

## 2018 St. Louis Regional Schedule Handout for Intermediate/Novice Players

This year there is a brand new schedule for the St. Louis Regional August 13-19, 2018 at the Renaissance Hotel by the airport. Most 2-Session Main Events are now at 9:30 am and 2 pm during daytime hours. This change accommodates players who don't wish to drive or play at night.

The schedule offers many new events that should be very appealing for Intermediate/Novice (I/N) players to earn gold points. These events also shield I/N's from playing against higher-level players and teams.

For I/N's who like pairs games, there are single-session 299er pairs games offered daily Monday through Saturday, three Gold Rush Pairs games, limited to players having 0-750 masterpoints, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and BCD Pairs on Saturday. There is also a Free Newcomer event on Monday, conducted by Bruce Greenspan and assisted by Phyllis Siegel. This event includes a free lesson on Takeout Doubles from 10 am to Noon that is open to all players. Following the lesson, there is a free Newcomer game, limited to players with 0-20 masterpoints, that starts at 1 pm (black points awarded).

For I/N's who prefer team games, there are three NEW 2-Session Bracketed Swiss team games on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday as well as a 2-Session Bracketed Swiss for 0-3000 players on Sunday.

Below is an explanation of the NEW Bracketed Swiss team game. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> page are some tips to help I/N players adjust their game tactics as they venture from playing in pairs games to playing in team games:

### **Bracketed Swiss Teams and Why They are GREAT for I/N's**

1. Our Bracketed Swiss is bracketed from the bottom up. That means that teams are assigned to a bracket starting with the team with the lowest average masterpoints.
2. There are usually 7 to 9 teams per bracket.
3. **Teams only play against other teams in their same bracket. Therefore, lower pointed teams are generally protected from playing against higher pointed teams.**
4. **Three teams in EACH bracket will win GOLD points in brackets with 7 teams; four teams will win GOLD points in brackets with 9 teams. There are gold point winners in every bracket!**
5. Each team plays all the other teams in their bracket. That makes this event more equitable in determining overall winners than Stratified Swiss teams. In other words, the teams who win and place in the overalls are the teams that played the best in the event.

The St. Louis Unit 143 Board of Directors and the Tournament Chairperson, Mike Carmen, hope you are excited about this new St. Louis Regional schedule. It offers many opportunities for you to earn those coveted gold points while enjoying bridge with friends in the beautiful Renaissance Hotel setting.

See you around the bridge table!

## Team Game Strategy versus Pairs Game Strategy

1. **In team games it is important to make your contract as well as to beat the opponent's contracts if you are on defense.** Players should not try to make overtricks if it means they could go down in their contract. In pairs games, making overtricks is often necessary to get a good board. Likewise, it is important to try to beat the opponent's contract even if that means that the opponents will make an overtrick by using this defense.
2. **In team games, players should consider what happens to their contract if they get a bad trump split and make safety plays rather than going for overtricks.** In pairs games, overtricks can be important.
3. **In team games, players should play in the "safest" contract rather than the highest scoring contract.** For example, in a pairs game, if one pair makes 4 spades scoring 420 and another pair is in 3NT on the same board making four and scoring 430, the pair playing in 3NT wins the board. However, in a team game, there is no difference in scoring between making 420 and making 430. That is because team games are based on International Matchpoint (IMP) scoring and pairs games are based on masterpoint (MP) scoring.

If one pair should fail to make their contract, however, there is a BIG difference in a team game. It is called a game swing. The team that fails to make their contract will lose about 10 IMPS if nonvulnerable and 12 IMPS if vulnerable on that one board. That could make the difference in winning or losing the match in a team game while it just represents one bad board in a pairs game. That is why players should select what appears to be the "safer" contract.

4. **To avoid big game swings, therefore, in team games, it is VERY IMPORTANT to bid all close games, especially vulnerable games.** It is significantly more important to bid close vulnerable games than to bid close nonvulnerable games. For example, the difference in making plus 620 for a vulnerable game in spades versus making plus 170 for a part score is sizeable. Making plus 420 for a nonvulnerable spade game versus plus 170 for a part score is not quite as drastic of a difference.
5. **In team games, players should avoid competing too high for part scores, especially when vulnerable.** If a player competes to the three level vulnerable and gets doubled by the opponents, this could turn a part score loss into a negative game swing. For example, if the opponents bid to 3 clubs nonvulnerable and they make 3 clubs, they score plus 110. Hopefully, your partners will do the same at the other table and the board will be no gain for either side. However, if your side competes to 3 diamonds vulnerable and gets doubled by the opponents for down 2, plus 500 goes to the opponents. Assuming your partners are in 3 clubs making 110 at the other table, your side will lose 390 on the board (-500 plus 110 equals -390) and your side will have turned a no gain or tie board into a game swing for the opposing side.
6. **In a team game, players should not double the opponent's below game level contract unless a two trick set is virtually guaranteed by taking tricks in your own hand.** These setting tricks should be based on trump tricks and aces, not on high card points alone, since the opponent's hand could be highly distributional. Defense is the most difficult part of a bridge game, and you and your partner may not always execute the right defense.
7. **In a team game, players should not bid "iffy" slams with less than 50% chance of making and should almost never bid grand slams unless you can count 13 tricks.** You don't want to lose points for making a game by going down in a low probability slam. You also don't want to lose points for making a small slam by going down in a grand slam. It is unlikely that your team would recover if your side goes down in a grand slam while the opponents make a small slam. Also, you don't know if the opponents at the other table will even bid the slam in the first place.