

Declarer popped up with the ace of clubs and cashed the ace of diamonds. Then he tried a low spade towards dummy. However, my partner promptly collected his ace of spades and ten of clubs for one down.

The routine continuation of two more rounds of diamonds at tricks two and three would have forced declarer to find the solution: the ace of spades onside. Would there have been any difference if I had played one more round of diamonds before shifting to the jack of clubs at the third trick?

The defence can prevail, but it needs to be very careful. On the third trick, declarer has a beautiful counter play: jettison the queen of clubs from dummy under the king. Any further play of the minor suits would then have been fruitless. My partner would have had to throw dummy in with a heart. Declarer runs hearts and in the four-card ending, both of us would have had to keep the correct cards: we both would have needed to keep two spades and my partner would have needed both of his clubs. Then we can get either two spade tricks or one spade and one club depending on how declarer plays.



Recently I played a deal in Örestadsligan, a local teams competition in the Malmö-Lund region. We met a team from Landskrona. After the match, I was astonished to find the deal slightly different than I had thought at the table.

Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ K 10 6 5 2
 ♥ A 5 3
 ♦ K 9 7 2
 ♣ 7

♠ 8 4 3
 ♥ K 10 7 6 2
 ♦ A Q 6 3
 ♣ 3

West	North	East	South
—	<i>Bennet</i>	—	<i>Wirgren</i>
—	—	—	Pass
2♣ ¹	Double	Pass	3♥ ²
Pass	4♥ ³	Pass	Pass

1. 6+ clubs, 10-14 HCP
2. Forcing by an unpassed hand
3. Forgetting that South was a passed hand

West led the king of clubs and thought for a while. East's silence over the double made me think/hope West was 2=2=2=7 and East 3=3=3=4. If West had the ace of spades and a heart honour, the contract was cold: win the diamond shift in hand and play a spade. Say West wins the ace and plays a second spade to the king. Then play the ace of hearts, diamond king and a heart to the ten – endplaying West. I played as described, making four hearts. The cards were also as described (or so I thought when West continued with the queen of clubs allowing me a ruff-sluff): West had ♠AQ ♥Q8 ♦108 ♣KQJ10952). They reached game at the other table too, but didn't make it, so we won 10 IMPs.

If the contract is four spades rather than four hearts and a club is led, East must then shift to a spade to West's ace so that West can exit with the spade queen, otherwise declarer can play two rounds each of hearts and diamonds, then lose two trump tricks to West, endplaying him similarly to the endplay in four hearts, but this time to discard the heart loser on the ruff-sluff.

I was distressed to find that, according to the hand record, the full deal was:

♠ K 10 6 5 2	♠ 9 7
♥ A 5 3	♥ J 9 4
♦ K 9 7 2	♦ J 5 4
♣ 7	♣ A J 8 6 4
♠ A Q J	♠ 8 4 3
♥ Q 8	♥ K 10 7 6 2
♦ 10 8	♦ A Q 6 3
♣ K Q 10 9 5 2	♣ 3

West had three spades, so he could have cashed the spade jack. Why didn't he? The same deals were played in all matches, and had been pre-dealt with Duplimate, so the board can hardly have been fouled. Can East have thought the jack of spades was the jack of clubs? Maybe, I don't know. The cows were flying by.



If a bridge contest has only three or four tables, it is generally considered advantageous to calculate the scores according to the IMP Scale. This can be done by calculating 'IMPs across the field' or 'Butler IMPs'. The latter method is also called 'Datum score'. For bigger competitions, it is

usually advisable to discount the extreme score values before you do the calculation. The datum is then either the arithmetic mean or the median score of the remaining scores.

For a three-table competition, I recommend using the median value. For a four-table competition, the datum should be selected according to the following rules, where the rules are sorted according to diminishing importance. That is, check if Rule 1 can be applied, then use it, otherwise check Rule 2, and so on.

1. If all four results are within a span of 60, then use the arithmetic average (e.g., 600, 620, 630, 650; use 625)
2. If three results are within 40, then
 - o If two of the results are equivalent, then use it (e.g., 170, 400, 420, 420; use 420)
 - o Else, use the arithmetic mean of the three near values (e.g., 170, 400, 420, 430; use 417)
3. If two results are within 20, and the other two within 40, then use the arithmetic mean of the two middle results (e.g., 60, 100, 400, 420; use 250)
4. If two results are within 30 and the other two differ more, use the arithmetic mean of the two results within the specified span (e.g., 150, 300, 400, 420; use 410)
5. If none of Rules 1 through 4 apply, then use the arithmetic mean of the two middle results (e.g., 150, 300, 400, 800); use 350).

Any scoring system can prove unfair in specific instances; there is always a certain amount of luck involved. I'll try to explain why I believe using the median is preferable for three tables and the most probable 'correct' score better for four tables. The advantage of using median occurs when one score differs remarkably from the other two. In the other cases, you could equally well use arithmetic mean, but for consistency it is better to use median values throughout.

Here is a simple example: there is a slam available to North/South and two tables bid and make it; at the third table the contract is set by good defence or poor play by declarer. The Noerth/South scores are plus 1430, plus 1440 and minus 50. Perhaps we could assume that the normal score is 1430 and it should therefore be used as datum. Thus the IMPs at Tables 1 and 2 should be 0 for both North/South and East/West. If we knew the reason for the result at Table 3, the IMP scores could be either N/S 0 and E/W plus 16 or N/S minus 16 and E/W 0. Nevertheless, because we cannot know the reason for the score at Table 3, the scores will be N/S minus 16 and E/W plus 16. One pair had misfortune on this deal, but we do not know which one.

However, using arithmetic average we get T1 N/S plus 10, T1 E/W minus 10, T2 N/S plus 11, T2 E/W minus 11, T3 N/S minus 14, and T3 E/W plus 14. There is a score difference of 10 between Tables 1 and 2. In normal calculation, this would give an IMP-value of zero. Here, we can see a difference of 1 IMP. More remarkable is that three pairs are penalized (T1 E/W, T2 E/W and T3

N/S/T3 E/W). If the East/West pairs at Tables 1 and 2 had been sitting North/South, they could perhaps have had a positive score. Just by sitting in the unfortunate direction they were penalized. So by using median for the datum score we reduce the injustice by a factor of three. Also note that the span of IMPs is very high (plus 11 to minus 14=25). This value is over the IMP-scale's limit of 24.

Another example: three spades is bid and will score 140; one competitor decides to bid four clubs and is doubled. Suppose the score is either minus 500 or plus 710. The results are dependent on the outcome and are presented here:

	Median Calculation			Average Calculation		
	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Scores	+140	+140	+710	+140	+140	+710
IMPs	0	0	+11	-5	-5	+9
Scores	+140	+140	-500	+140	+140	-500
IMPs	0	0	-12	+5	+5	-10
Scores	-500	+140	+710	-500	+140	+710
IMPs	-12	+1	+11	-12	+1	+11

You can see that median value is still the best way to do the calculations. The most probable (reasonable) score should thus be used for datum score; this is the median value. The selection diagram for four table tries to mimic this.

Someone could say, "Why not use the optimum score as calculated from the deal by a computer program as datum score?" But humans cannot see through the cards and seldom execute perfect play even at double dummy. Thus the optimum scores are either too low or too high for human beings.

There is an excellent compilation of the different methods in large competitions to be found at: http://www.bridgeguys.com/pdf/butler_scoring_stevenson.pdf

If Louis Wu (a character in Larry Niven's science-fiction novels) had been playing bridge, he would surely have said: "Tanj, who could create a perfect bridge scoring system? Tanj! Tanj! Median datum score is still the best calculation method for a three-table IMP competition"



In the card room of our club, only one table was in play and all the members had thronged to that table to kibitz. Mr. Badhir was in action. But that was not the only reason; the other three players who were Mr. Badhir's guests were equally dunce-like and were providing great entertainment for the kibitzers. When I peeped in, this deal had just been played and there was great merriment around the table. So I asked our