BBO Information

Getting Started:

1. Go to BBO website: www.bridgebase.com
   a. There is also an app available which you can use
2. **Register**: Click login/register and on next screen click Become a member which will take you to a screen to set up your information
   a. Create a username (BBO name) – if your first choice is unavailable, keep trying until you get a name that is available. People choose anything from part of their real name to odd references that mean nothing to anybody but yourself.
   b. Create a password
   c. Fill in your real name (not required)
   d. Fill in your ACBL #
   e. Under other, list your preferred bidding conventions (e.g. 2/1 GF, inverted minors, ...)
   f. Under Skill Level, choose the best description. Typically. Novice tends to be players with under 50 masterpoints, Beginner 50-200 masterpoints, Intermediate 200 thorugh flight B players, Advanced are flight A players, Expert are national champions and World Class are World Champions. You can choose Private if you want, but that's not helpful if looking for partners.
   g. Choose your country (USA)
3. **BB$:** To play any game that's not free, you need to buy BB$. Once you are logged in, click BB$ on the top right of your screen. Click Purchase BB$, decide how much you want and enter a credit card or use PayPal.
   - If you plan to be a frequent player, you can tell BBO to automatically add a specified amount when your account dips below a specified amount. If you don't know yet, you can always make that change at a later date.
   - Warning: Purchase BB$ through the website, not the app. There is a penalty for purchasing through the app. There is also a surcharge for using PayPal rather than a credit card.
4. **Settings:** Go to the Account tab on the right.
   a. Make sure that your information is correct
   b. Go to settings on the top horizontal menu under Account
      - Suggest you change to Confirm Bids under Playing. This will prevent you from accidentally choosing the wrong bid.
      - Consider changing to Autoplay singletons
      - Otherwise, leave the defaults for now. You can always change them later.

Choosing a Game:

There are many different types of games & games available. This section is focused on games that both offer ACBL masterpoints & support your local bridge club. There are 2 categories of games that do this: Virtual Club games and Support Your Club (SYC) games:

- Virtual Club games are games set up by your local club (or combination of nearby clubs) and typically allow only people who have played in that club in the past year to play (you can request an exception).
- SYC games are open to anybody.

Note that all games show up on the list of available games 2 hours before the game starts.

1. **For Virtual Clubs:**
   a. The names of the local Virtual clubs are:
      - BCAustin (NOT BCA) for BCA players
      - HI Bridge or Hill Country for San Marcos/Kyle players
   b. The schedule for games is on the Unit website (austinbridge.org) and, for BCAustin, also on the BCA website (bridgecenteraustin.com)
   c. From the BBO home page, under Featured Areas, choose Virtual Clubs
   d. On the next page, choose ACBL – North America
   e. The list of all virtual club games due to start within 2 hours will appear. You can find your club in either of 2 ways:
      - You can use the search box on the upper right above the list to search for the club name
      - The list is sorted by minutes before start time so you can scroll down to the right number of minutes (say 30 for a 1:30 game when the current time is 1:00) and then look for your club name
   f. If you are within 2 hours & you can't find your club name, make sure you are on the pending list (not the running or complete lists).
2. **For Support Your Club (SYC) Games**
   a. There are 3 SYC games daily with specific start times and 1 daily daylong SYC game (where you play with 3 robots). The specific-time games start at 9:00 AM, 4:10 PM and 6:30 PM
   b. From the BBO home page, under Featured Areas choose ACBL World
   c. The list of all ACBL games either day long or due to start within 2 hours will appear. You can find your game as follows:
      - The easiest way is to scroll down the list and look for games with ACBLSYC on the left. This is highlighted in a gray-greenish color so it is easy to spot (regular ACBL games are highlighted in yellow).
      - Since the list is sorted by daylong games first, then by minutes before start time so you can scroll down to the right number of minutes (say 30 for a 6:30 game when the current time is 6:00) and then look for the ACBLSYC game.
      - You can do a standard "find" from your keyboard and search for the club name
3. **For all games:**
   a. **Registration:** You must register before you can play. To register, click on the Title (2nd column) of the game you want to play (NOT the Host on the left):

- Make sure you have enough BB$ in your account before you try to register.
- For the daylong game, you will get a box that allows you to register and also has an "about" button that will describe the way a daylong tournament works.
- For all other games, you will get a box that allows to you register, specify a partner and indicate whether you will pay for your partner or not:
  - Your partner MUST be online to register (but can just be on the home screen – or anyplace else on BBO other than in the Casual section)
  - You type in your partner's BBO name (not his/her real name)
  - Leave the bottom box unchecked unless you want to pay for your partner
  - Once you type in partner's "name" the Invite button will highlight.
  - Press the Invite button & partner will get a box allowing him/her to accept the invitation.
  - Once partner accepts, you are registered for the game. You can logoff and log back on a few minutes before the game begins.
  - If the registration is refused:
    - Verify that you both have your ACBL numbers correct. Go to ACBLWORLD from the home screen and click Update Your ACBL Number below the list
    - If the ACBL numbers are correct, contact Mark McAllister for BCAustin Virtual games or Harry Ingham for HI Bridge or Hill Country Virtual Games (you shouldn't have this problem for SYC games if ACBL numbers are correct)
  - Note that SYC games fill up quickly. To make sure that you can register, register two hours before game time.
  - If you don't have a partner, you can place your name in the "partnership desk" for that game (after you select a game, it's the rightmost option on top of the screen)
b. **Convention Cards:** If you don't fill out a convention card, your card will default to SAYC. To create a convention card for you and your partner if you are not playing SAYC:
   - Go to the Account tab on the right
   - Select Convention Cards on top menu
   - Either click the New ACBL Convention Card or select one of the stock cards (whichever is closest to what you really want). Edit the card to show what you want. Note that the way to show the suit icons is to precede the first letter of the suit with an exclamation point (e.g. !C is the club icon).
   - Put your partner's BBO name in the Partner box on the top of the card
   - Put a title for the card in the Title box (e.g. Jack & Jill)
   - Save the card. This card will now show up in your partner's convention card list as well as your own and will automatically be displayed during the game whenever you play with that partner.
   - You can create as many convention cards as you like (for different partners)
c. Make sure that both you & your partner are online a few minutes before the game starts. If either of you is offline, you will not be allowed to play. You can be anywhere on BBO except in the Casual game area.
d. When the game starts, you will automatically be seated at a table and your hand will be showing.

Playing a Game:

One of the nice things about BBO is that there are many common errors which simply cannot happen. You can't bid or play out of turn, you can't make an insufficient bid, etc. There are some differences from in-person play.

1. **Alerting and requesting information about bids**:
   a. You must alert your own bids. The proper method, to make sure the explanation occurs in a timely manner, is to click the Alert button and type the explanation before making the bid. Then type in your bid and when you enter the bid the explanation will appear to the opponents at the same time as the bid.
      - Your partner cannot see your alert
      - Because your partner cannot see the alert, you should alert all agreements, including bids above 3N (e.g. alert your response to an ace-asking bid so opponents don't have to ask)
      - Make the alert explanation as clear as possible. Tend to describe meaning rather than giving a convention name.
   b. If you want to know what an opponent's bid means, click once on that bid. They will get an "explain" box to type the response.
      - If your double click or if your partner had already asked, you will get a message that your opponent is already answering a query.
      - If the bids are gone already (play of the hand has started) and you want to privately ask about a bid (or anything else), click on the opponent's name & you can type a message in the box that pops up, then press the Chat button. Make sure to type on the message line, not the Notes line.
2. **Menu:** There is a blue menu box on the upper left of your screen. It has several options that are useful. You can use it to:
   - View the opponent's convention card, click on the blue with box on
   - Call the director (this should be rare & most frequently occurs when there is a technical problem like the opponent seems to have lost his connection)
   - There are several other options depending on what you are doing. Click on the menu box to see them.
3. **Timing** is strict. When time for a round is over, you will be automatically advanced to the next round whether or not you have completed all of the boards. Incomplete boards will have their scoring adjusted – usually to what should happen to that contract. If you are far enough into the play, the director may look at the board and adjust the score to what appeared to be happening at the table.
4. **Communication:** You can chat with everybody at the table. Type your message on the line at the bottom of the screen which says ->Table
   a. If you know your opponents, you can use this to greet them
   b. This is often used to ask about general information like carding. A common abbreviation is udca (upside down count & attitude)
   c. It is also used with some common abbreviations to communicate with partner (since you can't talk to your partner privately during a hand). Some things you might see are:
      - glp (good luck partner)
      - typ (thank you partner)

d. Do not use this to try to educate your opponents – even the best-intended comments can be viewed as bullying. If you need to educate your opponents, call the director and ask him/her to convey the necessary information.

5. All games are effectively barometer games (you play the hands at the same time as everybody else). To see your results as you go, click on the History tab at the right of your screen. Results are posted after each round.

- To see what happened at other tables, place your cursor on the board of interest to you and click the "Other Tables" at the top of the results screen. It will show the traveler for that board.

Reviewing your Results:

After you have played a game, you can view what happened in detail. Click on the History tab, and a list of the games in which you have played appears.

1. Click on the game you want to review
2. The next screen will show a summary.
3. To get more information, click on the blue Results button on the top right above the list of boards. This will get you a list of the players and their percentages.
4. Click on your percentage in either the Honor List (if you appear there) or the section results.
5. You now see each board, your opponents, the results and some options to the right. For any board you are interested in you can click on:

- Movie to get a hand diagram which allows you to:
  - See the play at your table, trick by trick – keep pressing Next to advance. Options offers a choice to go card by card rather than trick by trick.
  - Manually enter the cards you want to play so you can test out alternative lines of play – press Play at the beginning or at any time during the "Next" review if you want to start from a point in the middle of the play.
- Traveller: Shows the results for all people who played the board
  - You can get to Movie from here as well

You can also view a summary of results on the ACBL Live for Clubs page. There is a link to that in Calendar & Results on the Unit webpage. For the BCA, Overall results are also available on the BCA webpage under Results.

Other Stuff:

1. **People**: The People tab on the right of the screen lets you indicate people that you want to "follow". Enter their BBO name under Add Friend on the bottom of the screen. You will now be able to tell if that person is online on BBO and what he or she is doing on BBO at the moment.

- If a person you have added as a friend has not added you, your relationship to that person is "follow". That person's name on your "people" list will have a gray background.
- If a person you have added as a friend has also added you, your relationship to that person is "friend". That person's name on your people list will have a blue background.

2. **Casual**: The Casual area (click on Casual on the home screen) allows you to set up a game of your own with friends.

3. **Game types**: Speedball games are 12 boards played at 5 minutes per board. Fast pair games are 18 boards played at 5 minutes per board.
4. **Who is signed up for a game**: To find out who has signed up for a game you are interested in, select a game from the list, then go to Entries on the top of the screen.
5. **General information about a game**: To find out information about a game, select if from the list and go to Details on the top of the screen. It will tell you things like how many boards will be played and the number of minutes allowed per board.