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Bridgemate II Lesser Known Features
by Bob Gruber

This being a very busy time of year, I'm making this column a short one on something I've wanted to touch on for a while. The topic is lesser known features of the Bridgemate (BM) system.

Why Aren't the Bridgemates Ready until after the Game has Started?

The Bridgemates are so smart—every round they know the boards we're supposed to play, the opponents' pair number, and even the opponents' names. Why are they so slow out the starting gate? Answer: because they only seem smart.

What they have is a large and quickly accessible memory, but they don't possess what we call intelligence, not even artificial. They have to be told everything—what movement will be used, the # of tables, the # of boards per round, the number of rounds, and a list of player #s and associated player names. Once they're told these things, they're very knowledgeable and very quick.

But, they can't be told these things until the Director decides on the movement and its specific components. Once the Director has given that information to the scoring program on the computer—ACBLscore in North America—the Director can have ACBLscore pass that information to the Bridgemate server and have the server broadcast the information to the individual Bridgemate units.

The PASS Key and the LATE PLAY Key

At BA II, pretty much everyone knows the OK key is an all-purpose key to wake the unit up and to advance to the next element or line. They also know the CANCEL key is another multi-purpose key to reject an entry and/or back up multiple entries by repeatedly pressing the CANCEL key. But there are a couple of keys that aren't as well known or intuitive.

While players learn to use the Bridgemates, they are often stumped by a couple of items: indicating a pass out, and indicating a No Play/Late Play. The pass out indicator—**PASS** in green—shares the "K" key on the Bridgemate keypad. The Late Play indicator is the zero (0) key.

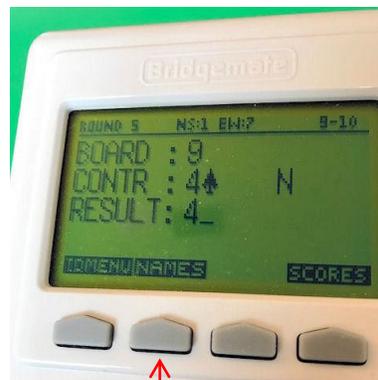**PASS** Key

LATE PLAY Key
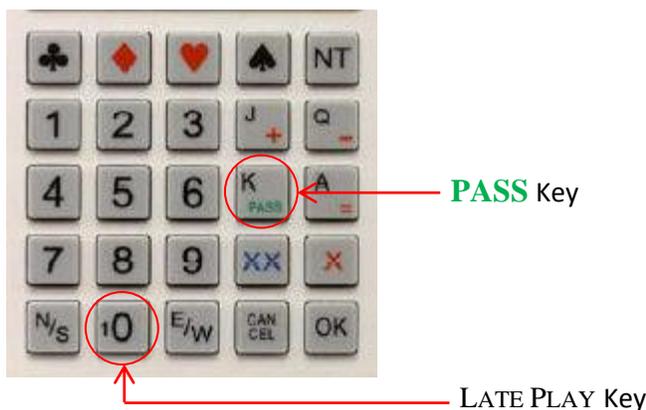
Function Keys of Note

There are four (4) function keys of note. One is used all the time. Another is relatively new. And the 3rd & 4th have been there a very long time, maybe from the beginning of the BM II line.

ACCEPT Key

Once North has OK'd the result, after a second or two, the rightmost function key takes on the role of the well-known E-W ACCEPT key.

NAMES Key

The NAMES key is the newcomer. Previously, you had to get your ACBL # exactly right at login. Now, when entries are pending for a board, the 2nd function key from the left, now labeled NAMES, allows entry/correction of the players'ACBL #s. Further explanation is at the end of this article.
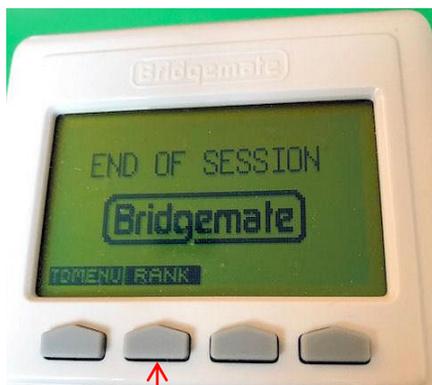
RANK Key

When the session is completed at a table, a provisional ranking is available by pressing the 2nd function key from the left, relabeled RANK.


GAME SUMMARY Keys

Once the provisional ranking is displayed, the 2 rightmost function keys allow you to see a board-by-board GAME SUMMARY. You may press either key to see the summary. Whether the summary shows each board as a % or as a number of matchpoints depends upon a setting the Director controls in the Bridgemate Control Software (BCS).

Correcting the Names after their Initial Entry
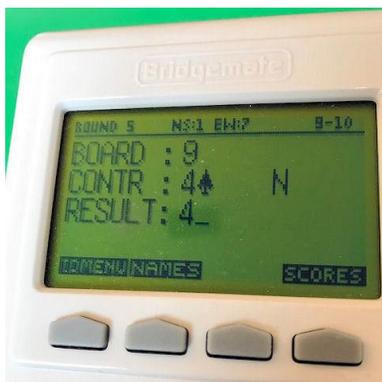
When you press the NAMES function key, the four (4) lines of N/S/E/W player names appear. The leftmost function key becomes BACK. The rightmost function key becomes CORREC, which stands for "I wish to make a correction," not "yes, those are the right names."

If all 4 player names are correct, press the BACK function key to be returned to the prior display.

If one or more player names are erroneous, press the CORREC function key. The names change to player #s. The cursor should be at the top of the screen, just to the right of North's player #.

If North's number is not correct, use the CANCEL key on the keypad to backup (i.e. erase digits) including the offending digit. Now ensure the correct 7 digits of North's player number are entered. Press the OK key on the keypad to advance the cursor to just to the right of South's player number.

Use this correction technique on any other erroneous entries. If an entry is correct as is, simply press the OK key to advance to the next line. When the cursor is at the bottom right of the last player number, pressing the OK key displays the player names. Press OK again to return to the prior display.