

Playing Bridge on-line with BBO.

General:

The best on-line experience with BBO is had by using a Desktop or Laptop computer. You can play using a tablet such as an I-Pad or Android tablet, but because of the size and lack of a separate keyboard it not quite as user friendly. Using BBO is free for general use but BBO tournaments, except for a few, are chargeable. The charges however are relatively small. The following description is aimed at computer users but if you are using a Pad the instructions are similar.

Getting there:

Open your usual browser and go to www.bridgebase.com. The very first time you do this you may be asked to accept a small program download. Do so, it is perfectly safe. Next you need to create an account with BBO. Click on "Become a member". You will be taken to another screen to enter a username and password. Once these details have been accepted you can now logon.

Next Steps:

You will now be presented with list headed "PLAY OR WATCH BRIDGE" and another headed "FEATURED AREAS". At the top right is the "Log off", "Help", "BB\$" and your online profile button. Down the right-hand side are tabs for "Messages", "People", "History", and "Account".

The first thing to do is to create your on-line profile, this is what's seen by other players when they click on your username. Click on "Account" and in "Real name" enter your first name (or the name that you want other players to use). Click on your skill level and your country, then top right under "other" enter details of your system e.g. Benji, 4 card Ms, Weak NT etc. Bottom right click on "Profile Image" and you can select an image or upload a photograph". For now, leave Settings, Convention cards, and Archive untouched.

The Acol club:

To arrive at the Acol club, where most of us prefer to play, in the large list click on "Casual", in the next list, click "All Public and Private Clubs" and finally third down from the top (under Public Clubs) click "Acol Player's Bridge Club" at which point you will be taken to a list of "Open Tables" if there are any. At the top you can click on "Full Tables" and watch a game being played by clicking on "Join" in the "Kibitzers" list. In the list of "Open Tables" click on any empty seat to join that table to play. You can also start your own table by clicking "Start Table" and entering your username in one of the seats. At the same time, you can enter your partner's name and the username of any other players you wish to invite to your table, otherwise just wait until enough players join.

Playing Screen:

Playing the game is very straight forward and intuitive but a point to note is that you must self-alert system bids. There is line for this in the bidding box which you use before you click the actual bid. The opposition players will see your alert, but your partner will not see it until after the hand has been played. If you make a bidding mistake or click a card by mistake during play you can ask the opposition for an undo using the small menu above the "Imps" box on the left-hand side of the playing table. If you wish to claim or concede the

game during play, click on the yellow claim box and enter the number of tricks claimed or conceded, the box will default to all of them.

Rather than detail the play, which is very intuitive and straight forward, I'll describe some of the surrounding information. To see the results of the hands as you play them, click on the "History" tab at the right-hand side and keep the history screen open. At the top of the History screen you can click on "My Table" to see a list of your own results or "Other Tables" to see the results from other tables for any highlighted hand in your list. At the bottom left of the screen is the "chat window". Click on the blue box to direct your chat to the correct destination which would normally be "Table". Note that you cannot talk privately to your partner, it is prohibited by the system when you are partners on a table. You can click on the trick counter "L" to see the last trick played (if you are still entitled to) and you can click on the centre of the final contract box to check the bidding at any time during play. Click on the Imps box to see a small segment of score History. Finally, note that the table options in the small blue menu can only be changed by the table owner i.e. the player with the small crown by his name, usually the table initiator.

Making "Friends":

While playing with someone you know or someone you wish to play with again, click on their name at the table and their profile will pop-up on the right-hand side. Click on the light blue box headed relationship, which probably just shows "Neutral" and click on "Follow". In future you will then be able to see them in the "People" tab whenever they are on-line. If you know a friend's username and they are not on-line, first "Search" for their username and when their profile appears you can follow them as above. If you have both followed each other, "Friend" will appear instead of follow.

Leaving:

To leave a table without leaving BBO, click on your name at the table. To go back to the beginning click on "Home" and to leave altogether click on "Log off"

Dave Lea. 18/03/2020