

Surrey League Matches on RealBridge

My Involvement

Whilst I am happy to set the sessions up and provide the RealBridge account in which the sessions are run, the team captain requesting the sessions must accept the responsibility for all other matters, including carrying out the director duties, which are very straightforward. The players themselves must accept the responsibility for all technical aspects in accessing RealBridge (see Technical Issues below).

I will email the team captain two links on the day before the match. One is the director link, the other is the player link. You need to email the player link to all players.

I also pay RealBridge for the session and the team captain who requests the session pays me at cost (currently £3.84).

Director Duties and Responsibilities

To access the session as director, click on the director link. You can do this any time after receiving the link. The layout will look like this:



The director duties are minimal:

- 1) Click the "Open Session" button. Players cannot login before you have done this. I suggest you do this about 15 mins before start time. RealBridge prefer it not to be done too much in advance because of unnecessary load on their server. That is also the reason why I do not create the links until the day before.
- 2) I will label the team tables. You need to instruct the players, when you send out the link, to login and then seat themselves by clicking on the appropriate seat. The players need to sit in partnerships at the table labelled for their team.
- 3) When ready to start, click on "Start Round 1" then again on "Confirm Start". RealBridge does the transfer of EW pairs at this point.
- 4) After 12 boards, RealBridge will return the EW pairs to their home tables. I will configure the match to use the auto-switch facility. So RealBridge will automatically switch the polarities of the home team players for the second half. All players must simply remain in their seats and RealBridge will do the rest.
- 5) Click on "Start Round 2" and that's it.

Note that there is an alternative option, which I do not set unless specifically requested to do so, whereby the two captains can jointly start the rounds, as per 3) and 5) above, rather than the director. Personally I think this complicates matters rather than simplifies them and it is easier for one captain to assume the role of director, which has to be done to open the session anyway, and start each round when the players are ready. However, I have included details of the alternative option in the Captains Start section at the end of this document.

A clock is set for 90 mins per set of 12 boards but it has no status. It is only a guide and will not cut tables off if they take longer.

I will destroy the session sometime later, after you have finished the match. Even after that, you can view scores and hands subsequently forever, using the session links.

If you are interested in what the director can do beyond the duties that I have described, there is a wealth of information at:

<https://realbridge.online/main-director-guide.html>

Accessing the Session as a Player

Before the Session

If you have not played on RealBridge recently, it is advisable to check, well in advance, that your microphone and camera are working satisfactorily, which you can do at:

<https://play.realbridge.online/camera.html>

If not, then please consult the RealBridge advice page detailed in the Technical Issues section below.

If you have not played on RealBridge at all, you should consult the RealBridge user guide at:

<https://realbridge.online/player-guide.html>

and also read the Technical Issues section below and try out one of the RealBridge taster sessions detailed there both to gain familiarity and confirm that there are no technical issues.

iPads have caused major, and sometimes insurmountable, problems in sessions that I have run. This spoils the event for everyone, not just the person experiencing the problems. Best advice is not to play on one if you can avoid it. However, if you do need to play on an iPad, please ensure that you have implemented the RealBridge advice and thoroughly tested it, as detailed in the Technical Issues section below, before joining the session. Note that RealBridge report that "*Many iPad users have followed the advice, and now have no more problems*".

Joining the Session

The director needs to email the player link to each player. Players access the session by clicking on the session link. They cannot do so until the director has opened the session as above.

You click on the link to access the session. It will present you with a login screen. Login using your real name (first name & surname). All other information on the screen, including ID number, is optional but you might wish to give your EBU number as the ID number.

The login screen shows your camera image and microphone sound level as confirmation (or otherwise) that they are working. To avoid last minute hitches, however, it is advisable that players check these well in advance, which they can do at:

<https://play.realbridge.online/camera.html>

During the Session

If for any reason you lose your connection during a session and have to login again, RealBridge reserves your seat under your original login name. So please login again with identical details (there are people who have not done!!). Otherwise you will be blocked from your seat until either you do so or the director clears the seat.

At the end of a hand, RealBridge gives you 10 seconds, with countdown, to look at the hand before moving on to the next one. There is a pause button, which can be activated by any player who wants longer to look at the hand.

If a player uses this pause facility on the last board of a round, please remember to cancel the pause. Without that, the round is not finished, you will not be returned to your home table, and the director cannot start the next round.

Regulations

The matches are governed by the SCBA Rules for Online play at:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/surrey/SCBA%20Rules%20for%20Online%20play.pdf>

Alerting

Unless it has been requested otherwise, I will set up the match without screens or self-alerts. Thus alerting will be as per "face to face" bridge, whereby you announce and alert your partner's bids as per EBU rules.

Undos

There is a button that allows players to request an Undo. However, the EBU regulations are clear that Undos should only be allowed for genuine misclicks during the bidding and not at all for Undos in the play. This is reiterated by Surrey Contract Bridge Association in their regulations above.

Although often regarded as harsh to lose heavily for a misclick, my personal opinion is that it is important to have an equitable agreement all round, so that players are not put in potentially embarrassing situations to decide on a case by case basis, and by far the most straightforward agreement is to strictly follow the above regulation.

If it is a defender's play, there will always be unauthorised information if a card is retracted and it is best if players are not required to judge how material it is. Also it would be difficult to get an EBU director ruling on it, having contravened the EBU regulation in the first place. It would further not be sensible to have one rule for defenders and a different rule for declarer.

Anyone seriously concerned about misclicks should take a look at their RealBridge Settings (see player guide link above). They can set bidding and play action to require two clicks.

Technical Issues

This is something that I cannot help with. It is up to each player to ensure that their hardware and internet connections are up to the task. Most people have no problems.

As mentioned above, microphone and camera can be checked in advance at:

<https://play.realbridge.online/camera.html>

For people new to RealBridge, the RealBridge taster sessions are a good way for players to confirm in advance that they do not have any connection issues. See:

<https://realbridge.online/try-realbridge.html>

If anyone does have connection issues, RealBridge have provided guidance on the more common issues at:

<https://realbridge.online/contact/>

Players should also be aware that it will generate a loud screech due, to microphone feedback, if two players play in close proximity or are in telephone contact whilst playing on RealBridge. So they need to avoid that. For match play, they shouldn't be doing that anyway.

Our testing found that any 2 computers in the same room generated the screech. We also ran some diagnostic tests which showed that if you are in telephone contact with another player at the same table, it will generate a similar problem.

iPads have caused major, and sometimes insurmountable, problems in sessions that I have run. This spoils the event for everyone, not just the person experiencing the problems. Best advice is not to play on one if you can avoid it. However, if you do need to play on an iPad, please ensure that you have checked out and implemented everything that RealBridge have detailed below.

Also, note the RealBridge statement here: *"If you would like us to talk you through this procedure, we are very happy to do that. Please contact support@realbridge.online for help, or phone us on +44 (0) 794 232 2209".* We have players who have found the telephone talk through both friendly and extremely helpful.

RealBridge recommend that the following instructions are issued to all players and their suggested text is reproduced verbatim here:

Contacting RealBridge for help

RealBridge are very happy to help with technical problems relating to RealBridge.

If you would like help with any issue related to RealBridge, please contact them:

[Email: support@realbridge.online](mailto:support@realbridge.online)

Telephone (UK): 0794 232 2209 or 0772 692 0784

Telephone (non-UK): +44 794 232 2209 or +44 772 692 0784

Telephone support is available 07:00 – 23:00 UK time (GMT).

If you have a problem during a session, please ring RealBridge at the time. This applies both to players and to directors.

If you often have problems with RealBridge, please contact RealBridge for advice.

If you are outside the UK and would like to avoid international calling charges, please email RealBridge with your phone number (with the country code, or the country name) and a short explanation of the problem. We will call you back.

iPads with iOS 15

This is the advice that we first circulated in December 2021. Many iPad users have followed the advice, and now have no more problems.

The latest release of iOS – version 15 – causes problems when playing on RealBridge. The symptoms are:

Loss of video and/or audio.

Freezing, so that you can't click anything.

The problem may occur at every table, or it may only occur against some opponents.

There is no need to suffer these problems – RealBridge have a solution which takes a few minutes to do. It will solve the problem permanently.

If you have iOS 15, please do follow RealBridge's advice. Even if you are not having problems now, this will prevent you from having problems in the future.

If you have an iPad with iOS 15, and you have not already updated your iPad as recommended by RealBridge in December/January, there is a settings change that you should make.

RealBridge are very happy to talk you through the procedure. You can contact them on the number above. It will take only a few minutes.

If you are happy to make the changes yourself, please see:

[For experienced users: https://realbridge.online/settings-change-ios-15.html](https://realbridge.online/settings-change-ios-15.html)

[Step-by-step instructions, with pictures: https://realbridge.online/media-support-settings-change-ios-15-detailed.html](https://realbridge.online/media-support-settings-change-ios-15-detailed.html)

If you have an iPad with iOS 15, and you have already updated your iPad as recommended by RealBridge on or after 8 December, we also recommend that you **upgrade to iOS 15.3.1**. You do not need to make any other settings changes.

If you have made the changes but you are still having problems, please contact RealBridge, and they will help you to check your settings.

[If you don't know which version of iOS you have, see https://realbridge.online/media-support-settings-change-ios-15-detailed.html#check_ios_version](https://realbridge.online/media-support-settings-change-ios-15-detailed.html#check_ios_version), or contact RealBridge for help.

For all iPads with iOS 15, you should use Safari, not Google Chrome.

MacBooks and iMacs with Monterey or Safari 15

If you have a Mac that has been upgraded to **macOS Monterey**, and you use **Safari**, please see the instructions here:

<https://realbridge.online/media-support-macos-monterey.html>

If you have a Mac that has not been upgraded to macOS Monterey, but does have **Safari 15**, and you are experiencing **freezing or loss of audio**, also please see the instructions here:

<https://realbridge.online/media-support-macos-monterey.html>

Captains Start

This is an alternative option whereby the two captains can jointly start each round, rather than the director. I do not set it unless specifically requested to do so. Personally I think this complicates matters rather than simplifies them, and it is easier for one captain to assume the role of director, which has to be done to open the session anyway, and start each round when the players are ready.

I can however set it on request or you can set it yourself, as director, before opening the session, as follows:

- 1) From the lobby, when logged in as director, choose Session Settings.
- 2) Select the Options tab and check the Captains Start box and specify the captains' names (exactly, including upper and lower case, as they will specify their names when logging in), separated by a comma, as per the example below.

The screenshot shows the 'Session settings' dialog box with the 'Options' tab selected. The 'Options' tab is circled in red. The 'Captains start' checkbox is checked. The 'Captains' field contains the text 'Capt 1,Capt 2'. Other options include 'Self-alerts and written explanations', 'Screens - video calls with one opponent only', 'Trick 1 delays (lead/dummy/3rd)' set to 2/0/0, 'Auction delays (dealer/next 3/subsequent)' set to 2/0/0, 'Triple' dropdown, 'Swiss: odd number of teams', and 'Stop play after each deal'.

Once this is set, the captains login as normal but will see a Start button when sat at their table, before each round starts. The various states are as follows:

<p>Neither captain has pressed Start</p> <p>Start</p>	<p>Neither captain has pressed Start</p> <p>Start</p>
This will appear when you are a captain, however, not enough players in your team are seated	This will appear when you are able to start
<p>The other captain has pressed Start</p> <p>Start</p>	<p>Waiting for other captain to start</p>
This will appear when the other captain has pressed start. Note: this will not appear if there is only one captain	This will appear when you have pressed start

When both captains have pressed Start, the round will start.