

When you Play Online - Be Nice!

The first rule given to us when we join the BBO community is 'Be Nice'. Cheltenham Bridge Club asks all of us to observe Best Behaviour at Bridge.

So how do we do this when we are playing online? What should we expect of our opponents?

- 1. Chat box.** This is really useful as we can chat individually to our partner and friends whilst waiting for a game, we can also talk to them after the session is finished. But during the play, we need to address all the table and it is polite to greet and say goodbye to our opponents. It is also polite to limit our observations on play and bidding. It is not polite to make derogatory remarks about any of the players at the table or to shout (using capitals – WHAT ARE YOU DOING!) or expletives (such as 'zzzzzzzzzz.....' or '???????????').
- 2. Alerting.** Playing on BBO is so different from playing face to face bridge. We can prepare a short explanation which we can cut and paste into the chat box to send at the start of every round – for example '12-14NT, 4card Ms, 3 weak 2s. Normal count except 1st discard rev att'. Note: The most important part of this is the signals and discards as the rest comes up in the announcements.
We can then use the announcement box (beside the "alert" button), present before you make every bid, to describe any system or method – for example: '6-10HCP' or 'shows 5+C & 5+D'. As our partner can not see these comments, we explain what the bid means in our system. If we forget we can tap on the bid later and add an explanation at any time.
We can create convention cards but in our games this is really not necessary as long as we use the alerting procedure.
- 3. Speed of Play.** We generally have plenty of time to play our boards. It is polite to claim if you are certain about the number of tricks you can make. It is also polite to agree the claim as soon as you are able.
We have had some complaints about hesitations during the bidding or play. The advice is to ignore them – connections can be lost, the doorbell can ring, the dog may need letting out – we can never know what happens in other peoples' homes. We have also had some complaints about people slowing down at the end of the round, time running out and an adjusted score being offered. We do not assume this is done deliberately, and players will never gain by doing this, but it is polite to keep a careful eye on the clock and speed up wherever possible. We advise you to look at the adjusted score (available in history) and contact the director if you feel the adjustment is incorrect. The director will be pleased to help.
- 4. Leaving the table.** If you are playing casually on a table and decide you have had enough bridge, please do remember to actually "leave" the table. If you just log off, the rest of the players will just wonder where you are and whether you intend to return.

It is obviously our intention that we all enjoy our bridge together online. Things do go wrong, so don't hesitate to tell us if you have a complaint or feel something could be better.
Judy Sanis