

What is a good score at cross imps?

Cross IMP scoring is used in many events, including the McDonald, Calder/Martin, and Grindon.

Cross IMP scoring is **teams scoring for pairs**. It is a method that has only become popular with computer scoring since the calculations are extensive, but the strategy is exactly the same as teams and aggregate scoring. Bid your games aggressively, beat the opponents' contracts, overtricks are not that important.

I'm often asked what a good score at cross imps scoring?

The simple answer is to say the same as a good score in the Scott Cup or Tom Woodman teams. Which for most people is more than the other teams, it's just difficult to predict since it depends on the boards and who you play them against. If you bid and make a lot of games, you will get a good score.

In general, if you average more than 1 imp per board then you are having a very good game.

One imp per board does not sound very much, as it is only an overtrick on every board. Small differences, such as the difference between +100 or +110, will be largely irrelevant (unlike matchpoint pairs). It is winning partscore battles, making games, and making slams that will determine your score.

In world-class teams events, cross imps scoring is used to produce the 'butler' and the best pairs tend to average around +0.75 imps/board. In a more mixed field, you will typically see the best pairs average about +1 imps/board.

However Michael Clark from the EBU reported that "the average score for second place in almost 3000 cross-IMPed EBU sessions is 1.323 IMPs/board. So try to score 1.324 IMPs/board and you'll win!"

So aim for +1 imp per board and, over the season, you will do well.

As an example, let us look at board six from the Royal Bank Cup on 13 November 2018. This was a matchpoint evening.

							MPs	XIMPs
C Smith & J Mole	S Moor & G Ellis	1♥	S	3	♣J	170	22	2.09
T Harris & D Elder	J Beattie & P Davidson	2NT	N	1	♠2	150	20	1.00
J Smithson & V Martin	K Forrest & M Reed	1♥	S	2	♠8	140	17	1.00
L Moore & I Guthrie	M Hodgson & J Smithson	1♥	S	2	♣J	140	17	1.00
A Horne & M Robson	J Lindsay & K Mole	1♥	S	1	♣J	110	8	-0.09
T Houghton & B Griffiths	C Edney & R French	1♥	S	1	♣J	110	8	-0.09
M Patterson & M Rowell	I McCreath & C McCreath	1♥	S	1	♦Q	110	8	-0.09
J Rowley & C McConnachie	S Pearson & R McCreath	2♠	S	=	♣5	110	8	-0.09
N Marlow & P Calder	M Mead & T Frew	1♥	S	1	♣J	110	8	-0.09
D Holland & D King	M Stone & C Rowell	1♥	S	1	♣J	110	8	-0.09
S Smith & A Plenderleith	B Thomas & G Martin	1♥	S	1	♣J	110	8	-0.09
S Davidson & K Home Robertson	T Oates & A Ross	3♥	S	-1	♣J	-50	0	-4.45

The grey column of the traveller shows the matchpoint awards for this board. Christopher and Jean got an outright top, because they got two overtricks more than the field. This would have contributed about 4% to their evening score as every board is worth the same. Sarah and Kitty got too high, and perhaps received a better defence, and scored a bottom.

As always at matchpoint pairs, the key is to beating everyone one else: it does not matter by how much. Terry and David played in no trump, increasing their score from 17 matchpoints to 20 mp because they beat those who made the same number of tricks in hearts (150 v 140).

I've added the cross imping for this board in the yellow column. This shows what you would have scored in the Grindon for this board.

As you can see, this is no longer an interesting board. Christopher and Jean will gain a couple of imps, as their team might have done in the Tom Woodman, but it is not a significant gain. Sarah and Kitty have lost a small partscore swing, but it is not ruining their evening the same way that a bottom at matchpoints might. For most people this is an average board, rather than the 8/22 (NS) or 14/22 (EW) matchpoints they were scoring.

This illustrates the fundamental difference between matchpoints and teams (whether teams of four or cross imping). Every trick counts in matchpoints: an overtrick in one no trump can be more important than bidding a game. At teams, bid and make games as the game bonus earns you lot of imps (and cross imps); overtricks are not very important.