



Sheffield Bridge Club

Competition Formats

The Committee always want to encourage our members to participate in a range of sessions and competitions and not be afraid to try to progress into ones which they perceive to be harder. All players should welcome and encourage newer players at whatever level.

The different scoring systems can be off putting if you are not familiar with them, the explanation below covers most of the regularly used scoring formats but players embarking on a new experience in bridge should remember that the game itself doesn't change just the overall scoring system (and occasionally the tactics).

Match Pointed Pairs is the standard scoring format for club duplicate bridge sessions and generates a percentage score for each pair. Each individual pair gains points for each board by a comparison with the score of all other pairs sitting in the same direction i.e. having the same cards.

Two points are gained by getting a better score than another pair and one if the score is identical. For example; if a Board is played six times you are scored against five other pairs – a “top” is 10, an average 5 and so on with 0 for the poorest (bottom) score. Thus the scoring is based upon your position against the field on each board.

The total number of points scored is expressed as a percentage of the maximum and sixty per cent is normally recognised as a good percentage score over a full session. Many competitions also use this scoring system.

IMPs Teams of Four – Your teammates sit in the opposite direction to you on each board. For each board both pairs scores are combined and the score, plus or minus, is converted to IMPs. The conversion rate is set out on bridge scorecards. It doesn't matter what most pairs do with a board – your scores are just compared with that of your opponents.

IMPs is short for International Match Points but are always simply known as IMPs. On a Monday night SBC has local leagues scored in this format. The Waddington League is scored in this way.

IMPs Teams of Eight – The Yorkshire League format – Boards are played at each of four tables. From each team two pairs play North/South and two East/West. The four scores are aggregated with a plus or minus total across the team and then this aggregated score is converted into an imp score.

Here the final total after 32 boards is again converted – into Victory Points. Where IMPs are converted to Victory Points the scales used are different depending on length of match and whether teams of four or teams of eight.

Cross IMPs - This is similar to Teams of Four but instead of comparing with just one other table, scores are compared with all the other tables in IMPs and the average is taken.

Tactically for teams scoring, including Cross IMP, we concentrate on making or defeating a contract without worrying much about overtricks and undertricks. It is often said that this is a purer form of the game than Match Points.

SBC Tuesday evening session is scored this way and the Patterson Trophy is awarded on the basis of accumulated IMPs over your 20 best sessions.

Swiss Pairs or Teams – a series of short matches (usually 5-8 boards) are played against other pairs or teams. The scores are then converted into “Victory Points” on a given scale. The opponents for the first round are randomly drawn but for subsequent rounds you play against a pair or team with a similar score.

This format is used for competitions attracting a field of mixed abilities (perhaps a charity event) as, for the majority of the session, each pair is playing against opponents scoring at a similar level.

If you are considering entering an event but are unsure about any aspect, please speak to a member of the committee or any experienced player who will be delighted to help and encourage you.

Ranking Systems

Master points – Master points are automatically logged by the Club and sent to the EBU (English Bridge Union) and are allocated normally to the top third of a field at all levels. Master points are accrued throughout a player’s bridge “career”.

The levels can be found on the EBU website via the following link:

<http://www.ebu.co.uk/masterpoints/ranks>. The progress to the higher levels a player’s accumulated score must include an amount of ‘green points’ which are awarded in national competitions.

National Grading Scheme (NGS) - a relatively recent advent, again managed by the EBU. NGS reflects current form. It is a complicated calculation based on the strength of the field and you and your partner’s NGS standing at the time.

After each session your NGS will rise or fall, albeit usually marginally, depending on how your score relates to your current standing. Current standing is based on the last 80 or so playing sessions and is reflected as a percentage referenced to a playing card.

The following link sets out the levels: <https://www.ebu.co.uk/ngs/stats>.