

Teams Tactics

General Approach

You don't have to beat par to win. A 51% score will win the match. Play for Par. Par Bridge will win almost any IMP match. Your aim is to take what is yours. Don't try to steal what belongs to the opponents. Play steadily and try to minimise your errors. No dodgy overcalls, for instance, don't give the opponents unnecessary information which may help. No stretching the limits of the range for no-trumps bids. No thin penalty doubles. When give an option, *always*, go for the surest, not the biggest. In short, no heroics, no falling in love with your hand and no views.

Games and Slams

Did any vulnerable game with half a chance. 40% games are a good bet. Bid non-vulnerable games only with a solid expectation of making. Small slams are even money, vulnerable or not. You should assume that any touch and go slam will not be bid at the other table, but that any 75% slam (one of two finesses) will be bid. Therefore, you should hold back if you are ahead in the match and press on if behind. This is important. Small slams are infrequent (about 1 in 15 hands) but they account for more than 50% of the swings at teams scoring.

Never bid a grand slam unless you can count 13 tricks.

Tiny Swings

Ignore them. They are insignificant. Never opt for a major suit or no-trump contract merely for the extra points. Select the safest contract. Forget overtricks. Don't worry about risking extra under tricks if doing so gives you a play for the contract (unless you are doubled and vulnerable). As declarer, your only mission is to make your contract. As a defender, your only mission is to get the contract down. (N.B. None of this, of course, applies to playing or defending against sacrifices, where what matters is *how far down* the contract goes).

Part Scores

It is important to compete for part scores so that your opponents don't get to play lots of contracts peacefully at the two levels. The difference between 2♥ and 3♥ down one is 4 IMPs non-vulnerable and 5 IMPs vulnerable. Fight for the contract up to the three level, then play for any plus score.

Sacrifice Bidding

Be careful here. Of course, it pays to lose 300 saving against a vulnerable game, but a phantom sacrifice of 500 against an unmakeable game costs you a disastrous 12 IMPs. Don't sacrifice if you judge there is a reasonable chance of getting the contract down. Incline towards doubling sacrifice, rather than pressing on e.g. to five of a major. Take the certain money. It sometimes turns out to be a lot.

Do notice the difference vulnerability makes. Don't sacrifice against vulnerable games unless you are sure of making. If the opponents are playing accurately, they will bid 40% games when vulnerable, so a proportion of even their freely bid games are going down anyway.

Penalty Doubles

Don't be a hero. At this game, the pussycat wins. A double which helps declarer make his contract is a disaster at IMPs. If the opponents have overbid, you are getting a swing anyway. Don't double

contracts just because you see them running into bad breaks. Take what is coming your way and don't try to steal a little extra. Be especially wary of doubling part score contracts.

You aim for the surest plus score not the biggest