

### Rationale

A knowledge of how a typical pairs game is scored is useful to help you understand the tactics involved.

Let's consider that you are playing in a 7 table mitchell movement, playing 4 boards against each pair whom you meet. You will be playing  $7 \times 4 = 28$  boards in total. You are pair 3 NS.

- You will receive a score for each of the 28 boards. Each board is worth the same amount to your score. Remember, the last board is worth the same as the first. You could think of each board being worth  $100 \div 28 = 4\%$
- This is what the travelling score card (TSC) for Board 1 would look like at the end of play.

Table	Contract	Tricks	NS	EW	EW Pair	NS Pts	EW Pts
1	1NTN	10	180		1	7	5
2	3NTN	8		50	3	1	11
3	3NTS	9	400		5	11	1
4	3NTS	9	400		7	11	1
5	2NTN	10	180		2	7	5
6	3CS	10	130		4	4	8
7	5CS	10		50	6	1	11

12 For each board, you are allocated a numerical score called matchpoints. If all the scores on the board are different then the points would be allocated according to this scale. Notice that the highest NS score receives  $2N - 2$  pts where N is the number of scores. Here a top =  $2 \times 7 - 2 = 12$ ; Bottom = 0

- Here, the top score for NS is 400. That was obtained at two tables, a shared top. So, NS3 and NS4 get to average the top two scores :-

$$(12 + 10) \div 2 = 11 \text{ pts.}$$

So, we got 11 out of 12 or 92% for that board.

- Notice that it is the *rank order* of the score which is important, not the *magnitude*. From NS point of view, a score in the EW column is a "negative" score and worse than any "positive" score obtained by a NS pair.

- To get our score for the session, we add the pts obtained on each of the 28 boards. That will give us a total out of a maximum of  $28 \times 12 = 336$

We can then convert this to a percentage. Perhaps we get a total of 192 out of 336 which is 57.1%

- To determine the winner of the NS direction, we examine the % obtained by each pair. The highest % is the winner and so on.
- Usually 60% will get you a win while 40% will find you last! The percentages should average out at 50%
- Notice that your scores can really only be compared to those who sat in the same direction. This is because your scores have been pooled only with those pairs. Your good scores have been earned against those pairs and your poor scores have boosted their scores.

• **FAQ:** How are the EW scores determined?

**ANS:** These are obtained in the same way by looking at the TSC from the EW point of view. A

"Top" to NS will be a "bottom" to the unfortunate EW pair who played the board against them.

- Effectively, we can consider that any matchpoints on a board NOT awarded to the NS pair must be given to the EW pair who played against them. .i.e. If we take the NS pts on board 1 from the maximum, we will find the EW pts. e.g. NS3 played board 1 against EW5. NS3 got a shared top. So, EW5 got a shared bottom. NS3 got 11 pts. So, EW5 got  $12 - 11 = 1$  pts. This is shown on the TSC shown.

• EW winners are determined in the same way. Notice that there will always be two winners for a Mitchell movement, one from each direction. The percentages obtained in one direction cannot be compared with those in the opposition direction. Say the NS winner obtained 62% and the 2<sup>nd</sup> placegetter got 59%. The winner EW got 58%. The EW winner could easily claim "How can we be beaten by the pairs in the other direction – our scores were never pooled with them!"

- The percentages shown above could result from a very weak pair sitting NS with that pair gaining 32%. As a result, all the other NS pairs will have "inflated" percentages.

### Howell Movements

Howell movements produce one winner. This is because each pair is allocated a different pair number and the pair will be NS sometimes and EW on other occasions. In this way, a given pairs scores will be pooled with and against every other pair at some time during the session.

- For a 7 table howell, the pair numbers will be from 1 to 14. There can still only be 7 scores on the board since that will mean all 14 pairs have played the board. Here is how board 1 might look in a Howell movement:-

Table	Contract	Tricks	NS	EW	EW Pair	NS Pts	EW Pts
1	1NTN	10	180		5	7	
2						11	
3						11	
4	3NTS	9	400		14	11	
5						5	
6	3CS	10	130		9	4	
7	5CS	10		50	2	1	
8						1	
9						8	
10	3NTN	8		50	3	1	
11	3NTS	9	400		8	11	
12						5	
13	2NTN	10	180		12	7	
14						1	

Say we were pair 3 and played this board sitting EW while pair 10 sat NS. See row 10 above. We always write on the line according to the NS pair number. We defeated their 3NT contract and from our point of view, we got an equal top. Hence, on line 3 you find 11 pts. Pair 10 got an equal bottom. Hence, they have 1 point.

- Our percentage is calculated in the same way as before. Perhaps we played 13 rounds of 2 boards so that we could meet every other pair. That would give a Maximum =  $26 \times 12 = 312$  pts