

Thornbury U3A Bridge Groups

Thornbury U3A is a charity based in the town of Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, UK. It is an organisation where retired or semi-retired people can meet like-minded people to share educational, creative and leisure activities to expand their knowledge, share interests and acquire new skills. At the time of writing (December 2023), there were four active bridge groups and a beginners group.

Bridge Group 1 has for many years organised an all-day annual teams event each November inviting members of the other bridge groups to join us, in order to make up an event with around 12 to 14 teams of four. It is called 'Military Bridge' as the teams collect 'flags' for achieving certain goals, with the winning team having the most flags at the end. For 12 teams, 11 rounds of 2 boards are played. For 13 or 14 teams, the players play twelve 2-board rounds, with usually six played before lunch and six played after lunch.

In a multiple teams event, teams-of-four compete against each other in a series of mini-matches. The ideal movement would mean a NS pair from team A plays a set of boards against the EW pair of team B and, later in the session, the EW pair from team A plays the same set of boards against the NS pair from team B, thus allowing a direct comparison of team scores. This is directly achievable with 13 teams, where it is possible for each team to play twelve 2-board rounds against each of the other 12 teams in an event lasting 24 boards i.e. it offers a 'round-robin' format where 'all-play-all'. It is partially but not completely achievable with 12 or 14 teams.

The associated documents seek to provide the movement information necessary to run the bridge part of the day successfully. Below are two copies of a document placed on each table which describes how the military 'flag' system works. A copy should be placed on each table. The technical director of the event will need to introduce the event and describe what happens. Some suggested text is provided for this purpose, for each movement separately.

There are three separate documents providing a description of how each movement works in principle, a summary of the position of all the pairs for each round and table movement cards to be placed on the relevant table for use by the participants, for 12, 13 and 14 teams of four.

The movement chosen for use with 12 teams is known as a 'Stagger movement', although there is a description provided of alternative movements. Movement cards etc are only provided for the Stagger movement. There are eleven 2-board rounds. 24 boards are needed for this movement to operate. Each team therefore does not play two pairs of boards. A complication with this movement is that every table must share boards with another table throughout the play.

The movement chosen for use with 13 teams is known as an 'American Whist Movement'. As mentioned above, this movement offers a 'round-robin' format where 'all-play-all'. 26 boards are needed for this movement to operate. Each team therefore does not play one pair of boards.

The movement chosen for use with 14 teams is known as an 'Incomplete American Whist Movement'. This movement is 'incomplete' as, with 12 rounds, it is not practicable to play 13 other teams. 28 boards are needed for this movement to operate. Each team therefore does not play two pairs of boards.

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Military Bridge – laminated table sheet

The text below is that shown in the original laminated table sheets used for the event. Some people find this slightly confusing, so a clearer version is provided on the page below (2 to a page) to print off as many times as needed – if helpful, they can then be individually laminated. The original text below is also inaccurate in that we are not using a Mitchell movement as stated.

Original text below – for revised text see next page

Military Bridge is a form of instant teams scoring. North-South stay home and guard their flags. East-West go forth to win more flags. The one with the most flags at the end of the session is the winner. Military Bridge has the advantages of an instant results while still being proper duplicate bridge.

A normal Mitchell movement is played and each team is given 10-flags to start.

- If N-S bid and make a contract they keep their flag
- If E-W bid and make a contract they take a flag from N-S
- If N-S defeat E-W's contract they keep their flag
- If E-W defeat N-S's contract they take a flag from N-S

In addition, the director awards bonus flags:

- For any game bid and made – 1 flag
- For any small slam bid and made – 2 flags
- For any grand slam bid and made – 4 flags
- For any doubled contract made – 1 flag
- For any pair achieving penalty points, as follows:
 - 400-900 – 1 flag
 - 901-1400 – 2 flags
 - 1401 and above – 4 flags

If the director awards the bonus flags, the opposing pair can verify the award. At the end of each round E-W take their newly-captured flag back to their home table before moving for the next round.

10 flags are provided to each team at the outset. The objective for N-S is to guard their home table, retain as many flags as possible and win bonus flags. The objective for E-W is to go forth to win more flags. The team with the most flags at the end is the winner.

- a. If N-S bid and make a part-score contract, no flags are exchanged
- b. If E-W bid and make a part-score contract, they take a flag from N-S
- c. If N-S bid and make a game contract, the director gives them one bonus flag (for small slams the bonus is 2 flags and for a grand slam the bonus is 4 flags)
- d. If E-W bid and make a game contract, they take a flag from N-S and the director gives them one bonus flag (for small slams the bonus is 2 flags and for a grand slam the bonus is 4 flags)
- e. If N-S are defeated in any contract, E-W take a flag from N-S (see also the bonuses below)
- f. If E-W are defeated in any contract, no flags are exchanged but see the bonus available for large scoring defeats

Additional bonuses from the director (not from the opponents):

- g. Any pair making a doubled contract – 1 bonus flag
- h. Any pair achieving 400-900 penalty points– 1 bonus flag
- i. Any pair achieving 901-1400 penalty points– 2 bonus flags
- j. Any pair achieving >1401 penalty points– 4 bonus flags

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TAKE ANY FLAGS THEY
HAVE WON BACK TO
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