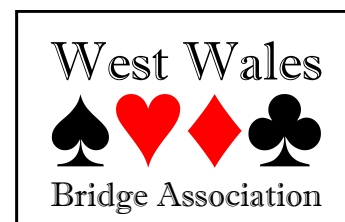


A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO STEPBRIDGE



Starting out

Unlike BBO and some other sites, StepBridge requires you to pre-register, then download an applet onto the computer or other device you intend to use. This app's icon will then function as your gateway into any games and events run by StepBridge. Here's what to do, *at least a couple of days ahead* of playing in a game or tournament:

- Go to the StepBridge web-site - <https://www.stepbridge.co.uk/>
- Installation instructions for different devices are found here: <https://www.stepbridge.co.uk/download/>
- Enter your details to initiate the registration process
- StepBridge then sends you a username and password via email
This is a manual process - allow at least 24 hours for registration
- Click on the desktop icon to log-in to StepBridge
- At first visit you need to 'create account', by providing your username and password from your email reply, and these details can be saved for subsequent auto log-ins
- If you are asked to select a server choose 'UK'

Set-Up

StepBridge provides the player with a windows toolbar for use prior to and during the play. At this stage, you are unable to actually 'see' a table in play so can accept the default settings. They are self-explanatory, but you may wish to consider personalising the following:

'Club' - 'Options'

'Appearance'

– this enables the visual and audio parameters to be amended. It's suggested that you consider

- 'Order Of Cards' – this will be your personal view of your own hand – ♠♥♦♣ or ♠♥♣♦
(if the cards appear too small, this can only be changed via the computer's display settings)
- 'Card Spacing' – try just above half-way on the slider
- 'Trumps Right' – you can see dummy's hand with the trumps on dummy's right as required in FtoF bridge, or matching the sequence you defined with 'order of cards' for your hand
- 'Trick Counter' – this should be ticked

'Play'

- 'Hide Bidding After Lead' – if you untick this, the bidding will still show during the play. If ticked the bidding is not visible during play (the norm in FtoF bridge), but can always be retrieved by pressing F3.
- 'Select Pass As Default Bid...' – leave unticked

'Club'/'Identity'

For serious competitions you should create a convention card ('Convention'). You can choose one of the standard cards and then copy it with a different name, then edit this to your personal system. You can save multiple cards for different partnerships.

(It is also useful on the 'Identity' sub-tab, to put a brief summary of your system in the 'Personal' area. At the start of a tournament you can 'copy' this (double click on your own or partner's name), and then as a matter of courtesy, at each new round, paste into the 'Message Area').

Player Contact

You can contact any other players (assuming they're logged-on), by pressing F9, or over-writing the 'To' box at the top of the 'message' area, or clicking on their name in the player list. Then enter your message and press 'enter'.

Tournament Registration and Entry

Activity	Table	Type	Mode	L-	L+	Players	Total	Label	Chair	Player
Competition	Lobby					3	3		visitor	MartinW
Fri Wed July 18th 7pm									visitor	TD Tony
Fri Sat July 18th 3pm									visitor	Wyn
Fri Sun July 18th 7pm										
Fri Forthcard										
Fri Wed July 18th 7pm										

Five scheduled tournaments, with three players listed in the Competition Lobby

When you enter StepBridge you are then in the 'Competition Lobby' (above) (you may have to click on 'Show Tables'), and you are shown a list of tournaments (activities) down the left hand side.

In the centre of the screen you are initially shown a summary of the Competition Lobby (and 'casual' tables), together with all players in the lobby, shown alphabetically down the right-hand-side.

You can double-click on any tournament and the centre screen will now display a summary of the tournament (for details press the 'Info' button).

Tournaments should be visible 10 days before their start (if you do not see the tournament you may need to click 'refresh'). To pre-register for a tournament, click on the tournament (at which point you are in the tournament lobby), and then press 'Info'.

This 'Tournament Information Window' then gives all the details of the event: start-time, number of boards, Director, number of entrants to-date, etc.

On this 'Tournament Information Window' enter your partner's name (if it is a pairs event), and register for the tournament. You should choose to 'invite' your partner (tick box) – when partner logs-in to the tournament, they will receive a message inviting them to play with you in that tournament (hopefully they will accept).

When actually competing in the tournament you must enter the 'tournament lobby' at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time (this enables the Director to optimize the tournament set-up) – click on the appropriate tournament name. You then just wait for the tournament to start (any delays etc. will be communicated to you from the Director via the 'message area').

(If you don't have a partner you can register without one. Then 5-minutes before the scheduled start time, as long as you're in the Tournament Lobby, the system will attempt to match you with a partner - if one is available).

Immediately prior to the start of the tournament both you and your partner will have a message displayed asking whether you are playing with partner's system card. You can only 'accept' this, so if you want to play with your own card, just wait, and partner will eventually 'accept' your card.

In addition to providing opponents with your system card, it is courteous to put a 'one-liner' on the message area at the start of a round. This should show NT range, 4/5 card majors, opening 2s wk/strong, discards etc (see 'Club/Identity' above, for a convenient way of doing this).

Sit-out Tables.

If you are unfortunate to sit-out a round, you can leave your table and watch the play at any other table during whilst sitting-out. You will automatically be returned to the correct seat when the next round starts. To watch another table, click 'View' -> 'Tables' (or just press the F6 key), then browse the table list to find players you want to watch, and when found, click 'Join Table' (or double click the table in the list). You can now watch the current boards being played. This procedure can be repeated as often as you like until the round ends. Note: you will see the scores of the boards that you are watching appear in your 'Board Results' list, but they will not be credited (or debited) to your personal result.

(The above does not apply to first round sit-outs, since there is a possibility that the Director will be able to fill your table during the first round).

Table Display

It is strongly advised that you maximize the screen.

You are always positioned at the bottom of the table, irrespective of your actual compass direction.

The auction table is shown at the bottom left of the screen (you are always positioned at the far right hand side of the table – irrespective of your actual compass direction).

The board details are shown at the top left, and in addition the vulnerability is highlighted (white/red) against players' names.

On one player from each partnership, there is a small 'note' icon at the right of their name. This indicates that it is that player's convention card that is being used.

If any player's name turns to 'red', this indicates that that player has been disconnected from StepBridge. The Director should be called immediately.

Many of the sub-windows on the screen can be repositioned. Just drag to an appropriate place (click with your left mouse button on the top bar; hold the button pressed down; drag the box to an empty spot; release the button). I personally have my 'bidding tray' in the centre of the screen (above my hand), and the 'auction table' immediately below my hand (partway into the message area) – i.e. all in a neat vertical line. Re-docked windows will be retained in their new position; to move a window back to the default location, select 'Playing' 'Dock Bidding'.

Bidding

The player whose turn it is to bid is shown in blue. The system imposes an automatic 5- second bidding pause if the preceding bid was a jump bid, equivalent to the show of a 'stop' card in FtoF bridge.

At your turn to bid, you are presented with a bidding tray from which you select your bid – click and then press 'OK' (alternatively you can just double-click the bid). The system prevents you from making an invalid bid.

If making a conventional bid, you 'self-alert' – your partner cannot alert your bid (the opposite of FtoF bridge). You should then fill in an explanation and press 'OK + Alert'. This will be shown to your opponents, but not to your partner. Also an asterisk will be shown against the bid in the auction table (but not on partner's display). If you wish to give a further explanation or if you forget to alert a bid, select 'opponents + spectators' at the right-end of the 'message' box, fill in the information, & press 'enter'.



If, as an opponent you want further details, right click on the appropriate player's name in the 'table names' box in the bottom right corner, and via 'private message' ask your question (if the auction has completed and it is your turn to play, you can message the table).

Tony Howarth suggests that you alert all conventional bids even beyond 3NT: online regulations are vague on this issue. You can check any player's convention card at any time by double-clicking on their name (either at the table or in the lobby).

If you make a mistake in the bidding and wish to retract a bid, click 'undo'. The Director will be called and he will assess whether it was a mis-click (often the case in the auction) in which case he will allow it - that bid and subsequent bids will be retracted by the Director -, or a 'change-of-mind' in which case he will not allow it and the bidding will continue.

Contract Play

Just click on the card you wish to play (on a tablet it's more complicated, you can click or drag & drop). When a trick has been completed with cards of the trick no longer displayed, the tricks won/lost can be tracked visually along the top of the Message Area window (you may have to re-size or re-position this window to enable the card placement to be visible). The count of 'Dec' and 'Def' tricks is also shown in the top left box.



At any time during the play, the declarer can claim some or all of the remaining tricks (press 'claim' or F2). Unless under time pressure, it's usually better to play out the hand as normal – saves confusion. If a defender challenges declarer's claim the Director should be called. He may then give an adjusted score, as is the case with FtoF bridge. Note – unlike BBO a *defender* cannot claim or concede.

You can review the last trick played at your turn to play by right-clicking the mouse and choosing the option, or pressing F4.

If you find it annoying to have the bidding displayed during your play of the hand, this can temporarily be removed by choosing 'Playing', and untick 'Show Hand'. The bidding will automatically then be re-displayed at the start of the next hand. If you wish to refresh your memory as to the bidding, press F3.

To permanently hide the bidding during the play, select 'Club' -> 'Options' -> 'Play' -> 'Hide'.

At the end of each hand the result for the board will be automatically displayed (previous boards played can be shown via 'View' 'Board Results'). You can view all boards you've played in the tournament ('Board'); all results played on a specific board ('Field'); details of your actions on a given board ('Detail'). If a player loses his connection for a prolonged period, or logs-out of StepBridge, then the history of the boards – normally available via 'View' -> 'Show Boards' - may be lost).

After the end of the competition, players will be emailed their personal results and regional events will be displayed on the West Wales Bridge Association website: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/westwales/>

Timings

Unlike FtoF bridge, in which the Director can progress the movement even if there are a few tables in play, online bridge can only 'move' the players for the next round when all tables are finished. This puts numerous timing constraints on the players, Directors, and software, so keep a careful eye on the clock! Timings are evaluated as follows

1. The TD sets the time for each board (6 - 7 minutes) – shown on the tournament 'info'
2. During play the Director can increase the allowable round-time for extraneous circumstances (*eg for announcements, to assist new-comers to StepBridge, or connection issues*)
3. Un-played boards are always started for WWBA events, and will not curtail play of 13th trick.
6. Any partly-played board (timed out), is scored as 60%/40% for the faster/slower pairs on all boards played in that round (fully or partly), subject to TD 'just cause' rulings.

Function Key shortcuts

As a quick way to action some of the features described, players can use shortcut keyboard function keys as follows:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| F1 | Help |
| F2 | Claim |
| F3 | View Bidding (if chosen not to always show) |
| F4 | View Last Trick (at your turn to play) |
| F5 | Undo (via Director call) |
| F6 | Show Tables |
| F7 | Board Results |
| F8 | Competition Results |
| F9 | Friends (add, contact) |
| F11 | Played Board |