

## Introduction to Scoring

In most clubs the scoring for each hand is handled by the BridgeMates or some other automated system. Many newer players may be unclear on how the scores for each board are determined, and how this relates to the overall board and session results. Just as in any other competitive sport, it is important that participants understand how the scoring works.

This document describes how a single play of a board is scored in duplicate bridge. Separate documents describe how these scores are then compared to give board and session results (see *Introduction to Matchpoint Scoring* and *Introduction to IMP Scoring*). Note that rubber bridge scoring is different and not covered here.

### What makes up the score?

The score awarded for a hand is determined by three factors:

1. The *contract* - consisting of the *denomination* (the trump suit or No Trumps), the number of *odd tricks* (tricks in addition to the *book* of 6 six tricks) and the doubling state (undoubled, doubled or redoubled).
2. The *vulnerability* - this is an attribute of the board, determined by the board number (in accordance with Law 2). The four vulnerability states (nil, NS, EW and all) are cycled through each 4 boards with the cycle starting one state later in each successive set of 4. This means that all combinations of dealer and vulnerability are covered in boards 1-16. The mnemonic ONEB NEBO EBON BONE is sometime used to remember this pattern (O=nil, N=NS, E=EW and B=both).
3. The tricks actually made.

If the contract has been made the score for the declaring side consists of:

- *Contract points* - Points for each contracted odd trick.
- *Overtrick points* - Points for each trick taken over the contracted total.
- *Bonuses* - Points for making a part-score, game or slam contract.
- A “*for insult*” bonus - Points for making a doubled or redoubled contract (50 and 100 points respectively).

If the contract goes off, the declaring side incur penalty points for each undertrick.

The scores for the two sides sum to zero (eg if the declaring side gets 110, the defenders get -110).

### Contract Points

Contract points are awarded for the contracted odd tricks made. The points per trick are determined by the contract denomination and the doubling state:

	Minors	Majors	NT
Undoubled	20	30	40 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 30
Doubled	40	60	80 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 60
Redoubled	80	120	160 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 120

Note that No Trumps is the same as the majors but with an additional 10 points for the first trick.

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Any contract that earns 100 or more contract points is a *game contract*. Undoubled the lowest game contracts are 3NT, 4H/S and 5C/D. Doubling or redoubling can make lower level contracts into game contracts (eg 2HX). This is called being “doubled into game”. Any contract that is not a game contract is a *part-score contract*.

### Overtrick Points

If the contract is undoubled the value of overtricks is determined by the denomination alone, using the same factors as the contract points. If the contract is doubled or redoubled the value of overtricks is determined by the vulnerability.

Undoubled	Minors : 20	Majors or NT : 30
Doubled	Not Vul : 100	Vul : 200
Redoubled	Not Vul : 200	Vul : 400

### Part-score, game and slam bonuses

Bonuses are added for making a part-score contract, a game contract or a slam. Slam bonuses are in addition to the game bonus:

	Not Vul	Vul
Part-score	50	
Game	300	500
Small slam	500	750
Grand slam	1000	1500

### Penalty Points

Penalty points are calculated based on the number of undertricks, the vulnerability and the doubling state. Penalty points per undertrick are:

	Not Vul	Vul
Undoubled	50	100
Doubled	100 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 200 (2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> ), 300	200 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 300
Redoubled	200 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 400 (2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> ), 600	400 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 600

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The following table summarises the cost of going off 1 to 4 tricks depending on vulnerability and doubling.

Off	Not vulnerable			Vulnerable		
		X	XX		X	XX
1	-50	-100	-200	-100	-200	-400
2	-100	-300	-600	-200	-500	-1000
3	-150	-500	-1000	-300	-800	-1600
4	-200	-800	-1600	-400	-1100	-2200

This table is useful when considering sacrifice bids. You can afford to go three off doubled if not vulnerable when your opponents have a makeable vulnerable game (-500 versus -600 to -620). Conversely if you are vulnerable and your opponents are not, you can only afford to go one off doubled (two off doubled would be -500 versus -400 to -420).

### Some examples

Result	Contract points	Overtrick points	Bonuses	For insult	Score
3S making, any vulnerability	3x30=90	-	50 (part-score)	-	140
3S making 10, any vulnerability	3x30=90	1x30=30	50 (part-score)	-	170
4S making 10, not vulnerable	4x30=120	-	300 (NV game)	-	420
3SX making 3, not vulnerable	3x30x2=180	-	300 (NV game)	50 (NV)	530
6NT making, vulnerable	6x30+10=190	-	500 (Vul game) 750 (Vul small)	-	1440

### Some points to consider

All of the intricacies of the scoring system do not need to be front of mind while playing, but there are some aspects of the scoring worth considering.

1. If you can make game (or slam) not bidding it is a very bad outcome. For example, 3S making 10 tricks scores 170 but 4S making 10 scores 420 or 620 (depending on vulnerability).
2. If you cannot make a game contract there is no benefit in being in a higher part-score contract. For example, 1S making 9 tricks scores the same as 3S making 9 tricks, but 3S is a riskier contract.
3. A not vulnerable game is worth 400 to 420 points (with no overtricks). A vulnerable game is worth 600 to 620 points.
4. Part-score contracts are worth 120 to 130 points at most (with no overtricks). Sacrificing against a part-score contract is a risky business even undoubled (at 50 or 100 points per undertrick depending on vulnerability).

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5. If you can make the same number of tricks in either No Trumps or a major suit contract, No Trumps will score 10 points more (other than at the 3 level where No Trumps gets the game bonus). This is relevant in matchpoint scoring, but not IMP scoring.
6. If you have the choice of making 3NT or 4 of a major (both without overtricks), 4 of a major is worth 20 points more.
7. Doubling a part-score contract can make it into a game contract ("doubling into game"). Think carefully before leaving a takeout double in as a penalty double of a part score contract (eg 3SX).
8. Vulnerability has no impact on makeable part-score contracts. Vulnerability does impact the value of game and slam contracts and the cost of undertricks. This is why it is safest to consider a sacrifice bid when the opponents are vulnerable (higher game bonus) and you are not vulnerable (lower penalty points).
9. Doubling more than doubles the penalty points if you go more than one trick off. For example, going off two tricks not vulnerable costs 100 points undoubled but 300 points doubled.
10. Doubling more than doubles the points per overtrick. For example, undoubled a minor overtrick earns 20 points, doubled it earns 100 or 200 points depending on vulnerability.