



June 2020 Newsletter

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Bridge in a Time of Pandemic and Protests

As our city faces the twin threats of disease and disorder, bridge may seem trivial. But at the same time, this is a way that we each, in our own homes, connect with our friends and our larger community. For many of us, it offers a few hours of “togetherness” and a new normality that is comforting. Of course, the most important thing is for each of us is to stay physically and mentally safe. Please get plenty of rest and stay safe.

And if you haven't tried online bridge yet, give it a go. Chicago Duplicate Bridge is running daily games that benefit the club, as well as five evening games every week. It's easier than you may think, and more social than you might expect. You have the opportunity to say hi to the opponents, thank your partner, comment on a particularly good play. And in the Virtual Club games, you get to “see” your friends and favorite foes from the club. See below for a description of the types of games you can play every day.

Upcoming Special Events—All on BBO

DAILY – Open ChicagoDB Games at 12:15 pm

Monday and Wednesday – 499er ChicagoDB Games at 12:10 pm

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs – Open ChicagoDB Games at 6:30 pm

Tuesday – 499er ChicagoDB Game at 6:25 pm

Thursday and Saturday – 499er ChicagoDB Game at 12:10 pm

Friday – Treetowns at 7:30 pm

Saturday – Treetowns at 6:30 pm

Read about the BBO games below, including more on how to play and how to find specific games. When the stay-at-home order is lifted, CDB will assess the local situation, keeping in mind that we have a particularly vulnerable population. When we are not putting our players in danger, CDB will go back to our regular schedule of in-person games, including monthly Swiss teams and mentor games, and special events. We will also “make up” missed events (such as the Rank Advancement Party we skipped) as much as possible. Watch this space!

Click on Calendar below the News on the Home Page to see the full schedules at
http://bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwom/bw.cgi?club=chicagodbc&pid=display_future

What's Happening with the Club?

The Board of Chicago Duplicate Bridge has been working with our landlord and the parking company to minimize our payments during the time while we cannot use our space. We are receiving and tracking revenue from the ACBL online games and online lessons, as well as the generous donations from many of you. As of this writing, we do not know when it would be practical to re-open for in-person bridge and thus nothing is written in stone. If and when there is, as a member-owned nonprofit organization Board, we will definitely inform everyone.

Here's the Board gathering as a Zoom meeting was about to start last week:



Chicago Duplicate Bridge Leads the Metro

When you play in the Virtual Club games on BBO, a portion of your fee goes back to your "home" club. Many of our members play at multiple venues in the Chicago metro area. To promote local bridge, we have formed official relationships with other local clubs. With Lawson and Treetowns we are operating as a single club. We share our player list with vacb105395 (the Temple Jeremiah family), so you are encouraged to play in their games, as they are in ours. And we are working with vacb275776 (Larry Cohen's family of games--UCClub). Please "friend" them on BBO and support the games that they are running, most of which are deliberately placed to not conflict with ours, because they are supporting ours.

Treetowns runs an open but elite game in Elmhurst on Tuesday nights as well as Friday and Saturday night games now under the joint banner. Consequently, you may see unfamiliar names as opponents in our games; we're all in this together. As we work out our relationship with these clubs, and when we should run parallel I/N games, things will continue to change.

FAQ—Matthew Answers Your Questions Here!

I don't have a partner - what can I do?

Your best bet, frankly, is to ask all of your friends to put you in touch with other people looking. There is a “partnership desk” option on BBO. Just go to the *Registrations* page for the game and look for it. It is public. You can list yourself and see who else is looking. This only works if enough people use it so I encourage more singles to try it out.

Another option: Offer yourself as a substitute on the same page, for any game. You will be picked up by games that have a sit-out and need a player.

I was charged a 30% surcharge by BBO for BBO-bucks. How come?

Any purchases through an *app* charge this premium. On a phone, laptop, desktop, or tablet, do not use the BBO app. Login through the browser, and you will avoid the surcharge. Show this sentence to your grandchildren; it will make sense to them.

I signed up for a tournament and it was cancelled. Am I still charged?

No. BBO does not charge for tournaments that cancel at any point.

I signed up for a tournament and was not brought in at game time. Am I still charged?

No. BBO does not charge for tournaments that launch without you.

I was signed up but the game launched without me. What happened?

When the game launches, BBO determines who is online, and if it deems you to be offline, then it will not allow you into the game. This will happen if (1) you are actually offline, (2) your phone has gone to sleep,(3) you haven't interacted with BBO and it thinks you may be asleep, (4) you are playing in another tournament, or (5) you are playing in the Social area (which BBO has recently moved to a new server). My suggestion is that you actively interact with the app or webpage within 5 minutes of game time.

As a director I have zero control over this, which I find as frustrating as you do. I cannot add players or tables. The best I can do is use you as a sub if we have a half table (but you need to message the vacb270876 account on BBO; game time is crunch time, and I won't be checking email or answering phone calls until all of my games are up and running smoothly).

We really are all in this together, and BBO is basically trying to use a high school football field to host the Olympics.

How exactly do I call the director?

In the upper left there should be a “hamburger menu”—a blue square with 3 white stripes, and *Call Director* will be an option. Click there and you will have a field to enter your objection.

If you call the director and have a complicated explanation, please start typing it before I get there. (Common complaints are "west slow," "south refuses to explain bid," "east paused for a minute before passing," or "E/W played the last board slowly and we lost a board.")

I will get there as quickly as I can and will rule as I would in a live game (including hesitations), but it gets murky when there has been a clear misclick. I rule within the spirit of the law, and I'm not giving anyone a free top board for an obvious misclick.

I keep clicking the wrong bid or card, and you don't allow undos. What can I do?

To keep this from ever happening, change your account settings. Go to Account (right tab), then *settings*, and set *confirm bids* to ON and *confirm played cards* to ON. *Confirm bids* requires you to click OK before the bid is accepted and fixes all misbid problems. *Confirm card* requires a double click, which only fixes some misclicks. Some directors will adjust for an obviously irrational misclick, but this is highly exceptional.

A board timed out. It wasn't our fault, and the opponents used up all of the time on the first board.

I would like to acknowledge Gino, who is the epitome of the ethical bridge player. If you can't start the last board with 4 minutes to go, BBO just takes it away and automatically awards both sides an average. Gino will often message me to inform me that he took most of the time on the first board, and then I will award him an AVE- and the opponents an AVE+. I would love to direct a full game of Ginos twice a day.

Gino spent extra time on a hand that required more thought than usual, and you are all entitled to do that once in a while when a hand deserves the attention. Gino times out on very few boards, unlike some of you (and you know who you are).

If this happens, call the director and protect your interests. Be aware that directors now have a tool where with some effort we can apportion blame to the second for delays (based on every bid and card played), and I will be tracking these, particularly for those of you who complain repeatedly that delays were not your fault.

There has been an accusation that certain players are deliberately running down the clock to put more time pressure on weaker players. I do not believe this to be the case (I think some people are just slow at all tables and that there is an incentive for stronger pairs to "complete" boards against weaker pairs), but the new software gives me a tool to study whether this is happening, and I will.

All About Alerts and Announcements on BBO

I'm still unclear. Please explain how and when I need to alert a bid.

There are five ways of communicating alerts:

- (1) clicking the alert button in the bidding box before bidding (you should do this for *any* unexpected bid)
- (2) typing something into the bidding box before bidding (e.g., "xfer," "15-17," "could be short," or "f" for 1N forcing)
- (3) clicking on your bid once it is made and typing in an explanation
- (4) responding to an opponent's question in the pop-up that says "Explain"
- (5) setting the chat option to ->Opponents and providing the explanation there.

Numbers (1) and (2) will show up to the opponents so that they know to ask. You can also alert a bid and explain later [using numbers (3), (4,) and (5)].

Anything that would not require an alert or an announcement in a live game requires no alert or automatic explanation on BBO (e.g., 2C, 2D response to 2C, stayman, weak 2s, weak 3s). If you are asked to explain, I suggest just answering what you intended (e.g., 1D opener "3+D 12-21 hcp," rather than "standard"). Anything that would require a full alert in a live game ***requires*** the alert button to be hit before making your bid (e.g., Jacoby 2NT, inverted minors without competition, Bergen raises, Drury). Anything that would require an announcement in a live game (xfer, 15-17, short club, 1N forcing) does not require an ***alert,*** but this is faster and sufficient. Or type into the text box in the bidding box, or alert and then explain. For almost anything above 3N, just make the bid and then use number (3) to explain anything that requires explanation (e.g., "2KC+SQ" for a 5S response to Key Card Blackwood).

When you explain a bid, as in real life you should say what you have, **not** the name of the convention, so Flannery should be explained as "5H+4S 11-15" not "Flannery," and "4+ gf raise" rather than "Jacoby 2NT." Lebensohl requires a full paragraph of explanation, so I will usually just alert as "Leb" to people who know and "forces 3C, not natural, more info" to those who don't.

Basically, the more expected a bid is, the less you need to type (e.g., with a 2D opener, Flannery and mini-Roman are alertable and should be accompanied by more detail, a weak 2 is not alertable, but an explanation should be "wk").

People use abbreviations that I don't understand.

There are some generally accepted abbreviations (which you can always ask about if you don't understand):

wk 2 = a preemptive weak 2 bid

gf = game forcing

nf = non-forcing

f or 1rf = forcing (like 1N forcing) or one round forcing

3h = an appropriate description of a support double of 1 heart

nmf = new minor forcing

4sf = 4th suit forcing (presumably to game)

inv = invitational (NOT inverted)

2 without = appropriate description of key card response

4h inv = good description of a Bergen raise

4h const = good description of a Bergen raise

The Classic Alert Fight on BBO

An advanced player thinks an opponent is being deliberately obstinate and refusing to answer legitimate questions, or a beginner doesn't understand the question and feels that believes they are now being bullied unnecessarily. Most of the problems I see are due to a mismatch of expectations and understanding, largely due to tournament-level players interacting with beginners (or people not understanding the interface). The advanced player should recognize the situation and ask a more direct question, and the beginner should simply say how the bid was intended, as opposed to "nothing special" or "standard" or simply not responding. Call the director if you are being bullied.

A guide to alerting and your responsibilities

All players are required to alert (their own, not their partner's) alertable bids, and any player is entitled to an explanation if requested.

Advanced players: Consider sending a private message to the bidder asking "do you play Flannery or was that a weak two." You know the information you need, ask the specific question rather than humiliating the weaker players. Those of you clicking the explain box 20 times simply do not understand the situation.

Beginning players: When you are asked to explain a call, you should explain to the best of your ability how you intended the bid. It is not a trick question to test your bridge knowledge or humiliate you. The opponents are allowed to ask what point range you thought you were showing.

Here is an example: 1S-2H-4S (your side is bidding spades). Some people play this auction as a very weak hand with 5 spades "weak 5 card raise" (all of my students), some people play it as a hand with the strength that 4S is going to make "I think we can make game in spades" (all of Audrey Grant's students), and some people play it as a very wide-ranging bid that could go either way "wide-ranging" (anyone playing Precision or learning bridge in Italy or Poland?). None of these is right or wrong, and as a beginner there is no expectation that you are aware of three possible meanings for these bids. You are simply expected to know what *you* think *your* bid means and to disclose that if asked.

I see a lot of people responding things like “nothing special,” when “10-12 points and support” would have taken the same amount of time.

Here is another “nothing special” example where this means 3 different things: 1H-P-2N. Anyone who has taken the first lesson of my crash course would recognize this as a game-forcing raise in hearts (Jacoby 2N) and might regard that as “nothing special,” having never seen anything else. I believe Audrey Grant teaches this indicates a strong jump shift of 16+ (which would be “nothing special” to her people), and some natural bidding systems treat it as a 10-12 balanced invite to 3N denying 3 hearts (which is the only non-alertable interpretation). As the most natural interpretation, the latter could be described as “nothing special.” The responses should have been “4 card raise gf,” or “16+ any,” or “10-12 bal.”

What about carding and leads?

Carding is never alertable. The declaring side must ask about it, but the defense should offer the information on request.

Beginners: If you are asked about carding and leads, then 90% of you should respond “std” or “standard,” which is what your bridge teachers have likely taught you (4th best from your longest and strongest, top of a sequence of honors, and high encourages/low discourages). If you have agreed to play any of the following things with your partner then you must mention them: Upside-down count and/or attitude, 3rd and 5th leads, attitude leads to NT, Lavinthal discards, odd-even discards, coded 9s and 10s, Rusinow or Journalist leads. You would know if you were playing anything on this list, and if not then you play standard, and should say so.

Advanced players: Rank beginners will not understand the question, so assume standard. Anyone playing udca will understand the question and respond immediately. It is unnecessary to humiliate the beginners.

Please explain again how you alert bids on BBO.

The alert procedure is a lot easier if you have *confirm bids* on. Here’s what the ACBL says: “BBO uses a self-alerting system similar to high-level tournaments where screens are being used. That is to say, you alert and explain (if asked) your own bids. To make a conventional bid click the Alert button BEFORE clicking the bid. It will show grayed to your opponents. They can now click it and ask for an explanation. A box will pop up on your screen requiring you to provide an explanation. Please provide it here and not via table chat, as your partner cannot see your alerts and should not see your explanations either. In case you forgot to alert, you can at any time click one of your bids and explain it. In the same manner you can click on an opponent’s bid (alerted or not) and require an explanation.”

How can I tell if my opponents alerted a bid?

Look at the auction. Anything with an alert or explanation will be highlighted. When a bid is outlined and/or shaded it can mean 3 things:

- If the bid is only outlined, it means it was alerted but has no explanation.
- If it is outlined and shaded, it was alerted and has an explanation.
- If it is shaded but not outlined, it was not alerted but has an explanation.

How can I tell whether my partner alerted correctly?

You can't. Until the hand is over you cannot see anything your partner alerted, announced, or explained if you do it properly. Once the hand is over, you can see it in the History tab.

BBO Games that Benefit Chicago Duplicate Bridge

Here is how you can play bridge and help financially support Chicago Duplicate Bridge. The ACBL is running 2 kinds of games that cost BBO\$, the largest part of which goes back to your home club. To play in these games, you need to have BB\$ in your account. To put money in an account, click on the blue BB\$ tab, top right on the home page. You can add BBO\$ using a smartphone or tablet, but BBO charges a 30% surcharge unless you enter using a browser (not the BBO app). There is no surcharge when using a laptop or desktop computer. **The menu is self-explanatory.** The 2 types of games are ACBL Support Your Club games and Virtual Club games. Both are described below.

(1) ACBL “Support Your Club” Games

The ACBL is running ACBLSYC (Support Your Club) games three times a day, at 9am, 4:10pm, and 6:30pm (Central). These cost BBO\$5 and pay ACBL black Masterpoints. All of these games are selling out—the 4:10 pm game by 2:15 pm. So, for example, both you and your partner need to be logged onto BBO at 2:00 pm to register.

There is an additional ACBLSYC individual game for BB\$6. Every day at any time of day you can play 18 boards against robots (and you are guaranteed to get the best hand at the table and you never have to be dummy), and earn black points, with \$5 going to the club. Find this at the top of the list after you select *Competitive*, then *ACBL Masterpoint Tournaments* under *Pending*.

(2) Virtual Club Games on BBO

We are very, very lucky to have a close, caring bridge community. At 12:15 (12:10 for 499er games) every day (all 7 days) and Monday through Saturday evenings, Chicago Duplicate Bridge/Treetowns is running pair games on BBO. These games are “private,” restricted to our players (and those of our partner clubs) and their guests. CDB was one of the first in the

country in offering these private games to keep us together during this stressful time. Each game costs \$5 BBO.

If you have played at CDB or a friend club in the last year, you should be good to go. If not, email your BridgeBase username to chicagoduplicatebridge@gmail.com. Once you are on the list, just sign up on line below. Here's what you do next:

- 1) Log on to BBO.
- 2) Under *Featured Areas*, select *Virtual Clubs* 2 hours or less before the game in which you want to play. You can do it up to game time, but it's helpful if you sign up at least 10 minutes before start time.
- 3) Select *ACBL Virtual Clubs*.
- 4) Select *Pending*.
- 5) Identify our game. In the left-hand column you will see vacb270876. Click on the middle column with the game name and time. Please note that the game will be identified as "combined," "open," "499er," or other similar description of the intended audience, so be sure you get the game you want.
- 6) Enter your partner's **BBO username**. Your partner must be logged into BBO to see and accept the invitation.
- 7) At start time, the first set of boards will appear on your screen. Have fun!
- 8) After the game concludes (that means all tables are finished), the results will appear, showing the pairs ranked and the percentage score.

The Longest Day—Not This Year

Given the continuing stay-at-home order in Illinois, CDB will not be formally participating in the ACBL's fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association, The Longest Day. ACBL is sponsoring a virtual event, and we encourage members to participate if you wish. Watch your ACBL email for more information. And we look forward to having an even better day of games and fund-raising in 2021.

Larry Cohen Seminar Cancelled

Again, we're sorry to say that Larry Cohen has cancelled his entire planned tour for this season. It's a disappointment for us all, but understandable. If you registered, your fees will be refunded. If you have questions about your refund or a particular way you would like to receive your refund, please contact Judy Adler at jfadler@aol.com.

Beginner, Intermediate/Novice News

With the club closed, Chicago Duplicate Bridge is offering limited masterpoint games on Bridge Base Online. Currently 499er games are offered on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons as well as Tuesday evening. We are monitoring demand and may add

additional limited MP games or discontinue a specific game as needed, so keep an eye on the “This Week” emails if you are interested. If there is a group of 16 beginners who would like a formal beginner game added in parallel with one of our other games, then it is reasonably easy to add if we know a day ahead.

And anyone can play in the Open games offered every day and most evenings. Beginners, this is a great way to begin to play against more experienced players. Players are friendly and even now we’re all still getting accustomed to how the program works. Don’t be shy; take the plunge! One tip: When you watch your partner play the hand, you have the opportunity to see what works well and what may not work as well. It’s a great learning opportunity.

Lessons—We’ve Got More Lessons!

Eldad “Gino” Ginossar is again offering well-reviewed bridge lessons on Zoom. There will be two subscriptions to weekly lessons, each costing a total of \$80 for all the lessons in June. If you wish to take both sets of lessons, the total cost is \$140. Each 90-minute lesson includes a 45-minute topical lesson, another 15-20 minutes on a secondary topic, and some analysis and Q&A related to the immediately preceding CDB game. Occasionally lessons include a game or quiz. It is not necessary to play in the game to benefit from the lesson.

Participants also have access to the course portal on Ruzuku for an enhanced learning experience. On this platform, students will be able to re-watch edited lessons, interactively rerun lessons' drills and quizzes, have all the course handouts organized, and more.

To register, send email to e.ginossar@gmail.com. He will give you details so you can pay by Zelle, Venmo, PayPal, or mail a check. Once you’ve enrolled, Gino will then send a link to the Zoom sessions. Chicago Duplicate Bridge receives 10% of all revenues.

❖ Master Lessons for Advanced Players (Gino Ginossar)

- **Mondays, 3:00 pm**
- **June 1: No lesson**
- **June 8: Capture the Queen**
- **June 15: The Count Signal on Defense**
- **June 22: Hand Evaluation in the Competitive Auction**
- **June 29: Asking/Showing Stoppers**
- **Thursday, June 11: Special Q&A Session at 10 a.m.**

❖ Intermediate Lessons (Gino Ginossar)

- **Wednesdays, 3:00 pm**
- **June 3: Reverse Bids**
- **June 10: 2/1—Fast/Slow Arrival Support Bids**
- **June 17: Entry Management in Declarer Play**

- June 24: Defending a NT Contract
- Thursday, June 18: Special Q&A Session at 10 a.m.

CDB may also offer a set of **Beginning Bridge** lessons on Zoom. These would be designed for people who want to learn bridge from scratch. With the enforced stay-at-home, many people are looking for ways to spend their time at home. Bridge is, as we all know, a great pastime. If you know anyone who might be interested, please have them contact Gino. Again, email e.ginossar@gmail.com.

Upcoming Tournaments

For now, all in-person tournaments have been cancelled for the immediate future. As soon as we get back to normal, we'll be providing tournament information. For more information on all upcoming local tournaments, see <http://bridgeinchicago.com/tournaments/>. For ACBL-wide tournaments, see <http://tournaments.acbl.org/>.

Player Achievements

Because there were no games held at CDB and members are playing in a variety of online venues, we do not have meaningful "in-house" achievements. We're all looking forward to being able to acknowledge outstanding games by our friends and colleagues.

Player Rank Advancement

Congratulations to the following members who have advanced in ACBL rank in April, as noted on May 6.

Inez White, Junior Masters; **Jacob Breneisen** and **Albert Spyer**, Club Masters; **Sid Bennett**, **Peter Bush**, and **Robin Josephs**, Sectional Masters; **Amin Hakim**, Sapphire Life Master.

Unit 123 Rankings

Congratulations to players in the Unit 123 rankings posted May 6!

Mini McKinney		Ace of Clubs	
0-5	Tijuana Nelson, #4 Jessica Nielsen #4	0-5	Jessica Nielsen #3 Tijuana Nelson #6 Susan Youngs #9
5-20	Peter Bush #1 David Kovacs #2 Elise Schreiber #6	5-20	Peter Bush #1 David Kovacs #2 Elise Schreiber #5
20-50	Mary Walsdorf #8 Robin Josephs #9	20-50	Mai Phan #7
50-100	Holly Economos #2 Steven Strong #7	50-100	Holly Economos #3 Mary Reed #4

Mini McKinney		Ace of Clubs	
	Mary Reed #8		Steven Strong #6 Maurice Norman #10
100-200	Kunal Pujara #1 Kathryn Norman #3 Frances Margolin #4 Ron Raedeke #9 Cynthia Huang #10	100-200	Kunal Pujara #1 Kathryn Norman #3 Frances Margolin #6 James English #9
200-300	Daniel Weiss #1 Les White #2 James Sturtevant #5 Rosalie Sturtevant #5 Pauline Oyama #7 Patricia Ballman #9	200-300	Les White #2 Pauline Oyama #5 James Sturtevant #6 Rosalie Sturtevant #6 Patricia Ballman #10
300-500	Aleksander Lishkov #1 Sarik Goyal #2	300-500	Aleksander Lishkov #1 Pam Seaman #9
500-1000	Judi Katz #1 William Berkman #2 Adriana Humada #6 Monte Lamb #7 Valy Lev #8 R. Paul Urbanick #10	500-1000	Judi Katz #1 William Berkman #2 Adriana Humada #4 R Paul Urbanick #5 George Marx #6 Monte Lamb #10
1000-1500	Mark Pinkowski #6 Paul Prez #7 Nic Hristea #8	1000-1500	Mickey Goldgehn #4 Burton Lewis #6 Janet Nachman #8
1500-2500	John Miller #2 Susan Eggebrecht #4 Cory Perkers #7 Rosede Olson #9	1500-2500	John Miller #3 Rosede Olson #4 Susan Eggebrecht #5
2500-3500	Tom Fogarty #1 Michael Airdo #2 Roger Theis #6 James Hudson #8	2500-3500	Michael Airdo #1 Roger Theis #2 Tom Fogarty #3 James Hudson #6 Dorri Goldgehn #7
3500 -5000	Kendra Bridges #1 Matthew Dyer #2 Joseph Stokes #4 Jane Kennedy #8 Betsy Downs #10	3500-5000	Matthew Dyer #2 Jane Kennedy #3 Kendra Bridges #5 John Goring #6 Cherrollyn Woodwine #9
5000-7500	Judy Zhu #3 Robert Kent #1	5000-7500	Judy Zhu #1 Robert Kent #2 Toddy Leavitt #6
7500-10000	Ellen Kent #1 Eldad Ginossar #2 Amin Hakim #4 Barbara Saben #6	7500-10000	Ellen Kent #1 Amin Hakim #2 Eldad Ginossar #3 Barbara Saben #4
10000+	L. James Phillips #4 Claude Vogel #6	10000+	L. James Phillips #1 Claude Vogel #9

