

JUNIOR BRIDGE CAMP 2021 – REPORT FOR SPONSORS

William Bourne 30th October 2021

The fourth South-Eastern Counties Junior Bridge Camp was successfully held at Bowles Rocks on 23rd and 24th October 2021. This was the first for two years because of the lockdowns. There was a total of 62 attendees and the England U-16 squad used it as a training session. The feedback at the bottom of this paper shows that it was a success.

I also sent out a short feedback survey after the event. It is clear that attendees liked Bowles Rocks as a location, and that the October half term works as a date for those who attended. I note that the sample here is inevitably skewed to those whom the date suited. A number suggested that the schedule was quite intense and it would be good to make a bit more time for children to ‘chill’.

The event worked thanks to the very substantial support and work by many people and organisations. In particular, I would highlight Mervyn Wootton and John Hardy at Sussex CCBA, Joan Bennett and Giorgio Provenza at EBED, Tunbridge Wells BC, and Jessica Mauve from Kent.

Table 1 - breakdown of numbers

| | Female | Male | Residential | Non-Res | Local | Non-Local | TOTAL |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Adults | 9 | 8 | 15 | 2 | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| Juniors | 15 | 22 | 28 | 9 | 17 | 20 | 37 |
| Staff | 4 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 28 | 34 | 49 | 13 | 26 | 36 | 62 |

These numbers do not include:

- Two cancellations (one refunded, one not)
- Three last minute attendees (adult) when the local hotel's water supply failed.

The success of the event was largely down to the attendance of the England U-16 squad, which comprised 22 of the 37 juniors attending. 17 local (defined as Kent, Surrey, Sussex) juniors attended, and the two cancellations were also local.

Child Protection and Safety

EBU's safeguarding policy mandates a new check for each event. However, post-lockdown EBED do not have the resources to process DBS clearance. Where a bridge teacher is teaching at a school, it will be best done through it. Where that is not the case, responsibility will fall back on the bridge association. I am aware that EBED are looking to clarify the processes in this area, but this may be an additional burden in the future.

Finances

JBC21 made a loss of £1,940 as per Table 2 below. Kent and Surrey have each provided £500 sponsorship, and the resulting £940 loss is covered by Sussex. This is in line with the original budget.

Table 2 – Headline Financials

| <u>COSTS</u> | | <u>£</u> |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Fixed | 1,595 |
| | Variable | 4,186 |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | | <u>5,781</u> |
| <u>INCOME</u> | | |
| | From attendees | 3,830 |
| | Catering | 11 |
| | Sponsorship (Kent and Surrey) | 1,000 |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | | <u>4,841</u> |
| <u>NET</u> | <u>Shortfall (Sussex)</u> | <u>-940</u> |

Conclusions

The objective of the JBC is to provide a weekend for juniors, and particularly local juniors, to play lots of bridge together and also have fun. Because of the lockdowns, the second part of that was especially important this year.

It was undoubtedly successful in the primary objective, as the feedback shows. However, the take-up from local schools was disappointing, reflecting the collapse of schools' bridge during the lockdowns.

There are significant steps forward being taken by EBED to encourage junior bridge, led by Joan Bennett. These should widen the audience of potential participants in future:

- A schools league for all abilities has started with initial success.
- A Grand Prix structure of six junior events through the year has been created in order to incentivise juniors to attend all of them. This event was GP1, and the last will be the Junior Teach In in August 2022.

In addition, there are a number of initiatives by county bridge associations. In particular, Oxfordshire runs regular tournaments for less experienced players and Douglas Wright in Surrey is starting a series of on-line bridge lessons for juniors.

The biggest single barrier to higher numbers is the difficulty of finding ways to advertise this and similar events. I am hopeful that the work being done by Joan Bennett will begin to alleviate this problem.

Recommendations

There are two good reasons to run a similar event next year. One is that we have a formula which obviously works. The second is that it is a key element in the structure of junior

events which is being put together nationally. The alternative would be to hold a similar event elsewhere (perhaps Surrey as being geographically easier).

On the other hand, JBC21 did not serve local juniors in the way it was originally intended. I take the view that this will improve next year because of the initiatives above, and that it is worth holding it again in 2022 during the October half term. Bowles Rocks is a suitable and popular venue, and has the ability to take larger numbers if needed.

If the decision is to go ahead with a JBC in 2022, I would like to explore with Bowles the cost and feasibility of making the event two nights and two days to make the schedule slightly less intense (i.e. Friday evening to Sunday evening).

Feedback (15 responses from 31)

Well organised event. The atmosphere was lovely with all the children and young people supportive of each other.

Missed seeing the older kids. Perhaps, don't schedule this to clash with the EBU Congress. I won't bring any new friends as I don't have any that want to play bridge.

Everything was great. No issues.

It would have been good to give the children a couple of half hour slots to just socialise. They needed a little chill time as well as the activities and bridge.

Weekend was very intense. Might be better to revert to formula of arriving on a Friday night.

Teaching minibridge, the children did very well. It would be nice to have something to send back to say "This is what they did. Please carry this on", and something for the children to do or be part of that do not have a local school bridge club.

Very grateful for all the support provided.

Maybe split up the age groups so the younger ones have shorter spells of activities - it was quite a lot to concentrate for such a long time and the long outdoor exercise was fun but exhausting. Perhaps splitting the activity to two shorter sessions of 60 mins to mix it up a bit?

The activities are good at the centre, food not so good.

it was overall well-thought out and everything was great! the climbing instructor (robin) was great too. all the training was useful and the saturday and sunday matches were fun (: . the speedball was hectic (in a good way!) and the scoring led to lots of funny doubles and redoubles. free bridge book for coming 3rd on sunday too! would do it again !

Good organisation

It was a terrific event. Thank you very much for all your effort.

It was amazing. If possible please can you run this at least 2x per year. Sophia and her friends absolutely LOVED it! They said they learnt so much. The food was great, the centre was great and the activities brilliant. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

Thank you. Very well organised. The more bridge comment above relates to my 10 year old wanting an extra speedball session!