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The game of bridge in the Covid 19 era.

Preamble:

Some critical information:

- COVID-19 is a highly infectious virus, for which there is currently no specific treatment or vaccine.
- COVID-19 spreads readily from person to person: droplets (cough or sneeze) either directly from an infected person or by touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) which have droplet contamination from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face.
- Infected people can spread the virus for up to 48 hours before showing any symptoms themselves. Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from very mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, while others may get very sick, very quickly.
- Those most at risk of serious illness and death include: all people 70 years & older, all people over 65 with chronic medical conditions especially diabetes and hypertension, all people with compromised immune systems.
- There is little, if any, benefit in asymptomatic healthy people routinely wearing masks from day to day. Masks worn by infected people reduce the spread to others.
- What does this mean for the bridge community here & world-wide: Bridge players fit the at-risk demographic in many ways – older, increased incidence of diabetes, hypertension, lung & other chronic diseases.
- Bridge players usually sit within 1.5m of each other, usually for 16+ minutes. Adjacent tables add to the proximity risk.
- Many items at bridge sessions are touched by many people – cards, bidding boxes and scoring devices, name sheets, travelling scoresheets, pens, refreshment cups & glasses.
- Physical distancing definitely reduces the risk of transmission and is enforceable in law. The distancing requirement presents a challenge for every bridge club. How might your club develop a workable plan for restarting face-to-face bridge sessions?



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Every bridge player who intends to go to their club to play bridge must ask themselves the following:

- Do I have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?
- Have I been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?
- Have I been out of the country in the last 14 days?
- Am I a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?
- Have I been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?
- Have I been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?

If you answer **YES** to any of these – you **MUST NOT** attend the club.

What happens on arrival at the club?

Entry screening for all:

- (a) There will be a club member who acts as 'entry monitor'.
 - (b) Entrants complete a Self Declaration Form on the first time they return to the club.
 - (c) Perform a non-contact temperature check.
- The best way forward is for your club is to have a **Risk Assessment** for dealing with the transmission of COVID-19
 - (i) from player to player and
 - (ii) players touching hard surfaces or equipment already touched by an infected person while attending bridge playing sessions.
 - A Generic Risk Assessment for CBAI bridge clubs has been prepared (see below) and clubs can adapt this to suit their own plan.
 - Your club is responsible for ensuring that all members & visitors understand that COVID-19 is a real and major threat. Your club is strongly advised not to 'water down' any directives or guidelines, and to comply with Government and Health regulations as and when they are issued and updated.



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The following are the primary player protection measures to have in place by clubs for returning to 'live' bridge in your club:

- (a) Sanitiser products and wash facilities.
- (b) Clean and sanitise all surfaces likely to be touched.
- (c) Clear Plastic or Perspex table screens.
- (d) Face masks or visors.
- (e) Non-contact digital thermometer.
- (f) All members to be made aware of the Risk Assessment.
- (g) Proper signage to aid member's awareness of all measures to be followed while attending bridge sessions.
- (h) The playing room capacity will be reduced, as necessary, so as to observe social distancing.
- (i) Each club will have one member to act as Covid lead, who will deal with Covid related issues as they are passed through to them.
- (j) Each club will have one member to act as Entry Monitor.



Generic Risk Assessment for Contract Bridge Association of Ireland Bridge Clubs

Bridge Club.....

Assessment carried out by:

Date of next review:

Date assessment was carried out:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Transmission of COVID-19 from Player to Player while attending bridge playing session						
1 Through touching hard surfaces or equipment already touched by infected person.						
1.1 Venue Features: Door Knobs etc	Player acquiring virus by touch.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Ensure hard surfaces at the venue are as likely as possible to be virus free at start of session. Clean surfaces likely to be touched. Prop doors open as far as possible. Consider an external sanitising station at entrance to Clubhouse.	Club Club	Beginning of session.	



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1.2 Venue Features: Catering Equipment	Player acquiring virus by touch.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Ensure player awareness with appropriate signage displayed. No catering. Players asked to bring and take away any drinks and drinking vessels for their own use.	Club	Before opening.	
1.3 Cash Handling	Player acquiring virus by touch.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	No cash handling. Players pay for the session by dropping the table money into a container after entering the club. Other safe collection method may be used. Ensure Players are aware.	Club	During Session Before opening.	



What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
<p>1.4 Coats and Hats</p>	<p>Player acquiring virus by touch.</p> <p>One player's coat and hat may be touched by another player.</p> <p>Contamination may pass between them</p>	<p>At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions.</p> <p>However, wanting to reopen when government permits.</p>	<p>Consider leaving hats and coats in your car.</p> <p>Coats and hats to be placed apart from others on hooks and coat rails.</p> <p>Consider providing plastic crates in the playing room. Each will be for use by one player for storage of coats, hats, handbags etc.</p> <p>Marshalling by Entry Monitor will ensure that players arrive in the room at intervals and do not crowd together when using hooks, rails and crates.</p>	<p>Club</p>	<p>Before Session</p> <p>Before Session</p>	
<p>1.5 Toilets</p> <p>Toilets will be available during the session</p>	<p>Areas in toilets may be contaminated by one player and touched by another</p>	<p>At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions.</p> <p>However, wanting to reopen when government permits.</p>	<p>Place antiseptic hand wash in each toilet.</p> <p>Place antiseptic wipes in each toilet.</p> <p>Instruct players to wipe surfaces and then use handwash thoroughly after using toilet.</p> <p>Instruct players to avoid queues in contravention of social distancing.</p> <p>Appropriate signage to be placed in toilets.</p>	<p>Venue</p> <p>Club</p> <p>Club</p> <p>Club</p>		



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1.6 Players bringing the virus into the club on their hands.	Players may contaminate surfaces or equipment.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Restrict attendance to members of the club. Instruct players not to attend if more likely than any other persons to be carrying the virus. Players temperature is checked on entry. Provide sanitising station for players entering the building. Ensure player awareness with appropriate signage displayed.	Club Club Entry Monitor Club Club	Start of session Before each session	
1.7 Bridge Club Equipment: Duplicate Boards and Playing Cards Preparation before Session	Player acquiring virus by touch.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Ensuring equipment is virus free at start of session. A set of boards for use in the session is to be pre-dealt either by way of a dealing machine or manually and the dealer should wear disposable gloves for the task.	Club Club	Before each session.	
1.8 Name Sheet	Player acquiring virus by touch	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Tournament Director to enter names on Name Sheet/ Recap Sheet	T.D.	By start of session	



What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
<p>1.9 Bridge Club Equipment:</p> <p>Duplicate Boards and Playing Cards</p> <p>Use During Session</p>	<p>Player acquiring virus by touch.</p>	<p>At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions.</p> <p>However, wanting to reopen when government permits.</p>	<p>There will be one set of boards used for each session.</p> <p>All players to have their hands properly sanitised before and after each round.</p> <p>At the beginning of the session the Tournament Director, either wearing disposable gloves or with hands properly sanitised, will place the relevant boards on each table.</p> <p>North will handle the board by the North end/corner and place it in the centre of the table where the table screen permits.</p> <p>Players will touch the unique side of the board containing their cards but will not touch any other part of it.</p> <p>At the end of each round the Tournament Director, either wearing disposable gloves or with hands properly sanitised, will move the boards from table to table.</p>	<p>Club</p> <p>Instruct players</p> <p>Instruct players</p> <p>Instruct players</p>	<p>Before each session.</p>	



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<p>1.10 Bridge Club Equipment:</p> <p>Bidding Boxes</p>	<p>Player acquiring virus by touch.</p>	<p>At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions.</p> <p>However, wanting to reopen when government permits.</p>	<p>Bidding boxes will be quarantined, untouched at least three days before each session.</p> <p>Bidding boxes will be placed on tables by people using disposable gloves or with hands properly sanitised.</p> <p>Bidding boxes will only be used by one player during the session.</p> <p>North and South will stay in their seats and use the same bidding boxes throughout the session.</p> <p>East and West will take their bidding boxes with them each time they move.</p> <p>Consider getting players to purchase their own bidding box.</p>	<p>Club</p>	<p>Before each session.</p>	



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1.13 Bridge Club Equipment: Scoring Laptop	Player acquiring virus by touch.	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	The scoring laptop and router will be placed in a safe area under the care of the scorer and players will be instructed not to touch them.	Club	Before each session.	



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2 Through inhaling droplets breathed out by infected person.						
2.1 Players entering the building. Players clustering as they enter the building.	Player acquiring virus by airborne droplet(s).	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits	Test players with non-contact digital thermometer. Players to complete Self Declaration Form. Marshalling will ensure that players do not cluster. Ensure player awareness with appropriate signage displayed.	Club Club Club	Before each session.	
2.2 Players passing each other without distancing as they fill the tables and for East/West players moving at the start of each round.	Player acquiring virus by airborne droplet(s).	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits	Players must wear a face mask or face visor. Ensure player awareness with appropriate signage displayed.	Club	Before each session.	



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2.3 Players breathing on each other at the table.	Player acquiring virus by airborne droplet(s).	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, wanting to reopen when government permits.	Perspex / Plastic Screens on the tables from corner to corner containing breath in the area immediately in front of each player. Players wearing face masks or visors. Screens will be wiped with antiseptic wipes before and after each session.	Club Club	Before each session.	
2.4 Players passing each other without distancing as they leave the building.	Player acquiring virus by airborne droplet(s).	At present remaining closed. i.e. not running sessions. However, to reopen when government permits.	Players will be asked to collect outdoor clothing etc. and leave the building socially distanced. Ensure player awareness with appropriate signage displayed.	Club Club	At the end of each session.	



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Summary of actions and policies required by this Risk Assessment:

Formal rosters for cleaning of table screens, bidding boxes, chairs etc. should be organised by the club.

The following lists are non-exhaustive.

Provision of Equipment

- Procure disposable gloves, hand sanitising gel and antiseptic wipes.
- Provide container for collection of table money.
- Signage for display where it is required in the building. CBAI will provide generic signage for clubs. Additional signage may be required depending on individual club circumstances.
- Procure Table Screens (see example below). Table Screens can be purchased from CBAI.

Layout of the room(s) / limitation of numbers of attendees

- The playing room capacity will be reduced, as necessary, so as to observe social distancing.

Bridge Sessions

- Only use Mitchell Movements for your sessions as Howell Movements will lead to excessive movement.
- Records of all persons attending the bridge session(s) must be kept for at least three weeks.



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Brief players before the session

- Admission will be available to members only.
- Player numbers will be strictly limited to approved capacity.
- There will be no catering, Players should bring with them, and take away afterwards, any drinks and drinking vessels they require
- Explain provision for coats, hats etc.
- Explain provisions for toilet use.
- Instruct players to maintain social distance at all times.
- Explain provision for handling boards, cards, bidding boxes and scorers etc. East / West to take their bidding boxes when moving.
- First attendance – have sufficient Self Declaration Forms.
- Subsequent attendances – attendance records need to be signed by each player, confirming no change to their personal circumstances since their last visit
- Failure to adhere to public health guidelines may invalidate your Insurance cover.



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Table Screen