

Every NVBA Sectional has at least three opportunities for Intermediate/Novice players to play in Team games. We have the Thursday evening game at Beth El, where those with under 200 Masterpoints can play in a Swiss Teams event; everyone else will be playing Matchpoint Pairs. Friday evening at Elks, there is a Triple Nickel Swiss, five five-board matches at 25 minutes per match, open to all. The other game for those less than 300 Masterpoints is Matchpoint Pairs. Sunday morning and afternoon at Elks there are two separate 299er Swiss Teams events, 11 am and in the afternoon after a lunch break.

Here is a general introduction to the mechanics and choreography (movements) of Swiss Teams.

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The four main differences between Swiss Teams and the Matchpoint Pairs you usually play are:

- 1: You depend on three people to help you earn the best possible results instead of just one. Note that's also three times as many people depending on you.
- 2: The game is essentially a two-table game; it doesn't matter what happens at all but one of the other tables in the event; in addition to the table where you are playing, only the table where your teammates are playing your opponents' teammates counts.
- 3: Scoring is by International Matchpoints (IMPs) converted to Victory Points, which is significantly different from the matchpoints you are used to. This scoring difference changes the strategy and tactics of the game to some extent.
- 4: You don't know where you will sit for your next match until your match and several other matches in the same round are completed and reported. (*This differs with Bracketed Swiss or Round-Robin teams, where table assignments are pre-determined.*)

ACBL has an introduction to team events at <http://www.acbl.org/acbl-content/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/nabc-welcome-bk-2014-body-WEB.pdf>; here's what they say about Swiss Teams:

Teams (of four, five or six players — with only four playing at a time) play other teams in seven-, eight- or nine-board matches. For example, Team A sits North–South at Table 1 and East–West at Table 2, while Team B sits North–South at Table 2 and East–West at Table 1. The results are compared and scored by IMPs.

Pairings for the first round are random. Pairings for succeeding rounds are determined by a team's win-loss record or Victory Point total. (See — Methods of Scoring Team Games.)

As with pair games, Swiss teams may be flighted, strati-flighted or stratified.

and for scoring:

International Matchpoints (IMPs) — *An IMP is a unit of scoring used according to a schedule established by the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge. In a team game, the difference in trick and bonus scores of the North–South pair and the East–West pair on the same team is used to look up IMPs from a chart.*

Victory Points — *When using Victory Point scoring, the IMP score on each board is calculated first. The total IMP score on the boards of the match are then converted to Victory Points in accordance with a predetermined scale.*

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Sequence of events:

Before the match begins:

- 1: Determine your table assignment. This is usually done by looking in the rack for the table under your team number.
- 2: Your N-S pair goes to your assigned table; this is your team's home table for this match.
- 3: Your E-W pair goes to the corresponding table (if home table is A-1, corresponding table is usually B-1)

Play the boards in the match:

- 4: Play the boards in the match. Shuffle and deal the boards that begin at your table; **do not shuffle and deal the boards that come to you from the other table.** (this usually involves a caddy carrying boards between the two tables).
- 5: Compare the scores on your scoresheets with those of your opponents at the table, be sure all players agree on the results of the boards just played.

(continued on reverse)

- 6: At your home table, compare with your teammates and compute the IMP scores for each board played. Total the plus and minus IMPs, and compute the final match score in IMPs. See below.
- 7: Your team captain checks with the other team's captain, to be sure both teams agree on the score.
- 8: The winning team captain submits the match score to the event Director.

After the first match, ACBLscore matches the teams for later rounds of the event -- and it does its best to match teams with similar Victory Point totals. That way, the winning teams play each other and the losing teams play each other, which forces the more successful teams to play each other to determine the event winners. Now you are at Step 1 for the next match. (*see previous page*)

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How the scoring works. (see sample scoresheet on next page)

Your team's N-S pair has a score on a board, say 3 NT E-W down 1 vulnerable, for +100. Your E-W pair, on the same board, may have a score of 2 NT E-W making 2, for +120. Add the two scores together and you get +220. Looking this score up in the IMP scale shows winning 6 IMPs. The other team, comparing the same way, has -100 and -120 for a -220 total, and -6 IMPs.

Add up the IMPs, plus and minus, for all the boards in the match, and you will get the final total. Say you won the match by 9 IMPs to 7 IMPs, a victory margin of 2 IMPs. Next, your captain checks with the other team's captain to be sure the scores match, then the winning team captain takes the result to the Director, who puts the results into ACBLscore. ACBLscore does the conversion into Victory Points; it will use the ACBL 20 VP scale for 6-8 Board matches; you can do the look-up yourself -- and you will find you gain 11 Victory Points. The other team, using the same process, finds they earned 9 VPs.

The Jeffries Chart, usually posted on the wall next to the rack, shows each team's cumulative Victory Point total after each round.

The Ring (Odd number of teams)

But wait, you say -- what if there's an odd number of teams? Then you have a "ring" where three teams play each other. There are two parts to playing matches in a ring.

To begin, at table 1, Team 1 N-S plays five boards (say 1-5) against Team 3 E-W. At table 2, Team 2 N-S plays five boards (say 6-10) against Team 1 E-W, and at Table 3 -- you got it! Team 3 N-S plays five boards (say 11-15) against Team 2 E-W.

When the tables are finished with these boards, the E-W pairs take the boards they have just played to their home table (where their N-S partners are playing), leave the boards there, and go to the third table in the ring to play their next match.

Now the second part of the ring:

- Table 1: Team 1 N-S playing boards 6-10 against Team 2 E-W.
- Table 2: Team 2 N-S playing boards 11-15 against Team 3 E-W.
- Table 3: Team 3 N-S playing boards 1-5 against Team 1 E-W.

When the dust has settled and it's time to compare, you will find that Team 1 played boards 1-5 against Team 3, and Boards 6-10 against Team 2. Team 2 played Boards 6-10 against Team 1 and Boards 11-15 against Team 3, and Team 3 played Boards 1-5 against Team 1 and Boards 11-15 against Team 2. So it works!

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How IMPs Differs from Matchpoints

In Matchpoint scoring, the difference between making 3 ♦ for +110, and setting 3 ♥ Vulnerable for +100 can be huge. In IMP scoring, the difference is **zero**.

In Matchpoint scoring, in a game where each board is played six times, your score ranges from 5 (top) to 0 (bottom). Each board has the same effect on your total score. In IMP scoring, the score on any single board can vary between -24 IMPs and +24 IMPs. **Not all boards have the same effect on your total score.**

The "big swing" boards usually involve game and slam bonuses, where one team gets the bonus and the other doesn't. Boards where the difference in the two scores (your table and your teammates' table) is only an overtrick or two, or even different partscores, have much less effect on the match. So **it's bidding and making your games and slams that are the important boards.**

For now, just know that the IMP scale dampens the effect of huge swings on a board, and the Victory Point scale further dampens the effect of big swings. Even with that dampening, **not all boards in the match are equal.**