LEARN BRIDGE
SCORING

We had a partnership misunderstanding. My partner assumed I knew what I was doing.

- **Anonymous**

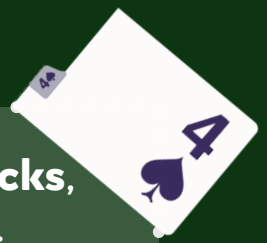
SCORING

HOW IT WORKS

The **BridgeMates** do the math for us now,
but it's good to know what **counts**...

Let's take a **closer look** at a score
you've probably seen before...

Scenario



You bid **4S** and take **11 tricks**,
making your **contract**.

450 comes up on the BridgeMate
when you enter the result.

Where does this number come from?

150

Every trick taken **after** the **6th** is worth **30** points each

+

300

The **bonus** for being in game is worth **300** points (not **vul**)

450

The **score total**, which will be **compared** against everyone else...

Let's take a closer look at everything involved...

SCORING

HOW IT WORKS

There are **four factors** determining your score...

TRICKS WON

CONTRACT

VULNERABILITY

(RE)DOUBLES

SCORING
TRICKS WON

Depending on your **strain**, each trick taken beyond the **6th (“odd tricks”)** is worth a certain number of **points**...

MAJORS

Each odd trick is worth **30** points

NOTRUMP

Each odd trick is worth **30** points

Add a **flat bonus** of 10 points at the end

MINORS

Each odd trick is worth **20** points

SCORING
CONTRACT

What you **bid to** determines how much of a **point bonus** you'll receive for making enough **tricks**...

PASS OUT

Everybody scores **0 points** on this board

PART-SCORE

Score a **flat 50 points** for making

GAME

Not vulnerable, score a **bonus** of **300**

Vulnerable, score a **bonus** of **500**

SLAM

Not vulnerable, score a **further** bonus of **500**

Vulnerable, score a **Further** bonus of **750**

If you bid and make a **GRAND**, score **twice** the **slam bonus**

SCORING
VULNERABILITY

There are **common abbreviations** or names for certain vulnerability configurations.

Suppose that you are **North/South**...

None vulnerable or **"nil"**

All vulnerable, or **"all"**

NS vulnerable, or **"unfavourable"**

EW vulnerable, or **"favourable"**

The vulnerability affects your score, and should thus also affect your bidding...

SCORING

VULNERABILITY

If you are **vulnerable**, you will **score more points** for **game** and **slam**, but you will also **lose more points** when you go down.

	NOT VUL	VUL
PARTSCORE	50	50
GAME	300	500
SLAM	500	750
UNDERTRICKS	-50	-100

Your (re)doubled scores will also be affected...

SCORING
DOUBLES

Despite the name, **doubles** do not *literally* double your score.
Instead, it gives **bonuses** emphasising **over-** and **undertricks**.

Let's say you played **4SX** and made **11 tricks**...

120	**30** per odd trick **excluding overtricks**	Another **50** for **"insult"!**
+		+
300	**Bonus** for being in **game**	**30** per odd trick **excluding overtricks**
		+
		100 for each (non-vul) **overtrick**
420	This is also the score for **4S=**, as **overtricks** are calculated differently when there is a **double**	**Total score** after being **doubled**...

420
+
50
+
120
+
100
690

SCORING

DOUBLES

We are familiar with the normal **game levels**... **3NT, 4 of a major**, or **5 of a minor**.

BUT... it's also possible to get a **game bonus** by being **doubled in a partscore**.

This happens when the **doubled trick score** exceeds 100, but it's easier to just **double the level** of the contract and see if that's game or higher.

SCORING
DOUBLES

Let's **compare** 1SX and 2SX, non-vul, both **making 8 tricks**...

MAKING	50	+	50	100			50	50
ODD TRICKS	30	+	30	60	60	+	60	120
OVERTRICKS			100	100			0	0
GAME BONUS			0	0				300
TOTAL	The **odd tricks** total to **under 100**, and **1×2=2**, which is **not game**			260	The **odd tricks** total to **over 100**, and **2×2=4**, which is **game**			470

SCORING
DOUBLES

Doubles make **overtricks** disproportionately valuable!
Being doubled **into game** and making overtricks is worth much more than being doubled **in game** and making the same number...

	NOT VUL	VUL
OVERTRICKS	20 / 30	20 / 30
X OVERTRICKS	100	100
UNDERTRICKS	-50	-100
X UNDERTRICKS	?	?

On the flipside, doubles also **increase the risks of going down**, as every undertrick is now worth much more...

SCORING
DOUBLES

At the **beginning**, a doubled **undertrick** is worth exactly **double** the base value, but they **quickly increase in value**...

X	NOT VUL	VUL
DOWN 1	-100	-200
DOWN 2	-300	-500
DOWN 3	-500	-800
DOWN 4	-800	-1100

Every **subsequent undertrick** is another **-300 points**

There are **greater risks** **and** **greater rewards** for both sides

SCORING
SUMMARY

There are **four factors** determining your score...

TRICKS WON

- **Majors** = +30 per trick
- **Minors** = +20 per trick
- **NT** = +30 per trick + 10 flat

CONTRACT

- **Bonus** for **level** of contract
- +50 **partscore**, +300/500 **game**
- +500/750 **slam**, ×2 **grand slam**

VULNERABILITY

- Affects **contract bonuses**
- Affects **score** for **undertricks**
- **Not Vul** = -50, **Vul** = -100

(RE)DOUBLES

- **Extras** on top of original score
- Emphasis on **over** and **undertricks**

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

But you don't "win" or "lose" at bridge just by adding up points.

Instead, in most sessions, we compare **percentages** at the end of the session.

What does getting "54%" mean?
Let's look at an example...

NS	**EW**	Contract	Making	Score		MPs	
				NS	**EW**	**NS**	**EW**
1	1	4S S	5	450			
2	3	2S S	4	170			
3	5	3S S	4	170			
4	2	4S N	4	420			
5	4	5S S	-1		50		

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

You will be assigned a unique **pair number** for your direction.

A **minus** score for one side is considered a **positive** for the other

NS	**EW**	Contract	Making	Score		MPs	
				NS	**EW**	**NS**	**EW**
1	1	4S S	5	450			
2	3	2S S	4	170			
3	5	3S S	4	170			
4	2	4S N	4	420			
5	4	5S S	-1		50		

Beating another pair is worth **2 MPs**.

Tying with another pair is worth **1 MP**.

Your **final score** is in **matchpoints** (MPs), which are awarded based on how many pairs' scores you **beat**

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Let's look at **NS** 1, with the best NS score on this board.
They **beat** all the other 4 pairs, for **8 MPs** and a top board.

We can score the rest like this – count how many they beat, how many they tied with, and add it up for the total matchpoints.

NS	**EW**	Contract	Making	Score		MPs	
				NS	**EW**	**NS**	**EW**
1	1	4S S	5	450		8	0
2	3	2S S	4	170		3	5
3	5	3S S	4	170		3	5
4	2	4S N	4	420		6	2
5	4	5S S	-1		50	0	8

If you get a **top**, your opponents will get **zero**.

Matchpoints always add up to the **same number**.

Beating another pair is worth **2 MPs**.

Tying with another pair is worth **1 MP**.

Your **final score** is in **matchpoints** (MPs), which are awarded based on how many pairs' scores you **beat**

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

What does this mean for **strategy**?

How much you beat other pairs by doesn't matter – just that you beat them at all.

We'll look at a couple of boards that show why this matters so much...

(These are real boards from a National Pairs event in NZ!)

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Game bidding – how much reward?

♠ 9862
♥ A9
♦ KQJ8
♣ J97

♠ AKT5
♥ QT
♦ AT93
♣ Q42

♠ J73
♥ J762
♦ 72
♣ AK63

♠ Q4
♥ K8543
♦ 654
♣ T85

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	4	5	5	3
S	4	4	5	5	3
E	9	9	8	8	9
W	9	9	8	8	9

Par -400 3NT= EW

NS: 11 + 5 = 16 HCP
EW: 9 + 15 = 24 HCP

Contract	Lead	Score		MP	
4♠-1 W	♦K	50		27	1
3NT-1 W	♠9	50		27	1
2NT= W	♦K		120	23	5
2NT= W	♦K		120	23	5
2NT+1 W	♦K		150	15	13
1NT+2 W	♦K		150	15	13
2NT+1 W	♦K		150	15	13
1NT+2 W	♠2		150	15	13
1NT+2 W	♦K		150	15	13
2NT+1 W	♦K		150	15	13
2NT+2 W	♦K		180	8	20
3NT= W	♦K		400	4	24
3NT= W	♦K		400	4	24
3NT= W	♦Q		400	4	24
3NT+2 E	♥4		460	0	28

Everybody makes mistakes... even very good players can end up in the wrong contract.

On this board, **3NT** was not a favourite with only **24 HCP** between the hands. So most people played in a **partscore**.

But that didn't mean a bad score!

71% was scored for not being in game, but making more tricks than everyone else.

This pair scored 100% and made 11 tricks in 3NT. But did they **need** to do that?

If they played 1/2NT and made the same tricks, they would score 22/28 for a 79% anyway.

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Game bidding – how much reward?

♠ KQT8
♥ QT983
♦ J74
♣ J

♠ A93
♥ AJ42
♦ 98
♣ Q965

♠ 7542
♥ 7
♦ AKT52
♣ AK7

♠ J6
♥ K65
♦ Q63
♣ T8432

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	3	3	7	3	3
S	3	3	7	3	3
E	9	9	6	10	10
W	9	10	6	10	10

Par -420 4♠= EW

NS: 9 + 6 = 15 HCP
EW: 14 + 11 = 25 HCP

Contract	Lead	Score		MP	
3NT-3 W	♠K	150		28	0
3NT-1 W	♥T	50		26	1
3♣+1 W	♠K		130	24	4
2♠+1 W	♣8		140	22	6
1NT+4 W	♥T		210	19	9
1NT+4 W	♣J		210	19	9
3NT= W	♣J		400	14	14
3NT= W	♥T		400	14	14
3NT= W	♠K		400	14	14
3NT+1 W	♦4		430	5	23
3NT+1 W	♣J		430	5	23
3NT+1 W	♠Q		430	5	23
3NT+1 W	♥3		430	5	23
3NT+1 W	♥8		430	5	23
3NT+1 E	♣8		430	5	23

These two pairs made 11 tricks in NT – **more** than anyone in game.

But it **doesn't matter** – the most they are scoring is **32%** no matter how well they declared.

On the contrary, if the "expectation" is to be in game (e.g. having 25 HCP), you won't earn many matchpoints even if you make more tricks

Vulnerability doesn't matter at all if the decision is just between being in game and not.

600 > 400, but it doesn't matter in MPs.

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Bidding the **right game**

♠ QT5
♥ J2
♦ AQ9863
♣ 86

♠ 976432
♥ 83
♦ 2
♣ J942

♠ K
♥ AQT9765
♦ T
♣ KQT5

♠ AJ8
♥ K4
♦ KJ754
♣ A73

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	10	7	4	11	4
S	10	7	4	11	4
E	2	6	9	2	9
W	2	6	9	2	9

Par +300 5♥X-2 E

NS: 9 + 16 = 25 HCP
EW: 14 + 1 = 15 HCP

Contract	Lead	Score		MP	
3NT+2 S	♥8	460		24	4
3NT+2 S	♥8	460		24	4
3NT+2 S	♥8	460		24	4
3NT+2 S	♠7	460		24	4
4NT+1 S	♥8	460		24	4
5♦= N	♣K	400		12	16
3NT= S	♣4	400		12	16
5♦= N	♣K	400		12	16
5♦= N	♣K	400		12	16
5♦= N	♥A	400		12	16
5♦= N	♥A	400		12	16
5♦= N	♥A	400		12	16
5♥X-2 E	♣A	300		4	24
4♥-1 W	♠5	50		2	26
3♥= E	♦4		140	0	28

11 tricks can be taken in **5D**, but because it's a **minor game**, it's worth only as much as 9 tricks in **3NT**

Usually, with a **major fit**, we will play a **suited game**, but with a **minor fit**, we play 3NT

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Sacrifices – when going down is good!

♠ 65
♥ AQJ
♦ A874
♣ J654

♠ KT
♥ 85
♦ KQ6
♣ AKQ732

♠ AQ9742
♥ 9
♦ JT95
♣ T9

♠ J83
♥ KT76432
♦ 32
♣ 8

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	1	9	3	3
S	4	1	9	3	3
E	5	11	4	9	10
W	5	11	4	9	10

Par -500 6♥X-3 N

NS: 12 + 4 = 16 HCP
EW: 7 + 17 = 24 HCP

Contract	Lead	Score		MP	
5♠X-1 E	♣8	200		28	0
5♥X-2 S	♣A		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣A		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣K		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣A		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣A		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣K		300	20	8
5♥X-2 S	♣A		300	20	8
6♥X-3 S	♣A		500	13	15
3NT+1 W	♠6		630	11	17
4♠+2 E	♣8		680	5	23
4♠+2 E	♣8		680	5	23
4♠+2 W	♠6		680	5	23
4♠+2 E	♣8		680	5	23
4♠+2 E	♣8		680	5	23

One pair **bid over** the sacrifice, but then **misplayed** it to go down...

N/S can **put pressure** on E/W and force them to guess – should they bid or double?

E/W can make a **slam** in spades, but it's hard to find... and harder when N/S get in the way!

N/S bid a contract they **don't expect to make**... but they think that going down will be worth **less than the opponents' game**

SCORING

MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

	NOT VUL	VUL
NOT VUL	-2	-1
VUL	-3	-2

A **non-vulnerable** game is worth 400-480

A **vulnerable** game is worth 600-680

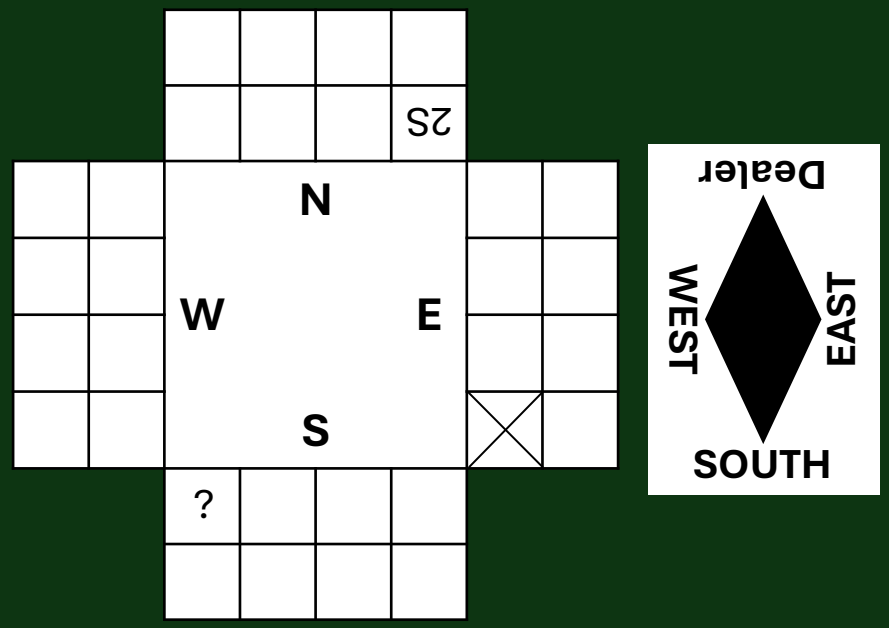
We can bid very **aggressively** when we are **favourable**...
but we should be careful when the opposite is true.

Most of the time, we will be at **equal** vulnerability...
So when should we sacrifice?

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

❖ Have a **big, unbalanced trump fit** – 10+ cards



Bid **4S**

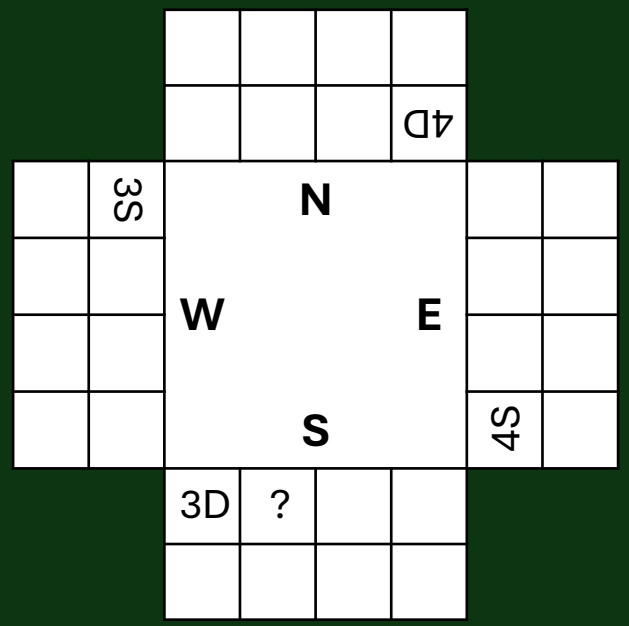
You have a **big trump fit** and an **unbalanced** hand

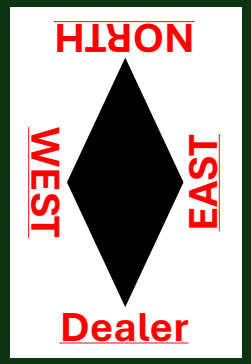
SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

❖ If you have already **pre-empted**, **don't bid again**

Sometimes **partner** might just be waiting to **double** with a hand like...





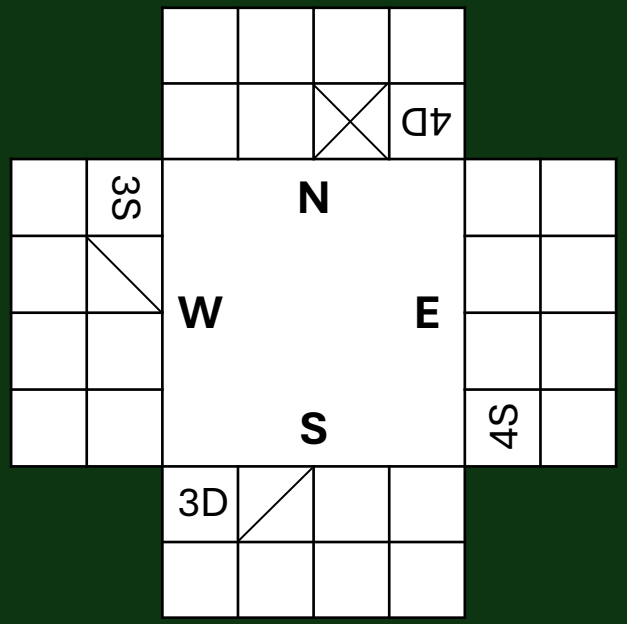
Pass

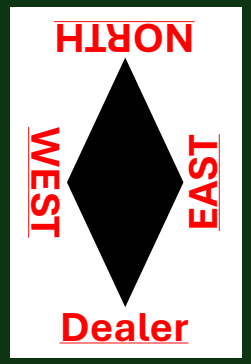
You've **already** described your hand, let **partner** make the choice

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

❖ If you have already **pre-empted**, **don't bid again**

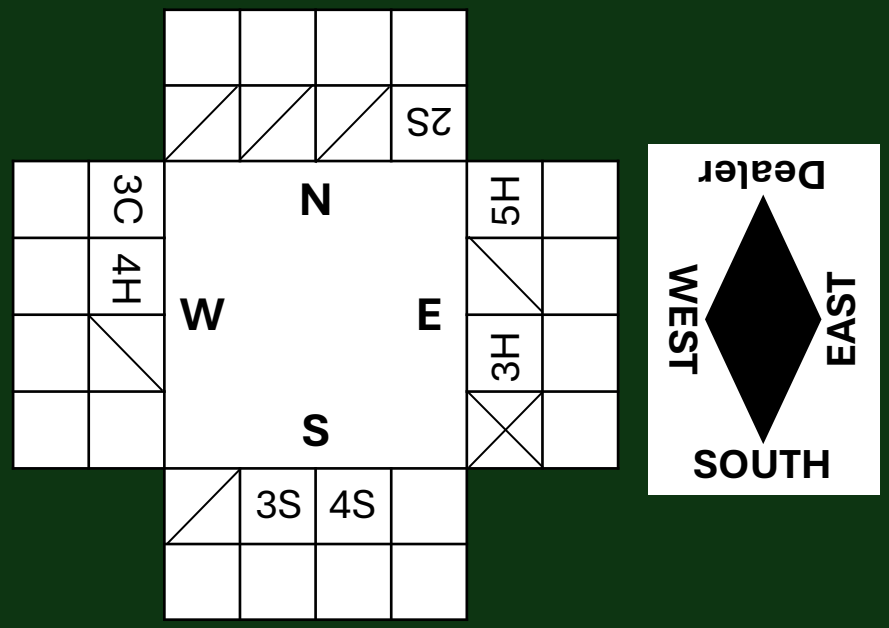




SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

❖ Sacrifice **fast** – bid to the **maximum level** of your hand



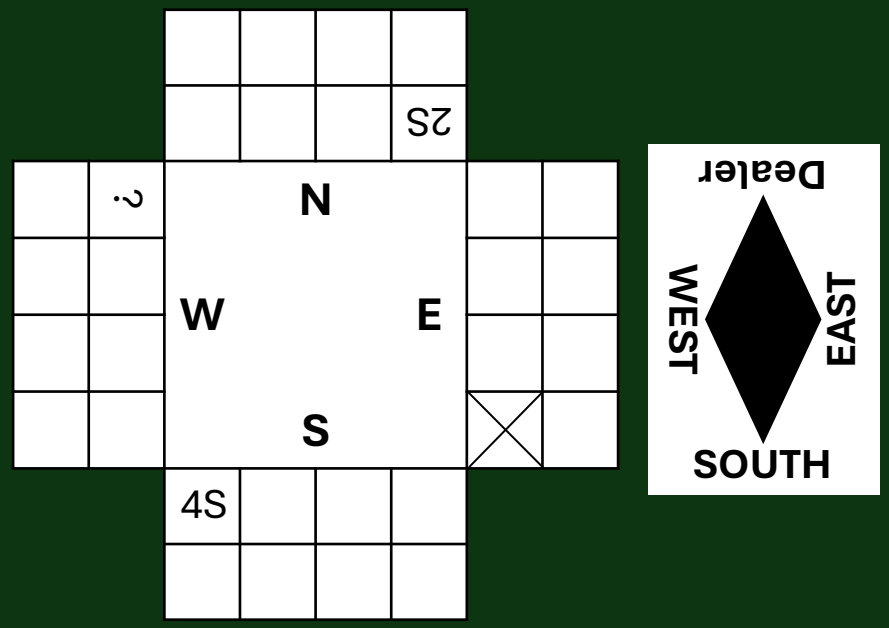
Imagine you try to take the auction **slowly**...

Lots of time for them to figure out where they want to be

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Some general **rules** for making sacrifices...

❖ Sacrifice **fast** – bid to the **maximum level** of your hand



If you bid **4S** first...

They have to guess whether to bid on or double you straight away, without knowing if they have a good fit

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

Competing for a **partscore**...

♠ J982
♥ A832
♦ AQ
♣ JT2

♠ QT76
♥ 95
♦ JT8
♣ A764

♠ K3
♥ KQJ74
♦ K653
♣ Q9

♠ A54
♥ T6
♦ 9742
♣ K853

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	7	6	6	6	7
S	7	6	6	5	7
E	6	6	7	7	6
W	6	6	7	7	6

Par +90 1NT= NS

NS: 12 + 7 = 19 HCP
EW: 14 + 7 = 21 HCP

Contract	Lead	Score		MP	
1NT= N	♥K	90		28	0
1NT-1 E	♠4	50		26	2
2♠-1 N	♥K		50	24	4
1♥= E	♥T		80	22	6
2♠-2 N	♥9		100	16	12
2♠-2 N	♥K		100	16	12
2♠-2 N	♥K		100	16	12
2♣-2 N	♥K		100	16	12
3NT-2 N	♥Q		100	16	12
2♥= E	♣5		110	6	22
1♥+1= E	♣3		110	6	22
2♥= E	♣5		110	6	22
2♦+1= W	♣J		110	6	22
1♥+1= E	♣5		110	6	22
2♥+1= E	♣3		140	0	28

There is a **huge variety** of contract on this boards due to competition from both sides

N/S didn't have to make their contract – they just had to do better than -110

The **worst** N/S results occurred when E/W were allowed to make a **low-level contract**

Vulnerability doesn't affect how much you get for **making** a partscore, but it affects your score if you **go down** while competing

SCORING

MATCHPOINTS

Remember the common partscore scores...

	1	2	3
NT	90	120	150
♡ ♠	80	110	140
♣ ♢	70	90	110

Most scores will be between **110** and **150**

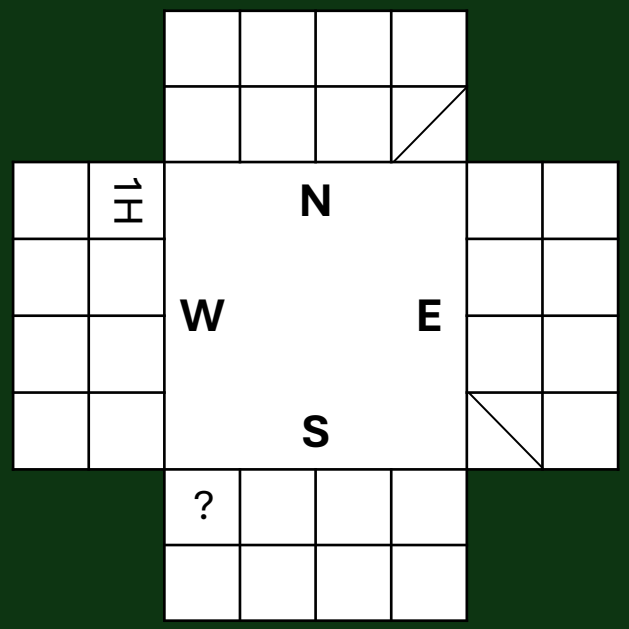
If you go **down 2 non-vulnerable** or **down 1 vulnerable**,
-100 will still be a good score if they were making

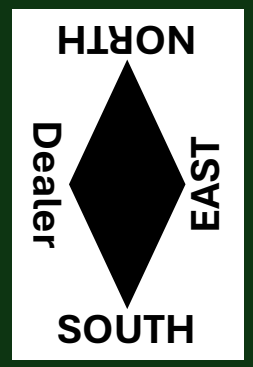
SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

When should you **compete?**

❖ When you are in the **pass-out seat**, act with **weaker hands**

Partner can still have a **good hand** that couldn't bid the last round





Double

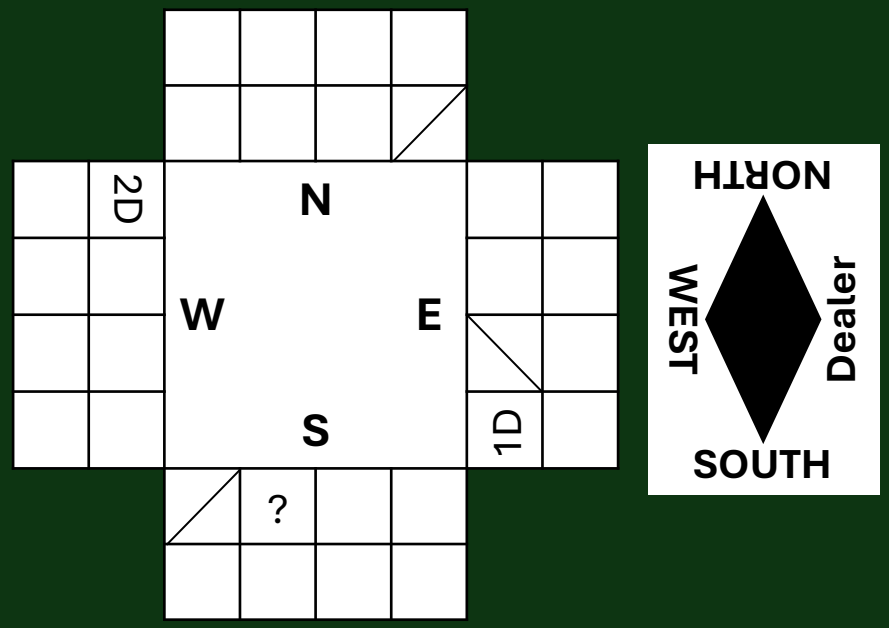
Not an **opening hand**, but **good shape** for competing – don't let them take the contract cheaply!

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

When should you **compete?**

❖ When you are in the **pass-out seat**, act with **weaker hands**

Don't let the opponents play where they **want** to stop



Bid 2H

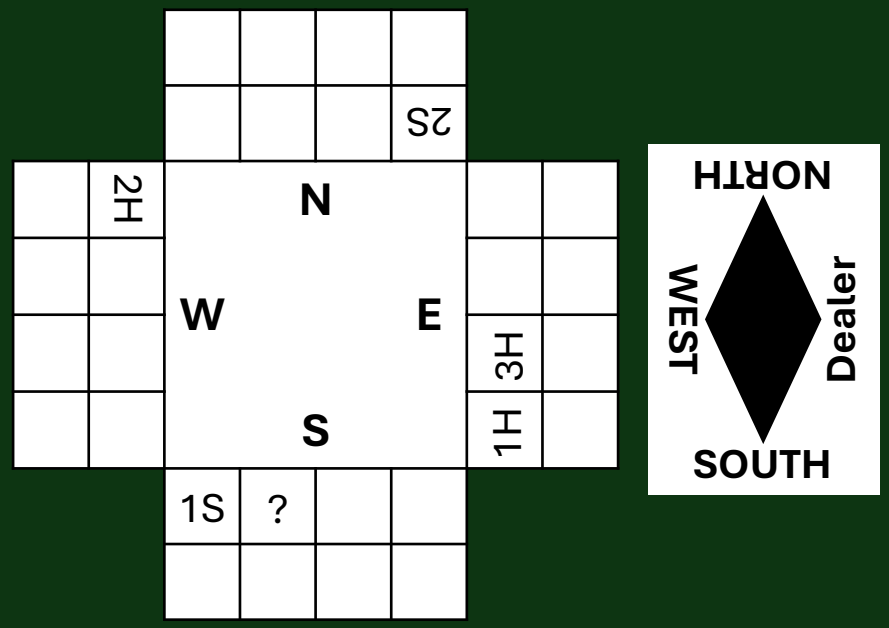
Not a **good suit** – but partner will know that because you **didn't** overcall the first time.

SCORING
MATCHPOINTS

When should you **compete?**

❖ Compete to the **3-level** with a 9-card fit

Spades are the “boss suit” because of their competitive power



Bid 3S

This is not **invitational** – just a competitive try for the contract.

SCORING
AFTERWORD

The **winning score** in a Pairs competition is often about **60%**.

55% is **very good** and 70% is **exceptional**

The **winners** of the tournament we sampled from only scored **55%** overall

This essentially means doing *just better than* average on every board – with some variance.

Some tops and bottoms are just **out of your control**. Good bridge is about **consistency**.

It is not the handling of difficult hands that makes the winning player. There aren't enough of them. It is the ability to avoid messing up the easy ones.

- Alan Sontag

THANK YOU!