



ACBLscore Game Recap Report by Bob Gruber

The wonders of the modern computer have given us ACBLscore (from the American Contract Bridge League) to score our duplicate bridge games and web sites to display the results of that scoring. ACBL Unit 547, the Ventura Unit, has a *Results* screen on its website. This screen gives a multitude of local game results organized by the day of the week and game location.

Each day/game location is followed by a series of dates displayed as digits in mm-dd format, where mm is a 1 or 2-digit month number (1-12) and dd is a 2-digit day-of-month number (01-31). These dates represent approximately the most recent month's worth of results. When you click on a date, a different screen comes up, a screen that displays ACBLscore's Recap of that game.

A newcomer to duplicate bridge has asked for an explanation of the *Results* screen. Let's assume the day of the week and game location are clear. It's the Recap itself that needs clarification. Starting with the basics—and assuming the raw score on a deal/board is not in question—we need to cover match point scoring.

Match Point Scoring

You earn match points in head-to-head comparisons (of raw score) with each other pair that played the same direction on a board.

- For each pair you beat, you earn 1 match point.
- For each pair you tie, you score $\frac{1}{2}$ match point.
- For each pair that beats you, you score zero (0) match points.

Top on a board is, therefore, based on the number of pairs that play that board. If 9 pairs play a board, top is 8, the number of pairs you can possibly beat. Average on the board, $\frac{1}{2}$ of top, is 4. If 13 pairs play a board, top is 12, which is again the number of pairs you can possibly beat. Average on the board, $\frac{1}{2}$ of top, is 6. Tops of 8 and 12 are common in club games.

Note that how much you beat or lost to a particular pair doesn't matter. All that matters is that you beat them or lost to them. You can't get more than 1 match point or less than zero (0) match points, i.e. there are no negative match points. Also, match points are discrete not continuous; there are only 3 values: 0, $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1.

Your particular raw score on a board may range from a large positive to a large minus and includes zero (0) for a board that is passed out. Since zero (0) is a legitimate score, you can compare it with every other pair in the same direction that played that board. To state the obvious, zero (0) beats all negative scores (1 matchpoint for each) and loses to all positive scores (0 matchpoints for each). You score $\frac{1}{2}$ matchpoint for each other pair that passed the board out.

Factoring

Pretty straight forward so far, right? That means it's time for a wrinkle! The wrinkle occurs when some boards are played a different number of times than others. Typically, the first requirement for this condition is that there is a half table so that boards "sit out" when the "phantom pair" is scheduled to play them. Other conditions may also be present, but suffice it to say that with a $\frac{1}{2}$ table, often



some boards “sit out” and some don’t, yielding a different top for those boards that “sit out” compared to those that don’t.

Advanced
Topic

To equalize this inequality, some boards are mathematically “factored” to have the same average as the others and essentially the same top (and bottom). But upon inspection, a “clear top” of 8, for instance, becomes 7.94 and a “cold bottom” of zero (0) becomes .06. (Note that added together they total 8.) The other match point scores on the board are also adjusted by odd amounts. Should you encounter “factored” scoring, the easiest thing to do is assume the computer got it right. Whew !

Score for the Game

Now that we know about match points, we can talk about your score for a session of bridge. By the way, duplicate is not a scoring method, but refers to the fact that all four hands of a deal are preserved by placing them in the appropriate North/South/East/West pockets of a duplicate board. In this way, many pairs can play, in essence, a duplicate of the same deal.

As for your Score for the game, it is arrived at by adding up the match points you earned on each board you played. It’s just simple arithmetic, which means it’s a fine task for a computer.

Pct (Percentage)

Pct should be no mystery once you realize it’s shorthand for Percentage. The computer takes your score and divides it by the total number of match points possible on the boards you played. Then, of course, the computer multiplies that by 100 to convert the fraction to a percentage, carried to 2 decimal places. The lowest percentage possible is 0; the highest, 100. A game that is “dead average” is 50.00%.

MPs (Masterpoints)

MPs, i.e. Masterpoints, are ACBL bridge players’ way of keeping track of their scoring ability over time. Well, maybe that’s a simplification that isn’t quite right, but there is some truth to it. When you play in an ACBL-sanctioned game, if you score well, you earn Masterpoints based upon a number of factors including the number of tables in play, the skill levels of the players, and whether the game is open to all comers or is restricted in some way.

Since prize money is not involved, you’re playing for prestige, and that prestige is expressed in Masterpoints. The higher you place in a given event, the more Masterpoints you earn. Masterpoints are cumulative, so your running total is considered an indication of your skill level over time (and also how much you’ve played).

Strata

Since skill levels vary greatly, from rank beginners who play infrequently to 30-years-in-the-business professionals—people pay them to be their partner—who play almost daily (and sometimes more than once a day), the ACBL allows people to win Masterpoints in an event based upon how well they did compared to others with the same relative skill level. This skill level is gauged by the total number of Masterpoints you hold.

Typically, an ACBL club game divides the players into 3 skill levels, identified as strata. The dividing point for each strat is determined by the director. Unless the event has some restricted



entry based on Masterpoints, Strat A is unlimited; Strat B usually tops out somewhere between 1000 to 1500 Masterpoints; and Strat C typically tops out at 300 to 500. Let's say the dividing lines are at 1000 and 500. You're in Strat C unless you're above 500 Masterpoints; then you're in Strat B unless you're above 1000, which pushes you into Strat A.

In stratified events, people at all skill levels are in the same field, and you can earn Masterpoints at your level—your strat—as well as all levels above if you score well enough. These three strats may also be identified as Flights A, B and C.

Sections

Within the ACBL, ideal game sizes are considered to be 9 full tables and 13 full tables. Movements for these games have all N-S's playing all E-W's and all pairs playing all the boards in play. Games of these sizes are conducted with all pairs playing in the same "Section."

Once the number of tables reaches 18, it is best to divide the field into 2 sections, where each section is a separate entity and pairs only play within their own section. For 18 tables, that would be 2 sections of 9 tables each. For 20 tables, that would be 2 sections of 10 tables each.

It is up to the director to determine the appropriate number of sections and best movement to accommodate the number of pairs.

Section Rank

Many club games are not big enough to have separate sections, but if they do, pairs in each section, say Section A and Section B, earn Masterpoints independent of the other section(s). Note, within a Section there will be N-S winners and E-W winners. The *Section Rank* header has 3 columns beneath it: the leftmost for placing in Strat/Flight A, the middle for placing in Strat/Flight B, the rightmost for placing in Strat/Flight C.

Different Presentation Formats

All the basic building blocks of the Recap Sheet have now been discussed. ACBLscore allows these building blocks to be presented in several different formats. The first order of business is the standings.

Presentation of the Standings

One presentation of the standings for N-S follows. Most items should need no explanation at this point. The Score is the score in match points. The column without a header is the Strat/Flight for the Pair on that line. A pair winning Masterpoints (MPs) wins whichever is the single highest total of any Strat in which they placed. Pair 10 for instance wins more MPs for 3rd in Flight A than for 2nd in Flight B. The "A" in parentheses after the 0.50 MPs indicates this situation. (Special games, such as a Club Championship, have Overall winners as well as Section winners. In such a case, the Strat in parentheses will be preceded by O [for Overall] or S [for Section].)



Pair	Pct	Score	Section	Rank			MPs	
				A	B	C		
9	62.96	136.00	A	1			1.00(A)	Dick LName- John LName
8	62.04	134.00	C	2	1	1	0.70(A)	Joan LName - Judith LName
10	57.87	125.00	B	3	2		0.50(A)	Louise LName - Loretta LName
7	50.23	108.50	A	4			0.35(A)	Ronald LName - Carol LName
4	48.84	105.50	C		3	2	0.32(B)	Betty LName - Patricia LName
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The N-S standings will be followed by the E-W standings.

Presentation of the Match Points

Next the match points on each board are listed. A traditional presentation follows. The N-S Pair Numbers are listed horizontally, while the Board Numbers are listed vertically. Our snippet of a traditional example shows all 10 N-S Pairs in the game, but only the 1st two boards. Each board has 2 lines. The top line gives the match points; the bottom line gives the raw score. If a pair didn't play a board, the match point entry is blank and the raw score is shown as several dashes.

In our traditional example, Pair 1 N-S scored 100 on Board 1 for 7.5 match points. Pair 2 N-S didn't play Board 1, but Pair 3 N-S lost 100 and only earned 2.5 match points. Pair 4 earned 5 match points for being -50.

PAIRS										
BOARD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1>	7-		2-	5	1	0	5	5	7-	2-
	100	----	-100	-50	-110	-150	-50	-50	100	-100
2>	-		5	5	7-	-	2-	7-	5	2-
	-420	----	-140	-140	50	-420	-170	50	-140	-170

After all boards are listed for N-S there's a similar presentation for E-W.

An alternative match point presentation is shown below for Board 1 only of the same game. The presentation per board is as much or more vertical than horizontal. The Scores are the same, but now you see the E-W match points as well as the N-S, making a second presentation for E-W unnecessary. Finally, not only are both the N-S and E-W pair numbers listed, but the name of each member of the pair is given.

RESULTS OF BOARD 1

SCORES MATCHPOINTS NAMES

N-S	E-W	N-S	E-W	NAMES
100		7.50	0.50	1-N-S LName1-LName2 vs 1-E-W LName3-LName4
	100	2.50	5.50	3-N-S LName9-LName10 vs 4-E-W LName11-LName12
	50	5.00	3.00	4-N-S LName13-LName14 vs 6-E-W LName15-LName16
	110	1.00	7.00	5-N-S LName17-LName18 vs 8-E-W LName19-LName20
	150	0.00	8.00	6-N-S LName21-LName22 vs 10-E-W LName23-LName24



	50	5.00	3.00	7-N-S LName25-LName26 vs 3-E-W LName27-LName28
	50	5.00	3.00	8-N-S LName29-LName30 vs 5-E-W LName31-LName32
100		7.50	0.50	9-N-S LName33-LName34 vs 7-E-W LName35-LName36
	100	2.50	5.50	10-N-S LName37-LName38 vs 9-E-W LName39-LName40

“Press” Area

Many directors include a “Press” area that describes the particulars of the game set up. If included, it usually follows the standings and starts with *EVENT*>. Among the items listed are the date, the Club #, the Director’s name, and the Strata breakpoints. Typically, you see a “Press” area preceding the N-S Matchpoints, and then a “Press” area preceding the E-W Matchpoints.

Asterisk to Identify E-W in Howell Movements

The snippet given for the traditional presentation of matchpoints is adequate for Mitchell Movements where there are distinct N-S only and E-W only pairs. It’s not adequate for Howell Movements where most (or all) of the pairs play some boards as N-S and some as E-W. To distinguish which direction a pair sat when they played a board, an asterisk (*) is used to signify E-W.

Bridgemate Information

With the arrival of on-table electronic scoring devices, the contract information that is entered into these devices may be included in the recap report. In the traditional presentation, it appears below the raw score in the format:

- # strain/denomination [*x* or *xx*] direction result
- # = contract level, 1-7
- strain/denomination = a single character for the specific suit or N for no trump
- [*x* or *xx*] = doubled/redoubled status, if any
- direction = N or S -or- E or W
- result = number of tricks made -or- number of undertricks preceded by a minus sign

Examples of this format are:

- 5CxW 5 = 5♣ doubled, played by West, making 5
- 3DN 3 = 3♦, played by North, making 3
- 3NS-2 = 3NT, played by South, down 2