

## Duplicate Extra Thoughts for Duplicate Bridge

Duplicate Pairs is scored using match-points. These award a score for your partnership based on how well you have done on each hand compared to the other pairs sitting in the same direction as you at all the other tables. These scores can be represented by relative figures, but are more commonly percentage scores. The biggest plus score - or smallest minus score - gets awarded the most points, with the point award gradually decreasing the worse you do. The best score is called a "top"; the poorest score, a "bottom".

### In the Bidding:

- ⚙ Overcall, and support overcalls, aggressively, especially when non-vulnerable.  
*Never let your opponents play at the 2-level if they have found an 8-card fit.*
- ⚙ Seek to go down in a contract by one or two tricks, opposed to letting opponents make a contract.
- ⚙ Seek opportunities to defend - and double opponents for penalties - opposed to bidding on yourselves, especially when opponents are vulnerable.
- ⚙ Ensure that you play in the highest scoring denomination: major suits rather than minors, no-trumps rather than a major. If you make the same number of tricks, you will then achieve a higher score.
- ⚙ Remain aware of the value of all contracts.

(If your opponents bid to 2S and you think they are likely to make this contract, that will score you -110. You must now consider whether if you bid on, you can fail in your contract and still lose less than 110. One down vulnerable only loses you 100; one or two down non-vulnerable loses you 50 or 100. However, if your opponents might double you for penalties, you will lose more.)

- ⚙ Continually assess potential scores, and try to maximise plus scores and minimise minus scores.

### In the Play:

- ⚙ If your contract is likely to be bid at other tables, aim for maximum tricks: overtricks are important.
- ⚙ If you have reached a particularly good contract (a slim slam, or ambitious game) which you feel others may not have bid, ensure that you make your contract and worry less about overtricks.
- ⚙ If you are going to fail in your contract, especially when doubled, set yourself a target of tricks whereby your score may not be the worst achieved on the deal (2 down may still be a good score, whereas 3 down might be a terrible score).

### In Defence:

- ⚙ Take maximum tricks for your side, even if you do not defeat the contract: preventing an overtrick may give you a very good score.
- ⚙ Do not make risky opening leads; prefer to see dummy before trying anything speculative.

### Overall Strategy:

Duplicate Pairs is an uncompromising form of the game, where you must show controlled aggression in the bidding, and strive to make the most tricks in the play. Any action which is likely to be successful 50% + of the time, should be embarked upon.

You must risk making penalty doubles, competing to higher levels, and pressurising your opponents at all times.

Played well, Duplicate Pairs is like walking along a precipice: always vertiginous, constantly challenging, exciting and tiring.

But, please remember, this is a game. Enjoy the mental rollercoaster ride and always...

**Cherish Your Partner**