missed the overtrick. At pairs, this could be huge. At teams, the difference is +30. This is converted to a new scale called International Match Points (imps). We look it up in a table and find that it gives us 1 imp
- #11. We bid game and made it for +620. It was not bid at the other table so back came –170. The diff is +450 or +10 imps. We say that this is a *swing* board. Notice that the opposition need 10 overtricks to make up for this result. Frequently, this one board could decide the match.
- #12 We defeated their vul partscore. Our teammates made it at the other table. Perhaps our defence was better or perhaps our west at the other table found a better or safer line of play.
Another 5 imps to us.
- #14 This looks like a scoring error. It's not. We let west play 4H and they made it. At the other table, NS "sacrificed" in 4S only to find that it made 10 tricks! This is called a "double game swing" and is a disaster when your on the wrong end of it.
15 imps out.
- #15 This time, we found a good sacrifice in 5C. That was –500 but our teammates were allowed to play in 4S for +620. The diff is +120 for a handy 3 imp pickup. Had we been set for –800, we would have lost 5 imps. Major penalties need to be avoided.
- In total, we won the match 19 imps to 16 imps. +3 imps is then converted to another scale called Victory Points. This win gives us 16VP.

At teams, you reconcile three times for each match.
1..Check that your opponents have the same scores before they leave. They should have the same numbers but with the opposite signs on each board.
2..Reconcile with your teammates by putting the scores together on the one sheet and working out the match result.
3..The captain of the winning team visits the opposition team to check that they agree with the result before signing and handing it in.

Butler Scoring

In this method of scoring, your score for a board is compared to the average at the tables in the room. By computer, this is then converted to imps etc. It's like playing teams when your teammates are always bringing back an average.
The average is calculated by ignoring the most extreme scores, then the computer averages the rest.

FAQ: We scored +620 in 4H but the average was only +510. Good news for us but how did this happen?

ANS: Obviously, 4H making wasn't a common result. Maybe it was hard to bid or perhaps it was defeated fairly often – better defence or poorer declarer play at the other tables.

Teams Tactics

- *Overtricks* are relatively unimportant. So,
1.. Be prepared to concede an overtrick in the hope of defeating the contract.
2..Never risk the contract for the sake of an overtrick
- *Safety.* If 5D is safer than 3NT, then that should be your contract even though 3NT might score 430. Always play in the safest slam. Imagine going one off in 6NT when 6D makes and your opponents stopped in 3NT. Your greed cost 22 imps.
- *Never try to improve a partscore*. e.g. Partner is in 2D which *will* make and so *should* 2NT. 2D will do.
- The reward for *bidding games* is considerable . See Board 11. If game has a 30% chance of making, you should bid it.
- Don't expose yourself to *big penalties*. They lose matches. If your teammates bring back a –800, DON'T ASK! Let them sort it out. We all know what –800 means.
- Be wary of doubling contracts from 2H to 3S. If they make the contract, they get the game bonus. 2HX making vul is –670. Undoubled, it is –110
- *Know your system*. Don't play a convention that either you or partner might forget. Stuff ups cost.
- *Defend carefully*. Don't finish up letting a contract make because you thought that you could set it *two* tricks by waiting.
- *Don't discuss* boards during the match. Save your mental energy for the rest of the match.
- *Don't play "catch up"* at teams. So, you've had a disaster. Don't make it worse with crazy decisions. You don't know what's going on at the other table. Your teammates may already have saved you! Butler pairs is different – the average will *never* save you.
- *Plus scores* are hard to beat. Keep setting their contracts and making your partscores can win matches when the boards are "flat".