

Worcestershire Bridge News

New Year 2021

The year is starting with little sign of any return to our face to face clubs. While we hope that the vaccine may bring some relief, playing online appears to be the order of the day for some time yet. However, that's not all bad news – many of us are enjoying playing online even though it's quite simply not as satisfying as actually meeting our friends in our clubs. However, there is plenty to think about both while we continue to play online and also as we contemplate what the bridge world will look like when we do return to our clubs.

Best Behaviour at Bridge – Online!

With no body language to guide us, our chat at the table can easily be misinterpreted – fortunately most of us in the County are long enough in the tooth and wise enough to know that and are careful with what they say. Similarly, as anyone who follows the news on the EBU website knows, online bridge offers plentiful opportunities for cheating – but also much better and more effective ways of detecting it. The EBU, like the other National Bridge Organisations, is taking a zero tolerance approach to cheating and our County fully supports this. Our emphasis, however, is on ensuring that the vast majority that have no intention of cheating enjoy their bridge as much as possible and, therefore, we have published a Guide to Online Conduct on the County Website (https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoo/bw.cgi?club=worcestershire&pid=display_page103) and we would encourage all players to study it (it only takes two minutes!).

After Lockdown – the Return of Face to Face Bridge

When (hopefully not “if”) we get back to playing face to face, many of us are likely to be considering whether, and perhaps to what extent, we will continue to play online. Certainly the ability to play a few hands without leaving the comfort of our own homes is an inviting prospect on a cold winter's night! However, we will also want the opportunity of socializing with our bridge friends. These conflicting emotions present opportunities as well as challenges for our clubs. It's entirely possible that players will play as much at their clubs as they did pre-lockdown, and will add to that some extra sessions online. Alternatively, they might play the same amount as pre-lockdown but continue to play some of their bridge online and so reduce the number of their visits to clubs. The likely result of this is that clubs will have to consider having some flexibility in responding to any changes in playing habits. One club in South Worcestershire has already laid the ground for a response to these changes. Bredon Bridge Club have teamed up with their near neighbours, Tewkesbury Bridge Club, and play on Wednesday and Friday evenings over between twelve and twenty-four boards on BridgeBase Online. In doing so, they have also attracted players from other clubs local to them. You can find details at <https://www.bridgewebs.com/bredon/home.html> Establishing these relationships between clubs and their members now will facilitate co-operation and, if appropriate, a joint response to the challenge ahead.

Eight High No Fear Swiss Teams

Our County is already participating in a very successful online league between nine counties across the Midlands. This mirrors, online, the Dawes League which, being a face to face competition, is, of course, currently suspended. However, we are acutely aware that this online league tends to favour the more experienced players who are selected to represent the County. The reality, however, is that these players are very significantly outnumbered by “average club players”. The Midlands Counties have, therefore, decided to trial an online inter-county teams-of-four event for these players.

The event will be restricted to pairs having a combined National Grading Scheme Grade (NGS) of Eight or less (that's 51% in numerical terms) at the time of entry and so will aim to ensure that all players have a comfortable game. Your NGS Grade can be found by going to the “My EBU” section of the EBU website. The event will be run along Swiss lines on Saturday 30th January and will comprise five rounds of five boards. The start time will be 2.00 and so the likely finish time will be between 5.00 and 6.00. The competition will be run on one of the sites that offer audio-visual communication with the other players at the table. That facility has only just become available on Bridge Club Live and so the competition is most likely to be run on a site which already offers it, RealBridge (yes, you will have a chance to familiarize yourselves before the event!). The important point is that you will have the opportunity to see and talk to your friends again! The entry fee will be only £8 per team and we would encourage as many of you as possible to take part. Enquiries and entries to Louise Wilson (lwilsoncmk@icloud.com) – don't miss this opportunity to start the year in style!



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