

20 Tips for Playing Team Games

1. Don't double part scores—no matter how many high-card points you have—unless you have a trump stack.
2. Don't double a game or slam contract unless you're sure you can set it at least 2 tricks in your own hand.
3. Stretch to bid game, especially when vulnerable.
4. Don't bid a small slam unless the odds of making it are better than 75%.
5. Don't bid a grand slam unless you can count 13 tricks.
6. Play your safest contract. In IMP scoring, there's little advantage to bidding 3NT if 5 diamonds is a safer contract.
7. Don't sacrifice unless you're sure you're only going down one trick.
8. In competitive auctions, be careful about pushing the opponents to game.
9. In competitive auctions, the 5-level belongs to the opponents.
10. Be bold on defense. Risk a trick to defeat the contract.
11. When declaring, make your contract. Don't risk it to make overtricks.
12. Make very sound preempts. Have a good suit: AKxxxxx, KQJxxx.
13. Upgrade your overcalls by at least 2 points. If you normally overcall with 8 points, raise your minimum to 10 points.
14. Make aggressive raises to the two level. (The opponents won't double.)
15. Don't make risky bids because you think you're behind in a match. Remember you have partners at the other table.
16. Do whatever you have to do to get a positive score on every board. Getting a positive score is more IMPortant than getting the maximum score.
17. Don't make a bid partner might not understand—even if you think it's the perfect bid for your hand.
18. On defense, take a chance to set a contract. If you let them make an extra trick, they get 1 IMP. If you set a contract that your teammates make, you could get as many as 12 IMPs.
19. Don't engage in recriminations with your teammates. ("Our opponents set our 3NT contract. How did you let them make it?") You might want to play teams with them again.
20. Have fun!