

The Bridge Circle



Guidelines

(Terms and Conditions of Membership)

The Bridge Circle (**Circle**) is an independent and sole proprietorship (entity) operated by [Darren Evetts](#) (the manager) (DarrenE on BBO). The sole aim of the Circle is to offer low-cost online bridge and associated activities. The ethos is for a few pleasurable and convivial hours of fun, fair and friendly bridge, along with associated activities including seminars, courses, and featured events. There are usually (see below) no Masterpoints and no NGS. The EBU and some Clubs are offering something more than that if you prefer that environment (<https://www.ebu.co.uk/node/3738>).

Circle activities are conducted in accordance with these guidelines (terms and conditions of use) and, where employed, the auspices of BBO and the Rules of Duplicate Contract Bridge (exceptions may be contained herein). The aim is to provide everyone with a few hours of enjoyable bridge, or associated activity, whilst maintaining a fun, fair and friendly playing field. There is a wide range of playing experience among members, and everyone is expected to remain patient and understanding.

BBO is committed to maintaining a pleasant atmosphere on Bridge Base Online. Playing on the site is a privilege, not a right, as is membership of the Circle, and all members are expected to follow these guidelines.

There are members who are unable to use the chat facility, and those who prefer to retain anonymity online, both of which are accepted, and respected. The organiser is aware of who is who, and BBO has a record of registration information. Beyond that it is up to the individual member what personal information they choose to share online.

Any participating player is deemed to be in agreement with these guidelines.

SUBSCRIPTION

- Monthly subscription rates for continuous (regular monthly payments) membership (ie not ad hoc) are as follows:
 - £5 per person
 - £5 for guest membership subscription (see below)
- Subscription payments are due on the 4th day of calendar month for that month.
- New members – unless otherwise stated in the confirmation email, the first subscription payment is due upon confirmation of membership acceptance and payment details. Thereafter it is due on the 4th day of each calendar month.

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- Junior (as per definition of the English Bridge Union) membership is free of charge.
- Guest Membership Subscription – A member may purchase a guest membership subscription for up to 4 specified players/partners.
 - A guest may only partner the member(s) whose guest subscription they appear upon.
 - A person may only be a guest of one member at a time.
- Subscription payments are a donation in return for which you, or your nominated guest(s), are added to the list of players who may join sessions run by the Circle on BBO, subject to available capacity.
- The rate for ad hoc membership is £10 per calendar month (ie if a member chooses to dip in and out of membership or has previously failed to make the regular monthly payments of £5).
 - Ad hoc membership will expire on the 5th day of each month (regardless of when payment was made), and players removed from the list automatically. Following that a new ad hoc membership request is required.
- Members may only register one BBO username on their primary account. Additional usernames will require the appropriate number of guest membership, and be subject to those conditions.
- Any member, along with any registered guest(s), failing to make his or her payment will be removed from the list at some point following the 4th of the month in which the payment was due.
- Membership of the Circle does not commit you to any obligations or expenses beyond those outlined in this document, nor does it afford you any rights in relation to any assets or otherwise of the entity.
- The Circle accepts no responsibility whatsoever for the conditions in which you choose to play, or the equipment you choose to play on. Access to events is solely reliant on your ability to successfully log in to Bridgebase Online using a suitable Internet capable device.
- The Circle also accepts no liability for the operational conditions of Bridgebase Online. If, for any reason sessions do not take place, there is no redress.
- Membership of the Circle is a privilege and may be withdrawn at any time with no right of appeal or redress, and the manager's decision in any matter shall be final.
- Subscriptions/Donations are non-refundable, save that anyone making larger single payments shall be refunded any remaining balance excluding the current month.
- The Circle may from time to time run special offers/campaigns to attract new members. These offers/campaigns will not impact the subscription charges of current members (due to its already very low cost), but may offer incentives to new members for a specified period of time. The offer/campaigns will specify whether or not they apply to former members of the Circle; they will never apply to current members.

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- The Circle may from time to time run “open” or “closed” charity events (eg Children in Need) or simply make a donation on behalf of members to a charity. The plan to make a donation on behalf of members will always be posted on the website and announced during (most) sessions. Any member wishing to object to a proposed donation will be welcome to do so and a final decision will be made on the basis of overall direct or passive opinion.
- Notwithstanding any item herein, there is no liability whatsoever on the Circle, its manager, or its associates, in relation to any matter.

Further Information

Is available in the help section of the Circle website homepage, www.bridgecircle.uk, or by emailing BBO@bridgecircle.uk

Table Numbers

There is no upper limit on the number of tables we can have in a session, and minimum number of tables for a session to run a session is 2. Where sessions attracting lower numbers of tables may be opened up to other players on BBO. We may have no knowledge of who some players are, so if there are any issues, please do call the TD.

Member/Player Conduct

- All players are expected to act with courtesy at all times and to adhere to the principle necessary to ensure sessions are friendly, fair and, where possible, fun! Of course, when our bids and finesses go awry or the opposition make a mistake that does not cost them, we do not consider that ‘fun’, and we cannot legislate for that I’m afraid 😞.
- Any concerns about a player’s conduct at the bridge table should be referred, at the time, to the TD/Course Tutor, who may require a screen shot of chat messages emailed to BBO@bridgecircle.uk.
- Concerns about a member’s conduct during other sessions will be referred to the manager.
- The manager may decide to remove a player from the list of participants if it is felt that he/she is not entering into the spirit of these events. Any such removal may be reported to the player’s home Club, County, or NBO, for action as they see fit.

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GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) – Data (Your Data) Protection – Privacy Statement

Data collected (Name, Email Address, BBO Name and, for any joint venture activities with an affiliated entity, your NBO number) is for the sole purpose of administering your current, past and future membership of the Circle. Data is stored on a secure G-Cloud platform using 256-bit SSL/TLS and 128-bit AES keys encryption, accessible by authorised Circle personnel only.

Data, including data relating to play, is shared with BBO and Bridgewebs, but will not be shared with any other organisation unless so required by law, or as part of an investigation into a breach of Circle guidelines.

For questions relating to how your data is used, or to amend your data, please email [here](#).

Thank you for your attention to these guidelines, and most of all enjoy!

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GENERAL – Playing Online Bridge (BBO)

Tournament Director (TD)

Please be aware that the role of the TD is very different from that when playing face to face. The (often playing) TD is not able to join your table to chat to you all, and cannot see the chat history. The TD can only see the bidding/board/play when the round has ended. Bearing this in mind the TD will often have to make quick decisions based on sketchy information. Where a problem occurs, please call the TD. The TD will ask you to play on and provide the facts as soon as possible. The priority is to play on and complete the boards. The TD will assess the situation and can, if deemed appropriate, adjust the score later.

Please note that unlike face to face bridge, the TD has a limited time to make a decision/ruling. The TD will attempt to establish any facts pertinent to a ruling, but players who do not respond promptly to a chat message from the TD can expect the TD to rule summarily based on the available information already provided.

If required, the TD must be called immediately there is a problem to ensure his/her ability to liaise with all players.

Please also note that when playing at the TD's table, the TD may be dealing with issues elsewhere, so may be slow and distracted. Apologies in advance for this!

The TD's ruling in any matter is final, and there is no right of appeal. Once a ruling, or scoring adjustment, has been made it is acceptable for players to draw the TD's attention to any matter the player feels is relevant, or may have been overlooked. However, if you failed to respond to a TD's prior request for information, then the TD may disregard such additional information. Once the TD deems the matter closed, and to avoid any ambiguity, the TD will state that the matter is closed and that is its end.

Half Tables/Sit Outs

There seems to be no consistency in how BBO deals with an odd number of pairs. Sometimes it allows the event to commence with a sitout (which the TD will try to fill if there are any of our players about), and sometimes it just drops a random pair. There is nothing the TD can do when a pair is randomly dropped. Sorry about that.

If you are sitting out please be conscious that the round will end when all tables in the section are finished, so you may not always get a 16 minute (2 board rounds) break, but you are likely to be okay for at least 10 minutes.

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We will sometimes use robots to make up the half table and avoid having to sit out. If you choose not to play against the robots (ie a pair of robots, not a human playing with a robot) and prefer to 'sit out', that is fine, averages will be awarded for any boards not played. However, that if you make any call on a board (eg Pass, Double or a bid), you must to complete the round or average minuses will be applied to both boards.

Robots

Please BEWARE - When a human plays with a Robot the explanations given are what the Robot provides and may not be what the human player intended.

Disconnects

Disconnects occur for all manner of reasons, but it is always expected that a player will make every attempt to reconnect thereafter. Once reconnected, the player will automatically be re-seated. If all attempts at reconnection fail, please let your partner know, or email BBO@bridgecircle.uk.

Where it is unlikely that a player will return, the TD may bring in a substitute player.

As with any event, players must not leave the event without the express permission of the Tournament Director. If there are connectivity issues, then the TD will notify remaining players of the plan/procedure.

If a tournament is cancelled beyond the half way point, that session will be cancelled.

Chat

The chat facility is a great way to communicate, explain system, have a laugh, and enjoy a joke. Players should take care not to make comments that may be interpreted as offensive and, equally, players should always avoid reading any negative intent into chat comments. We are all to assume that chat is meant to be jovial or informative, never accusational or critical.

Undos

It is not in the spirit of the Circle to allow absurd situations to arise out of a misclick - we can create those in many other ways 😊! To that end, the TD will, subject to the below, look to restore some sense of normality by way of an artificial or adjusted score.

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An Undo must always be granted, but must only be requested for a misclick only. Undos are not acceptable for a change of mind. An Undo granted, which later looks as though it may have been a change of mind, may result in an adjusted or artificial score. This is particularly likely were the misclick may lead to an advantage that would otherwise not have been available to the player. Failing to allow an undo may also result in an adjusted or artificial score being applied.

You cannot request an undo against Robots. You also cannot request an undo if you are (now) dummy (ie if you pass accidentally and it makes you dummy). Also, if you accidentally pass in 4th seat following P P P, you cannot undo this either. Should either of these situations occur, you need to call the TD immediately and tell the table you have done so.

The TD's decision in any matter relating to an undo is final.

Claims

False claims can easily be rectified by the TD. When a player claims it is assumed that he or she is aware of the current position and will take all necessary steps to ensure the claim is valid. For example, drawing all but one trump before a claim is made. If you fail to draw the remaining trump(s), having already drawn some, then it is reasonable to assume that you have forgotten, or miscounted, and the TD may award the trick to the other side.

Where claims are made it is expected that players will take care to check the claim before rejecting (ie rejecting for rejections sake is not in the spirit of our sessions). It is also expected that claims be made when the remaining tricks are clear. Equally, if anyone chats for clarity, that should be provided. If not, a rejection is made, and play continues, bearing in mind the above statement regarding trumps, etc. Please call the TD if this situation occurs, stating the Board Number, and at what trick the claim occurred.

Alerts/Announcing & Systems

There is no announcing – only Alerting

If you play the Circle System alerts/announcements are not necessary. The Circle System is here: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/bridgecircle/Circle%20System%20Card.pdf>. If you play any other basic system (eg 5 card majors, precision, etc) then you **must announce this at the start of the round**.

Self-Alerting - if your call is alertable or announceable (Weak NT, Stayman, Transfers, and anything else under the Circle Simple System, as above, is assumed in the absence of an alert or pre-announcement at the start of the round) you should click the alert tab before

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you make your call. You can also explain your own call in the box provided. Alerts are expected for anything non-standard.

However, it is accepted that some players miss this, or cannot use the alert and/or chat facility, and that is fine. It is expected that if you play anything in addition to the Circle System then at least one member of the partnership is able to answer questions on their methods. To that end if you have any questions about your opponent's methods you should chat your opponents, or the table, to ask those questions.

The TD will not entertain any matters relating to a failure to alert if it is deemed that the player could have asked the opponents for an explanation (eg the meaning of doubles). However, if a player, or pair, repeatedly fails to pre-announce, or alert, the TD will take action.

Systems – Players are welcome to employ any recognised standard system of bidding providing that it is a system not considered to be highly unusual or one that falls short of any recognised acceptable standard. Where there is any concern as to the suitability of a system, the manager may request that the pair cease its employment.

Tempo in Bidding/Play

Any break in tempo when face to face at the table can cause untold strife, and should always be avoided wherever possible. Online breaks in tempo can occur for all manner of reasons, and far beyond those when face to face, and it is also far more difficult to establish the facts. Therefore, unless there is a break in tempo in the bidding that may cause UI (Unauthorised Information) and a player (partner) to take an action that may have been suggested by the break in tempo (UI), no consideration will be given to any form of ruling/possible redress. Where it is considered that UI occurred, and an action may have been taken that was suggested by the UI, an adjusted score may occur.

Please be aware, however, that any player found to be breaking tempo in too many advantageous positions (ie with singletons in trumps, etc), will be in breach of the spirit of these guidelines.

Round Time

The round will end automatically after 16 minutes (2 board rounds), so try not to be caught out! The system or TD, where possible (eg there has been some play) will adjust the board to the likely final result. If a player has been away for some time, please let the TD know at the start of the next round, and any average can be adjusted accordingly. This means that the TD will review the board and assign the likely score based on common sense. The

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system does apply automatic adjustments, so if an adjustment is made that looks implausible based on the play (ie a finesse is assumed by GIB (the system) that may not have been obvious from the play), then please let the TD know.

If the board times out (ie you lose it), please refresh and check your scorecard, and if it did not register the final result, please call the TD and indicate the board number, and the TD will review the board.

Prolonging play in order to obtain an average board (as opposed to the likely score) is not in the spirit of these guidelines.

Masterpoints and/or NGS (in partner events only, eg Children in Need)

The Circle is not affiliated to any Bridge Organisation. Masterpoints and/or NGS do not apply to any Circle session unless it is part of a wider Bridge community event eg Children in Need Simultaneous Pairs. Where such participation takes place, it will be widely advertised and the awarding of Masterpoints and/or NGS will be automatic for players who belong to affiliated partner entities (e Warwickshire CBA). There is no optout option other than not to play in any associated sessions.

Updates to these Guidelines

Updates to these Guidelines are made periodically, so please keep an eye on them.