

I learned or became familiar with duplicate bridge when I went to college in Missouri. I went to a beginner bridge course for about two months, and later found the local bridge club where we earned fractions of a point for placing. I was invited to play in my first swiss team, and naively said, "I am just a college student. I can't afford to go to Switzerland." I have learned a lot since then. I doubled my points from 4 points to 8 points by winning 6 out of 8 matches, which was sure fun and my first swiss team event ever..

After several years of not playing, I then took up residence and joined the Gulfport, MS bridge club. When I returned to duplicate bridge, the scores and game had changed considerably and for the better. A member of the Gulfport MS bridge club, Walter Lewis, seemed to mentor new players, and I was his latest arrival. He seemed to have a wealth of bridge knowledge and we would talk and improve my game on bridge a lot. Eventually, I became certified as an EZ bridge instructor. As I became more confident, I played at the club house and went on sectionals and regionals, generally within a 2 hour radius. I then played against players in who had over 10,000 points each and always lost to them, but in close matches. But, I always learned from them, due to something that I did not do correctly or a bridge bid that had a double meaning that my partner and I did not discuss. Each one of these players without exception always wanted to help.

I logged into OK bridge for a few years and have most recently been playing on BBO at the Huntsville, AL bridge club. I later played and am still playing on BBO, where it is fun playing both with a person and a robot as a partner. One time, in fact, my robot partner did so well that I sent an e-mail to BBO asking where I could send a box of WD 40 as a gift.

I would summarize my experience that bridge feeds your ego, and then deflates you the next hand. However, you are a winner if you learn from both your strengths and your weaknesses. If you can find a mentor, you will not only learn what to do or what not to do but the question of why. This question itself will significantly improve your game.