

AUG 2020



Sheree Pavey has written as short article about her experience participating in the Progressive Congress section of the Virtual Summer Meeting. You can read it below:



My first selfish thought when this pesky virus reached our shores and looked like it was here to stay was, "what about my Bridge?". It really was a soulful cry given the extent that bridge has become such an essential part of my week.

The EBU and local clubs very quickly and magnificently galvanized themselves and bridge players nationally into switching online. What a relief. My partner and I soon settled into a regular online club.

Being a frequent visitor to the EBU website I was alerted to the invitation to the "Summer Meeting 2020". Ordinarily held in Eastbourne, the EBU decided to undertake the Congress virtually.

I didn't want to play in the main event. My self-esteem couldn't take encounters with "well I have been playing since childhood/school/university e.g 30, 40, 50 years now". To be fair these guys are very happy to see us, being guaranteed, after a couple of rounds, of smoothly and easily stepping over us and up the competition ladder.

I'm in, I guess, what you might politely call my sunshine years (not yet golden), and have only been learning for 3 years, my lack of experience stands out like a sore thumb and whilst mulling over all of this I spotted reference to the "Really Easy Congress" running alongside the main Congress and re-branded the "Progressive Congress". I promptly signed up my partner and myself.

To be honest I wasn't sure if I had to play every event in the Congress in order to achieve an overall score or whether I could pick and mix. Luckily my partner Datsun180 possesses the same drive to play as myself and we decided if we could, we would do it all and that's exactly what we did.

Charlie paired us with two great team mates (Ollie and Claire) for the team events.

And then we were off. My previous dining room table, now renamed the bridge table, was duly set up with a mug of tea, a glass of water and a small mountain of biscuits (Boris may try to do away with BOGOFs, it won't stop me buying them in bulk). The familiar anticipation, excitement, fear (did you know that all those emotions feel the same in the body?), the sweaty palms and increased heart rate, especially when you know it's your turn to play, the cacophony all kicked in. We played fair to middling in all our events, a few bidding misunderstandings all part of a bridge player's rich tapestry of life.

The daily 9-high relaxed pairs and twice weekly EBED tournaments were incorporated into the Congress. This strategy was engineered to encourage those that regularly participate to step up and sample a gentle Congress. I hope this worked. For me, having played in those tournaments it provided that extra confidence and reassurance that I could cope.

My admiration of Christine, Jacks and Charlie knows no bounds in their ability to organise the teams event. I imagine it was like herding cats, but herding excitable and stressed cats into unfamiliar technological pens REMOTELY! It worked - we ended up on the right table with the correct opps.

On a related note, when I play it is not competition with others that drives me, it is to be the very best I can be. Bridge is not to my mind a game that can be perfected. Even the most experienced cannot surely go into a game knowing without doubt that he/she will win if they do everything right, there are so many unpredictable variables.

I love to play with likeminded people. By omitting to hold stratified regular events or weekly games I think clubs are missing out on an opportunity. Calling it progressive or improvers doesn't really cover it, some of us aren't going to progress or improve, we are where we are, being the best we can be. My NGS Is unlikely ever to climb above 10 or Jack if I'm very lucky.