

Bridge Game Overview

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05.09.2020

Sfetcu, Nicolae, "Bridge Game Overview", URL = <https://www.telework.ro/en/e-books/bridge-game-overview/>

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Online text: <https://www.telework.ro/en/contract-bridge/>

Excerpt from:

Sfetcu, Nicolae, "*Bridge Bidding - Standard American Yellow Card*", pg. 1-2, MultiMedia Publishing (2014), ISBN 978-606-033-105-6, URL = <https://www.telework.ro/en/e-books/bridge-bidding-standard-american-yellow-card/>

Contract bridge, usually known simply as **bridge**, is a trick-taking card game using a standard deck of 52 playing cards played by four players in two competing partnerships with partners sitting opposite each other around a small table. For purposes of scoring and reference, each player is identified by one of the points of the compass and thus North and South play against East and West. The game consists of several deals each progressing through four phases: dealing the cards, the auction (also referred to as bidding), playing the hand, and scoring the results. Dealing the cards and scoring the results are procedural activities while the auction and playing the hand are the two actively competitive phases of the game.

While the game involves skill and chance, it has many variants and event types designed to emphasize skill, vary the method of scoring, set limits on the nature of the bidding systems which may be used, set the pace and duration of play, define player eligibility, enable larger team composition, provide country representation in international play, and to group players of similar interests, skill levels, age, or gender, or combinations thereof. The most common game variants are rubber bridge and duplicate bridge. In rubber bridge, two partnerships participate in the game at one table and the objective is to score the most points in the play of several hands. In duplicate bridge, there are more tables and partnerships and the hands are dealt and played in such a manner that each partnership plays the same set of hands as their East-West or North-South counterparts and with the scoring based upon relative performance. Competitions in duplicate bridge range from small clubs with a handful of tables, to large tournaments such as the World Bridge Championships where hundreds of tables play the same hands. The game variant and associated method of scoring have significant influence on bidding and card play strategies.

Dealing

Partnerships are self-determined or by a cut of the cards, the two highest cut playing against the two lowest; the first dealer is the player cutting the highest card. Cards are dealt clockwise, one at a time and face down starting on the dealer's left so that each player receives thirteen cards. In duplicate bridge the dealer is predetermined by the board; the board also contains the four hands which have been dealt and placed in the board prior to commencement of the game.

Auction or Bidding

The bidding starts with the dealer and rotates around the table clockwise with each player making a call, the purpose being to determine which partnership will contract to take more tricks given a particular trump suit or with notrump, referred to as the strain. The partnership which makes the highest final bid is known as the declaring side and is said to have 'won' the contract. The player on the declaring side who, during the auction, first stated the strain ultimately becoming trumps or notrumps is referred to as the declarer.

Playing

The rules of play are similar to other trick-taking games with the additional feature that the hand of declarer's partner is displayed face up on the table after the opening lead has been made by the member of the defending side to the left of declarer; the displayed hand is referred to as the dummy and is played by declarer.

Scoring

After all thirteen tricks have been played, the hand's score is determined by comparing the actual number of tricks taken by the declaring partnership with that proposed in the contract and awarding points accordingly. The available scoring points for the declaring side are dependent

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upon both the level and strain of the contract and are awarded to them only when the contract is 'made', i.e. at least the contracted for number of tricks are won by them; failure to do so results in the defending side receiving points instead and they are said to have 'defeated' the contract. Individual scores of several hands are accumulated to determine the overall game score.