

SO.... You want to direct a Bridge Game online...

An online club sanction was granted “sua sponte” (on its own accord) by the ACBL to all clubs in response to the pandemic on an emergency basis to keep bridge and the clubs alive. The rules for online play and rights that clubs have are being developed by ACBL management and may not mirror those in the Codification or Handbook that are in place for face-to-face play.

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Goal: Collaboratively and dynamically document the process and issues.

Roundtable Meeting: Mondays 7 pm EDT

Meeting Agenda:

The View from ACBL - Greg Coles, ACBL (greg.coles@acbl.org)

Tips from the Trenches - Rick Beye, ACBL (rick.beye@acbl.org)

Don's Corner - Don Freeland, BBO (don.freeland@gmail.com)

Directing Online Bridge Manual - insert link

- Contact Emails:
 - RingMaster@acbl.org - Greg Coles
 - PoolMaster@acbl.org - Rick Beye
 - PoachMaster@acbl.org - Lynn Chapin - VISITOR/GUEST POLICY
 - ACBL@bridgebase.com - ACBL Number issues with BBO
Accounts
- Report Ethical issues - [BBO Player Memo-ACBL Ethics Violations](#)

ALERTS

On BBO, players alert their own calls, not their partner's. This includes calls that would normally have an announcement in face-to-face games, such as opening NT ranges and 1NT forcing or semi-forcing. When it is a player's turn to call, the bidding window will appear. In addition to the available calls there is an Alert button and an explanation line. Before choosing their call, the player should click the Alert button and enter their explanation. That way, the information will appear to the opponents when the call is made.

If the player forgets to alert a call, they can click the call in the auction display and they will be prompted to enter the missing information. Opponents can also click on a call in the auction display. This will prompt the player that made that call for more information concerning its meaning. Again, only the opponents will see this information.

If a player feels the need to request or give more information directly, they need to change their chat option so that they are communicating only with the relevant opponent, not the whole table. Do not send to both opponents. A question asked to the table or an answer given to the table is unauthorized information for the partner of the person who chatted to the whole table.

BBO\$

- ◆ Advise players not to buy BBO Bucks on an APP... there is a 30% premium charged. Tablet users CAN use the browser to buy BB\$ and play in the app
- ◆ **Transferring BB\$ to players**
- ◆ Each Virtual club is entitled to designate **one** BBO account to have unlimited transfers of BB\$ out of the account. This could be the vacbxxxxxx, the club manager/owner's personal account, or some other account.
- ◆ The designated account can be set up so that the account user(s) can purchase BB\$ in desired quantities, then transfer any amounts to as many players as desired, using the BB\$ button.
- ◆ This is a way for clubs to help "house players" with free plays, members who do not use credit cards, or who just need technical help with getting BB\$ into their accounts.
- ◆ To set up your account for your vacb, please contact Rick Beye at poolmaster@acbl.org with
 - ◆ the BBO ID of the account that you wish to designate for unlimited transfers
 - ◆ the associated email address if it is not the one you are sending from
 - ◆ the Club number
 - ◆ the Club name

BLOCKED PLAYERS

There are four potential causes of players being blocked from your games.

1. The player is not on your Include List or your Friends List.

Short term solution: Add the player to your Friends List then edit your tournament and click the Modify button. The player should be able to register now.

Long term solution: If you believe that the player belongs on your Include list, contact poachmaster@acbl.org for assistance. Include your club number, the player's name, ACBL # and BBO ID.

2. The player does not have an ACBL number registered with BBO. This can also be the cause of the player not being on your Include List and will keep them from entering masterpoint limited games.

Short term solutions: If they have a number but do not have it registered with BBO, they can click ACBL World on BBO and then click the button at the bottom of the window that says Update My ACBL Number. Often, they will be able to enter a limited game shortly after doing this, but the system can take up to twenty-four hours to update. If the player is unable to successfully use the Update button, they can send their name, ACBL # and BBO ID to ACBL@bridgebase.com for assistance. This will take at least a day for processing.

If a player without a registered ACBL number is trying to enter a limited game and you are sure that they meet the masterpoint eligibility requirements, you can remove the masterpoint restrictions from the tournament long enough for the player to register then put the restrictions back. This is only to be used as a last resort.

Long term solution: Have the player obtain an ACBL number. Make sure that you are listed as the recruiter, so your club gets the credit.

3. The player has too many masterpoints for the event they wish to enter.
4. The player does not have enough BB\$ in their account to cover the entry fee.

Solution: Have the player purchase more BB\$ and try again or have the player's partner pay for both entrants.

5. Clarification on when an **ACBL number** is recognized within 24 hours: If 1) the player uses the ACBLWorld Update option AND 2) Logs off and on before the tournament starts: ACBL number will be known to L4C for that tournament and all subsequent plays.

BREAKS

Thanks to Libby Longstreth for the correction to the "Break Hacks"

To add a break after round X, put into the description +breakX+. This adds a 60 minute break after round X. After 5 min or whatever break length you want, remove +breakX+ and put in +breakX-1+ and the game will restart in a minute.

For example, if you want a 5 minute break after the first round, put in +break1+. This provides a 60 minute break. To shorten the break, wait until the desired amount of break time has elapsed (5-10 minutes) and change +break1+ to +break0+ and modify. The game will restart.

For a break after round 2, +break2+ starts the break, changing it to +break1+ will end the break and restart the game. And so on

BRIDGEWEBS (From Don Freeland)

1. To post BBO results on your bridgewebs site, first make sure you have created the event in bridgewebs.
2. Then go into results administration and choose the BBO Online Tab. Then select the calendar entry for which you want to post. Fill in the Online session number which is the 14 digit tournament number which you can find by right clicking the game results on BBO and copying the URL of the game on your clipboard and looking at the number following "t=" at the URL when you try to paste it,
3. Then click Update and you should now see it in your results.

Upload BBO Online Amend Attach Remove Recover Player

Use results from BBO Bridge

This option can be used to: Use results from BBO Bridge.
You can use the results from BBO and present them on your site.
This option will convert BBO usernames into Club Membership names and convert to a suitable Bridgewebs file.

Select from Calendar: Fri May 15, 2020 1:15 PM [(2278-1589573574) (May 15, 2020 17:49 PDT)]

Date : May 15, 2020
Time : 1:15 PM
Title : Duncan Open Pairs Online
Updated : May 15, 2020 17:49 PDT

Event Title.: Pairs Online

Online Session No.: 2278-1589573574 e.g. 3917-1585144986

No of Boards.: 21

Update

Finding Tournament number for Bridgewebs

Hints for accessing results of a BBO Online Bridge Session

After you have played a "BBO Online Event" the results can be found at a special BB Utility page, usually of the format

<http://weutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tarchive.php?m=h&h=hostname>

where hostname is **your** hostname for your club,

Use this list to find the latest result.

If you click on the Title, the results will show in a popup. However, if you hover over the title and "Right Click" most browsers will open up a pop option that allows you to "Open in a New Tab"

Then you will see a web address such as the following

<https://weutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=3917-1585144986>

You need to copy the entry after t= and that is the BBO Session Number e.g **3917-1585144986**.

Copy and Paste this into the event in the Bridgewebs calendar or Results Administration in the "Online Session No"

There are other ways, but this is fairly reliable.

BBO => XML convertor - <https://mirgo2.co.uk/bboextractor/> (at your own risk)

CHATTING & CHAT

As a director or player on BBO, you need to be able to chat with others. The Chat window is generally shown at the bottom of your screen, but you can also open a Chat window on the right side of your screen by clicking the Messages tab and clicking Chat at the top of that window.

It is important that your chat is being sent to the right person or group. It is very easy to send a message to the wrong person(s). There is a message line at the bottom of your screen where you can type messages. Next to the line is a blue button that always says Lobby when you first log in to BBO. If you click on that button, a menu comes up offering choices of where to send your chat. At first, the choices will be Lobby and Private. If you choose private, you will be prompted to enter the BBO ID of the person to whom you wish to chat. The blue button will then say that user name instead of Lobby.

When you are directing a tournament, you may have other choices. If you are at a table, you will also be able to talk to that table or to the whole tournament associated with that table. If you aren't viewing a table or have multiple tournaments in progress, you can also choose to address the whole tournament by choosing the Chat to Tournament command in the tournament drop-down menu.

The Chat Manager offers you the ability to store some stock phrases for repeat use to save time and avoid typos when you are in a hurry. To access the Chat Manager, click anywhere in your Chat window and the Chat menu will appear. When you open the Chat Manager you will see the messages you have already stored, if any, and a line where you can add new messages. When you click on a saved message, that message will appear in a new window where you can verify and change, if necessary, to whom it is being sent. You can also choose to edit an existing message. Once in edit mode, you can highlight the message and use ctrl-C to copy the message. You can then paste it into your message line at the bottom of your screen by clicking there and pressing ctrl-V. Some directors prefer to have a separate text document open to copy and paste phrases for messaging. If you choose this route, be sure to use the ctrl-C and ctrl-V methods of copying and pasting. Numerous directors have said that using the Copy command in their text document does not work when trying to move a message to BBO. BBO does not support right click on mouse and paste.

“Extended” Chat to Tournament functionality

When a tournament director sends Chat to Tournament before the tournament starts the chat now goes to all players registered in that tournament, even if they are no longer in the tournament lobby.

Similarly, after the tournament has ended, Chat to Tournament goes to all players who completed the tournament, even if they are no longer in the tournament lobby.

CLAIMS & CONCESSIONS

A player can claim on BBO by clicking the Claim button that is usually located in the lower left corner of the table window. The player will be prompted to choose how many of the remaining tricks they intend to take. There is also a line where the player should offer a line of play or note how many tricks the opponents will get, if any.

Claiming in the middle of a trick sometimes causes an extra trick to be claimed or conceded. It is best to wait until the trick is completed before claiming. Some players do not understand when a claim is made for less than all the remaining tricks. If unfamiliar with the opponents, the player may find it easier to wait to claim until they will win or lose all the remaining tricks.

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge still apply. If a claim is rejected, the table can continue playing or someone can call the director for a ruling. If a player is rejecting a claim and wants a director ruling, they should call the director and leave the claim on the screen for the director to see when they arrive at the table.

NOTE: If the play continues, the final result stands. There is NO unauthorized information and the claimer is not bound to his claim statement, if any.

DIFFICULT PLAYERS

- ◆ Can I remove a player sitting at a table?
 - ◆ Yes. Right click (control click on mac) on Player X then Sub Y for X. This will remove the original player from the seat and replace him with the sub until X logs in again. To avoid X returning, Right click on Player Y then Sub Y for Y. This is referred to as 'locking' a player into a seat. See Substitutions below.
- ◆ Can I remove a player from playing in my game for good?
 - ◆ Yes. Choose the player you wish to exclude and open their profile. Change the relationship to *Ignore*. When setting up your tournaments, in the entries tab, check "exclude players ignored by host". All ignored players will be blocked.

DIRECTORS – NEED ONE?

- ◆ **Find Directors for your game, and sign up to direct for others!**
 - ◆ [Available VACB Directors](#) - you should have access to it if you can read this document
 - ◆ [Get on the Available Director list](#)
 - ◆ Questions? Chris Wiegand chris.wiegand@acbl.org

DIRECTOR TRAINING

- ◆ **Director Refresher Training Session Schedule** All times are CDT
 - ◆ Refreshers: Tuesday 4:30pm, Thursday 7:30pm CDT
 - ◆ Email melody.euler@acbl.org to schedule.

DISCONNECTS

- ◆ How do I add a substitute?
 - ◆ To add a sub quickly, open the table with the missing player, right click on the missing player's username (control click on a mac) and choose "substitute-any" from the drop-down menu.
 - ◆ To choose a specific username, use the "Sub-Select" option and pick from the list or type a username you wish to use as your sub
 - ◆ See [substitutions](#) in this document.
- ◆ Can I delay the game to make sure all of my *registered* players get in if they get knocked offline by accident or if they were idle and unaware? Yes, by putting +allavail+ as a hack in the description area of your setup, this will "hold" the game from starting while some of your players are offline. You can then remove the hack when you are ready to start the game.

FRIENDS LIST VS. INCLUDE LIST

There are two lists of players that are used to determine the total set of eligible players for each of your events.

The **friends list** is composed of those players that you follow from your VACB##### account. Only players followed from this account become part of the list, players followed from another director account are not eligible for your events.

The **include list** is automatically generated each day and is populated with those players whose ACBL numbers have been associated with your club. The include list must not be modified.

The friends list is intended to be used for those players that are being made TEMPORARILY eligible to play in your club events (see the VISITOR policy.) Presumably, they will be players who have requested to be made eligible for the current, upcoming game. After you follow them, you will need to MODIFY your upcoming event, so that the change in the friends list is reflected in that game's eligible players. Once the game has started, the expectation is that you will remove those players from your friends list until such time as you want to make them eligible again.

GUESTS

Guests have now been reclassified as visitors. Please see section on VISITORS

GUEST MEMBERSHIPS

Introducing ACBL's Guest Membership option – a FREE way for players and students to try the benefits of ACBL membership.

- ♣ What can players do with a Guest Membership?
- ♣ Play in any club or tournament game
- ♣ Earn up to 20 masterpoints®
- ♣ Read online editions of the Bridge Bulletin
- ♣ Receive ACBL Live and Live for Clubs results emails
- ♣ Guest Memberships are completely free, last for 120 days and are only available to brand-new members (no previous or current members).
- ♣ Masterpoints will be filed as unrecorded and become permanent upon joining with a full membership.

HACKS

What are the HACKS? (note: all are CASE SENSITIVE and must be surrounded by plus signs--spaces and other characters are irrelevant outside the hacks, contrary to previous information.)

- ◆ **+allavail+** : This will delay the start of the Tournament until all players are online, allowing you to chase down MIA players. This checks for players approximately every 12 seconds, so when all your players are available, the tournament will start soon. This is a hard stop if players are missing. If you decide not to wait any longer, click Unregister Offline Teams in the Tournament Menu. (In case this doesn't work, if you need to start the tournament anyway, remove the +allavail+ and Modify and the tournament will start. This can happen if your players are "online" but currently playing another tournament, or perhaps in the Casual area, your scribe is not sure.)
- ◆ **+MPLIMIT=nnn+** : Configure a Limited game (ACBL#s required-without an ACBL number the system is unable to determine that a player is eligible). Four digits can be used in the limit field.
 - ◆ This is an anti-hack but if you want players who do not have ACBL numbers to be able to play in your limited game there are several options. You can make it Open and self-police, or you can open briefly until they are registered and then close again--apparently it lets them stay. Once the game has started, be sure to go back to your tournament set-up and be sure that the hack is correctly added limiting the masterpoints for the game.
- ♠ **NEW HACK** – Open tables are now able to get credit for concurrent limited games.
 - ♠ Ex: You have 5 open tables and 20 limited tables. Using the format **+LT=x+** in the description of your game x is the number of limited tables that the open game will get credit for. Put this hack in AFTER your game has started.
- ♠ Use **+hm18+ +howell+ and specify 18 boards**, to run an 18 board Howell automatically if appropriate.
- ♠ **+howell+** : Create a Howell movement, see extensive information [below](#)
- ♠ If you are brave enough to try using the +break+ hack: If you get stuck using the +breakN+ hack and cannot get restarted there is a **rumor** that changing N to N-1 might do the trick, i.e. if you have +break4+ try replacing it with +break3+. Remember, this is not tested! If you asked for the break after round 1, oh well. I doubt you can change it to +break0+. Besides, do not use the +break+ hack!

HELPFUL HINTS

- [Generate ACBLScore AttendanceReportInstructions.pdf](#) - Thanks Jane Huerta
- [Generate BridgeWebs AttendanceReportInstructions.pdf](#) - Thanks John Ramos
- Mail the file as an attachment named {clubno}attendance.csv to attendance@bridgefinesse.com

HOWELLS

Why do you want to run a Howell? This is not a rhetorical question. The amount of information you need depends on the answer. If you are going to run only 18-board games, and you only want to run a Howell to avoid playbacks, the section on simple Howells will tell you all you need to know. If you want to play a different number of boards, or if you want to insist on 2-board rounds with 7 or 8 tables, or you have some other set of circumstances you want to account for, you will need to continue on to the section for additional Howell instructions.

No matter what, if you want to run a Howell, the VACB club account **MUST** be online at game time. This is true even if some other account will be handling the directing duties. If you fail to have the VACB club account online at game time, your game will be a Mitchell, playing the number of boards per round specified in the Format section of the game setup. There is no way to recover once the game starts, so please keep this fact in the front of your mind as you proceed.

BBO 18-board Howells

For this section to apply, you are going to run an 18-board game 100% of the time. If you intend to play a different number of boards, the instructions in this section will not work, full stop. BBO has a “hack” for 18-board games, **+hm18+**. Note that the letters are lower case. Again, this only applies for 18 boards, +hm20+ has no meaning and will be ignored, leaving you playing a Mitchell. **+hm18+**, in conjunction with **+howell+**, will apply the following algorithm to determine your game movement:

- With 7 or more tables, a Mitchell movement is used. The number of boards per round will be what you have set in the Format section, so you should set this to 3 board rounds, otherwise, you will have revenge rounds with 7 or 8 tables.
- With 5 or 6 tables, a 9-round Howell with 2-board rounds is used. This will be true even if the boards per round is set to 3 in the Format section.
- With 3 or 4 tables, a 6-round Howell with 3-board rounds is used. This will result in a revenge round with 3 tables.

If you are satisfied with the above algorithm, the important steps to remember are:

- VACB account **MUST** be online at game time.
- +hm18+ and +howell+ in the Description field.
- Number of boards set to 18, boards per round set to 3 (to avoid revenge rounds with 7 or 8 tables.)

Other Howells

If the specifications listed for Howell movements using +hm18+ are unsatisfactory, you can specify the number of boards per round and number of rounds in your event. The BBO software is not forgiving of mistakes. You should choose the number of rounds and number of boards you will play in advance. Attempting to cater to multiple possibilities can leave you in situations where you are playing 20 one-board rounds or 18 two-board rounds.

In addition to the +howell+ hack, you will use **+roundsN+**, where N is the number of rounds you wish to play. In the Format section, you will specify the number of boards per round and the total number of boards. Doing this ensures that you will have the number of boards per round and number of rounds you desire. So, if you will have 7 to 10 tables, and insist on ten 2-board rounds with no play backs, you would put in the Description field +howell+ +rounds10+, and in the Format section specify 20 total boards. BBO **will ignore** the boards per round entry, so you must take care here. If you specify 30 total boards, your movement will consist of 10 3-board rounds, even if you have specified 2-board rounds.

- +hm18+ and +howell+ in the Description field, in either order. It can also be entered as +hm18+howell+

- Number of boards set to 18, boards per round set to 3 (to avoid revenge rounds with 7 or 8 tables.)

Makeable Contracts add-in for Chrome

- ◆ Download Chrome Extension here: <https://tinyurl.com/s6j4r7r>
- ◆ Watch TDDon explain how to use it: <https://youtube/vrb0TUqZCJs>
- ◆ Update: Can also be used on Table History file opened in Chrome.

MEMBERSHIP – I have a player who just joined the ACBL – How do I get them assigned to my club

- ◆ Please use a customized link when recruiting new members. It will not only assign the player to the recruiting club, but it will also attribute the new player to the specific recruiter: i.e.
<https://my.acbl.org/membership/join?club=123456&member=1234567>
(where the first number is your club #, and the last number is your recruiter player #). This will streamline new recruits and eliminate follow-up emails to Patty Taylor. For more information contact Patty.Taylor@acbl.org.

GUEST MEMBERSHIPS – See section on this new program

MEMBER RECRUITING

- ◆ **Strategies for New Member Recruitment** (From Joe Grill)
 - ◆ [New Member Recruitment Video](#)
 - ◆ [Chat transcript](#)

PAYMENTS TO ACBL & CLUBS

BBO keeps 20% of the entry fee you charge the players as “rent”. In addition, there are charges for credit card fees and for costs of transferring the money from BBO to the ACBL, which are generally about 3.5%. Effectively, you will receive approximately 77% of your entry fees each month. BBO generally sends the money to the ACBL around the middle of the following month. The ACBL sends it on to you within a day or two. The quickest and easiest way to receive your money is to set up a direct deposit. The ACBL uses OnPay to transfer the money directly to your bank account. If you choose this option, OnPay will contact you with easy instructions. You can still request that a check be mailed to you each month. This can add one to two weeks to the process. If you choose to have a check mailed, make sure that the mailing address for your club is correct. You may not want payments going to your club’s physical location. Finally, you still need to log in to your club manager account on ACBL Live For Clubs at least once a month to pay your table sanction fees, if you have not utilized the auto-pay feature there.

POOLING

Before we begin to explore pooling of member lists, it is important that we first understand why each club has a member list and how it has been created. With the sudden advent of the need to get our “brick and mortar” clubs playing online, we needed to find a way to allow clubs to be able to price their games accordingly. Some clubs have much higher fixed costs that they need to offset, higher rents, taxes etc. Without doing something to lock down where players could play, we would have situations where price wars would begin, driving the profits down for all clubs. This is where the concept of creating an include list came from. Your club’s list comes from three sources. First, we added all players that won masterpoints at your club in 2019. This data came from club report data which, unfortunately, does not contain attendance information, only data on players who won masterpoints. We then added in attendance from Live for Clubs – all players who played in your games, whether they placed or not, were added from Live for Clubs data from January and February. Lastly, any new members that joined since the beginning of 2019 that put your club number on their form were added. So now every club is a “private club”. Only club members can play there – members who are on the list compiled as outlined above. From the beginning we realized that there would be a need to allow “pooling” of some sort.

What is pooling? Pooling is the generic term for sharing private member lists between clubs. There are two ways to do it – more on that shortly. The most common scenarios we envisioned were things like: - a club owner that had multiple clubs - clubs that shared a building - smaller clubs in close geographical proximity. However, new ideas began to form and there are many different “alliances” happening. The bottom line is, it is your private club but if another club wants to admit your members and you’re fine with that, then pooling is for you.

PRIMARY/SECONDARY (replacing former description). This is by far our most common type of pooling. In this scenario there is one club that is running games but another club, or multiple clubs, decide they want their members to be allowed to play there. What we do in this case is add ALL the members of the secondary club(s) to the list of the primary club. The primary club runs the games and everyone from all the clubs can play. The entry fees (less BBO’s 20%) are all sent to the primary club – just like would happen in real life. They run the game – they collect the money. Any sharing of revenue or profit is between the primary club and the secondary club(s), the ACBL will not be involved (this project and the finances are already complicated enough).

Primary/Secondary relationship would be when two or more clubs all want to run games, but they have all agreed that they want to allow their players to be able to play in each other's games. An example might be that three neighboring towns want to take turns holding games throughout the week. Club A will run games Monday, Club B on Tuesday, and Club C on Thursday. When clubs are set up as peers, every player on every club's list is added to all the other club's lists. As with the primary/secondary scenario, it is the club that runs the game that gets the money from the entry fees. If you wish to pool with another club here is the best way to go about it. - Have an email exchange between the clubs, getting agreement that lists will be shared. - Forward these approvals to poolmaster@acbl.org - Make sure that the email includes club numbers, not just the names of the clubs. - Pooling will take effect overnight when BBO's batches run to update your include list.

RESULTS

RE: Game Results

- ◆ Is there a way to find the results after the tournament.?
 - ◆ Yes. Change the two references in this link to your club number and post this URL on your website.
<http://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tarchive.php?m=h&h=vacb123456>
 - ◆ The above link returns (I think) the last week's worth of results. To see a different number of days, append "&m=#", where # is the number of days:
<http://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tarchive.php?m=h&h=vacb123456&md=40>
 - ◆ The h= argument is the BBO ID of the host that created the tournament. The m=h is a mystery up to now but seems to be required.
 - ◆ Hand Records and Travelers for club games may be accessed by any VACB account. To see these records, you must open a new "private" or "incognito" browser session (without preexisting cookies) and authenticate to BBO as a VACB account. Players can always see any of their own hand records.
- ◆ Why was my player, who is a beginner, being placed in the "A" Strata?
 - ◆ This is an indication that she does not have an ACBL number registered with BBO, or did not have in time for the daily sweep from ACBL. Have her update her ACBL # (Found under ACBL WORLD) and wait until tomorrow. Note: The game where she was placed in the A stratum will not be corrected retroactively.
 - ◆ We think that this can be corrected by making sure the ACBL number is in the player's profile, then having her log off and back on. This should cause the masterpoints on BBO to be correctly updated from ACBL.
- ◆ Can we add time to rounds while the game is in session?
 - ◆ Yes, kind of. You can change the number of minutes per board in whole numbers. Edit tournament, change board time, click modify tournament. Note that when all tables finish a round, the round ends. This is not a way to extend the time you have to make corrections after the game.
- ◆ Games with fewer than 6 tables are not stratified. This will change soon.

ROBOTS

Robots, or the computer playing as an opponent, can be used in BBO games. When setting up a virtual club game, one of the first things to be decided is whether to allow players to register with a robot as a partner. This option is listed on the Entries screen of the tournament creation window. Once a virtual club game is created, this choice cannot be altered. The ACBL recommendation is that players not be allowed to register with robots but we leave it to the club to make the final decision.

Robots can also be used to fill sitouts and as substitutes when a player loses their internet connection. The procedure for subbing in a robot is the same as for human substitutes. For sitouts, choose Substitute from the tournament menu and where it says "with", type "robot". To put a robot in during the game, right-click on the missing player's name and choose "Substitute Select". Again, type in "robot" for the replacement.

When robots are being used for sitouts, many directors reduce the robots' scores so that they do not scratch in the game. You cannot access the robots' scores directly, so it is a good idea to keep a record of whom their opponents were each round. If planning on reducing robot scores, try to do so as the game progresses, as there are only twenty minutes after the game to make adjustments. A current bug in BBO is that if a robot finishes the game, it is assigned any masterpoints earned by the player in that position. Try to avoid using a robot in the last round or close to the end of the game if the player that is missing is having a good game.

- **Robots subs!!! Now working!**
 - ◆ The robots will be eligible for masterpoints, yes, they will. This is an artifact of BBO and not within our control. You can adjust their scores down, presumably to Avg-.
 - ◆ Robot Substitutes. You can now replace a player with a robot, by using: Substitute *playername* with robot. You can later replace the robot with a human. It is super quick, and you won't lose a board trying to get someone to accept.

Experience says you *may* not be able to reseal your player, some of the robots are very stubborn. We are keeping an eye on this.

Replacing a Robot:

To replace a robot, right click on the robot at the table and choose Sub Select or Sub Any.

SAVED DEALS

When you set up a tournament, you have the choice of using Random Deals or Saved Deals. BBO uses hands saved in a LIN format. Before you choose Saved Deals, you must have the deals you want to use loaded into your account already. To do this, start by going to your Account tab and clicking Deal Archive at the top of the window. Next, click the “+” symbol next to Select Folder. An Untitled Folder will appear in your list. Click the pencil symbol at the right of that folder to edit the name. Once you have the folder ready, click Import LIN File at the bottom of the window. A new window will appear. In this new window, click Choose File and browse your computer to find the set of hands you want to import. Once you choose the file, click Import and the hands should be loaded into the folder you have created. You will need to create a new folder for each set of hands you want to import. If you click the folder now, it will list the hands. You can click each to see that it matches what you expect and to make sure that it imported properly. It is recommended to spot-check several hands as sometimes there are errors during the import process.

Loading the saved deals into your tournament is a simple process. In edit mode, click Format at the top of the window to go to the page where you can modify the number of hands, the minutes per board, etc. In the lower right change from Random Deals to Saved Deals. When you do this, the Select Folder button will become active. When you click it, your list of available hands folders will appear. Click once on the folder you want to use then click Select at the top of that window. You have now loaded the deals into that tournament. The final step is to click the Modify button on the edit page to save your changes.

You may use saved deals that you created at your club or you may contact The Common Game to have them provide hands for you.

NOTES:

- ◆ Be sure to change the number of boards to 36 in case you need them. After they are loaded, change the number of boards back to the number you plan to play
- ◆ If you load saved hands you will no longer be able to copy tournaments. (You can try, but it does nothing--to copy you must revert to random deals). A good trick is to change to random boards, copy the game, and don't save the changes!
- ◆ VERY IMPORTANT, when you Modify Tournament, make sure you get the Yellow “Tournament Modified” message (and NOT the “Loading Saved Hands” one)
- ◆ VERY IMPORTANT: BBO uploads only LIN files. If you have your hands in another format (pbn, dup, etc) you need to convert the hands to the LIN format. Google “pbn to lin converter” to find a tool to do this for you.

SCORE ADJUSTMENTS

There are several reasons why you might need to adjust scores while directing a game on BBO. There are the usual ones with which you are already familiar: Unauthorized information, misinformation, or a bad claim. On BBO, the most common reason for adjusting scores is that all the boards were not finished before the round ended. When this happens, the computer will often automatically adjust the score if the board was not started or if there were six or less tricks to play. When the line of play is not clear or if there are too many tricks left to play, the computer will leave the adjustment for the director. So, sometimes you will need to adjust the score for a board that has been completed and at other times you will be assigning a result for a board that was not finished.

During the game, there are three ways to access the page for score adjustments. The first, which also works during the post-game adjustment period, is to use the Adjust Score command in the tournament menu. This will require you to know the board number and the BBO ID of at least one player at the table. Also, you will need to know what adjustment you want to make. The second method is to look at a player's results. While the game is in progress, you can access a player's results most easily by right-clicking on the player's name (ctrl-click on a Mac). You can also use the Player's Results command from the tournament menu. When the player's results are displayed, click on the board that you want to adjust. You will see the board and bidding and be able to replay the hand for as many tricks as were played. When you are ready to adjust the score, click the blue button with the three horizontal lines on the replay. Then choose Adjust Score. The third method is similar to the second, except more information will be filled in for you by the computer. This happens when the computer has left you an unfinished board to adjust. The notice will appear in your Director Calls area. Click the notice and choose Show Deal. This will take you to the same window you had in the second method.

The adjustment window has two lines. The upper line is where the board number and the correct players are specified. You can enter the BBO ID of any player that was involved in the hand at the table in question. You do not have to put the declarer's ID there. The last space on the top row is where you specify whether you will be assigning a contract and score or an artificial result. There is a drop-down menu for this space. The first item in the menu is Contract. If you choose this, you must fill out the second line of the adjustment window. Other options instead of Contract are Pass Out and a series of different artificial adjustments such as Ave Ave, Ave+ Ave, or Ave- Ave-. These scores are always listed as the N/S result followed by the E/W result. Currently, No Play, or NP, is not available.

The second line of the adjustment window has four spaces. The first is where you specify the contract. There is a drop-down menu with all of the possible suit and no trump contracts listed. Next you specify if the contract was undoubled, doubled, or redoubled. Third, you specify the declarer. Finally, you enter the total number of tricks. For example,

if you wanted to assign a contract of 4H making 5, you would enter 11 for the number of tricks. Once you have entered all the necessary information, the Adjust Score button at the bottom of the window will become active. Click the button and glance at the lower right corner of your screen to see a message in yellow that the score has been adjusted.

Be careful that you are about to adjust the right board. Check that the board number and the players are correct. As of this writing, BBO sometimes reloads the last board you looked at instead of the one you have just requested

SEATING... North/South or East/West

In BBO tournaments, the inviter will be seated South or West while the invited will be seated North or East. This applies to Mitchells and presumably carries over to Howells. This is presumably an artifact of the implementation and not guaranteed behavior.

Pro-Am or Mixed Pair Games:

In games where the players are pairs of Pros and Amateurs, you may wish to ensure that all Pros sit South and West, and the other players sit North and East, or vice versa. You can ensure this by taking advantage of the following behavior of BBO: The *inviter* of a pair will always be South or West, while the *invited* will be North or East. Make sure that all registrations are initiated by the Pros (or by the Amateurs, but not by a mix of both).

SITOUTS & SUBS

Handling Temporary Substitutions

When players are disconnected during the game, they should be given a minute to reconnect before attempting to get a substitute for them. They are almost always back quickly. If you decide you need a substitute during the game, you can right-click on the player, either at the table, or in the show tables list. You will choose either Substitute – Any [SubA] or Substitute – Select [SubS]. SubA will broadcast an invitation to one of the available substitutes. SubS will provide you a list of possibilities, along with their nationality and advertised skill level. You can select one of the names on this list, or type in another if you know that they are available. In either case, you will be able to see in the bottom right hand corner of the screen that the invitations have been sent (or that an error of some kind has occurred, usually that the person selected is no longer available.). You will also be notified in that area that either the invitation has been accepted or rejected. If you get a rejection notice, you will have to send out invites again, even if you originally used SubA. The first rejection cancels the other requests, so they must be resent. You can send multiple requests (SubA or SubS) without waiting for the acceptance or rejection.

If you want to access the Substitution menu from the Tournament Menu, you can only access SubS.

When the player who was disconnected returns, they will automatically be reseated at the beginning of the next hand. If you wish to reseat them sooner, you can use the Reseat Player option in the tournament menu. A box will open where you can enter the player ID and click the box Reseat Immediately, followed by OK. They will not have access to any of the history of the hand, so we recommend this only be used if they are still in the auction, or they are the dummy.

If you need to substitute for a disconnected player after the opening lead, we recommend putting in a Robot sub. Use SubS and type in “robot” as the new player name, and one will appear. The Robot will know who held what cards previously and when they played them, information a human substitute will not have access to. They will not understand the auction as anything other than Robot standard, so it is not a good idea to substitute them during the auction. If the human player has not reappeared prior to the end of the hand, you will wish to substitute a human for the robot when the next hand begins.

Handling Permanent Substitutions

When you substitute a player into your game, we have the potential problem that, if the player is not given permanent status, they will not be able to rejoin the game should they experience a temporary disconnect. If there was an original player, he will come back and retake the seat they originally held at the beginning of the next hand. If you do not want the originally player to come back, you can give the sub “permanent status”. To give a player permanent status, you need to click on the player, use SubS, and substitute the player for themselves. In other words, replace Rob with Rob. This is what is known as “locking them in their seat.” You will see a notification in the director call area of the screen announcing the permanent replacement. This will also ensure that the new player earns whatever masterpoints the pair wins.

If you have a problem player, that you decide must be removed from the game permanently, you will need to confer the permanent status on the substitute. Otherwise, the problem player will continue to be reseated at the beginning of each new hand.

Filling in an Original Half Table

You can use the Tournament menu to select either SubA or SubS. Ordinarily, you can perform these functions from the Show Table screen or directly at the table by clicking on the player, but if you are attempting to replace a Sitout with a specific player, it must be done from the Tournament menu. You can fill in a ½ table with robots. See section on Robots for more information.

NOTE: You can SubA from the Show Tables screen or directly at the table. It is only SubS that does not work for a sitout if issued from the Show Tables or directly at the table.

STRATIFICATION

1. There must be six or more tables. THIS WILL BE CHANGING SOON!
2. Stratification is based on the AVERAGE masterpoints of the pair. Player's BBO experience may change their stratification
3. Players without ACBL numbers registered with BBO will be put in the top strat. BBO STARS are automatically placed in top strat.
4. The field will be divided into thirds with the extra pair(s) put in the bottom strat. Example: with ten tables, ACBL will put three tables in A and three in B and four in C.
5. Fill-ins will be put in the top strat no matter what their masterpoint total.
 - ♦ A player is considered a 'site newbie' if he has no ACBL number and fewer than 50 BBO points. This makes him, and so his pair, a Strat A.
 - ♦ BBO now forces non ACBL members into Strat A.

TABLE HISTORY

The Table History command in the tournament menu allows the director to see a time-stamped review of all bids, plays and chats made at a table. This can be invaluable in judging slow play, breaks in tempo, rude comments and late alerts. It can be opened in a separate window and saved for later review if necessary. Once the game ends, the director can no longer access the table history.

TEACHING TABLES/GAMES

- ♦ Note! Teaching Tables are not the same things as Teaching Games. Teaching Tables are an existing BBO feature in the Casual Area where the teacher sets up one table and has more control than is usual.
- ♦ **Teaching games!** There is nothing magical about these compared to any normal Limited game, except to note that extra short games of 6-11 boards now receive (reduced) masterpoints. A model to think of is: 3 tables, 6 boards, a teaching break between each round (*workaround for the break is to add time to a round and take the break before playing the boards*). Hoping to add audio/video in the not-so-distant future! Remember to charge \$5.
- ♦ Really, Teaching Games are just short games with breaks between rounds.
- ♦ The only interesting difference is that ACBL has made a change so that playing 6-11 boards will now result in masterpoints being issued, although at a lower rate obviously.
- ♦ You can think about three tables minimum, playing 6 boards, with breaks to discuss the hands.
- ♦ There are plans for the players at a table to be able to use audio/video to talk amongst themselves, and the instructor can visit the table for help or teaching, but this is not complete.

TOURNAMENT SET-UP

- ◆ WARNING – Do NOT use BBO, version 2 for setting up your games. There is a maximum entry fee of \$5/player in that version. 😊
- ◆ When creating tourneys, list CLUB NAME AND TIME
- ◆ Limited Games: Add for example: **+MPLIMIT=300+** to your tournament “Description” box (i.e. Should be +MPLIMIT=299+ or +MPLIMIT=99+
- ◆ DO NOT USE:
 - ◆ +MPLIMIT=300ER+
 - ◆ +MPLIMIT=0-300+
- ◆ NEW! NEW! Effective immediately – open games will now get credit for concurrent limited games. - 😊
 - ◆ Open tables are now able to get credit for concurrent limited games. Ex: You have 5 open tables and 20 limited tables. Using the format **+LT=x+** in the description of your game x is the number of limited tables that the open game will get credit for. Put this hack in AFTER your game has started.
- ◆ Number of sections = 1 + floor(number_of_tables/16), i.e. the largest a section will be is 15 tables, to maximize the masterpoints awarded. (See [Masterpoint Awards](#): Adjustments to Section Awards). This is set automatically by BBO.
- ◆ The option for “Robot” (on/off) cannot be changed once you create a tournament. You will need to create a brand-new tournament if you have chosen that option.
- ◆ Last minute changes: First thing to do is add 3,4 minutes to your start time; do not forget to modify. Give yourself time to make your edits and CHECK YOUR WORK before you hit the modify button. SPEED KILLS.
- ◆ If a game does not START because a registered pair is already playing (perhaps in the Limited game that started earlier) you must Edit the tournament and delete +allavail+. Using ‘Unregister Offline Pairs’ will NOT work because they are not offline.
- ◆ When using uploaded deals for your tournament, peek at a board or two before uploading them to the tournament, to see that they look ok. If something goes wrong with the deals used in the tournament, the tournament can get cancelled at the start.
- ◆ Warning: When adding hacks in description, do not copy and paste from sophisticated editors like Word where special characters may be imbedded.. Use only primitive text editors like WordPad or type in manually.
- ◆ Do NOT use [x] Include members of my private club - None of the Virtual ACBL clubs are *private clubs* in the BBO sense and selecting this will effectively make the event open to all. This may be why “foreigners” are able to enter your game

- ◆ WARNING: Keyboard input in number fields is often garbled--use arrow keys and double check! This applies to the number of boards especially.
- ◆ If you have a player you had to Friend a player to get them into your tournament, or if they updated their ACBL number since the early-morning data dump from ACBL, make sure they log off and back on. This will update their masterpoints on BBO and ensure that stratification is correct.
- ◆ Masterpoint-Limited Game Only (+MPLIMIT=xxx+) Trick for “New” Limited Players
 - ◆ Issue: Player adds ACBL number within 24 hours but is not allowed into Limited tournament because the MP are not “known” to the tournament.
 - ◆ Solution: If the player logs off and logs back on, the system refreshes the “known” MPs. The player will then be allowed to register if they are under the masterpoint restriction.
 - ◆ If a player updates their ACBL player number by clicking on the ACBL World->Update player number, BBO will now have the number on file but this is not picked up until the player logs out and logs in again. So, while adding this person to a friend’s list will work to allow them into a VACB game, a masterpoint-limited game requires them to logout/login so that BBO picks up their new info.

VISITORS

Your online club, as an invitational club, is not required to allow anyone into your Virtual Club Game who is not a member. For Virtual Club Games, a member is someone who appeared on the club's list of previous players. You may, however, allow non-member players into your Virtual Club Games with the following stipulations:

- ♣ You may allow anyone who has played in your club since January 1st, 2019 who was left off your initial list of members.
- ♣ You may allow your members to play with a visiting partner, but the number of visiting players should be kept to less than 15% of your field, on average (the ACBL will consider weekly numbers in the aggregate, not individual games).
- ♣ You are not to solicit outside players to find a partner and come play at your club. You may communicate with your members to tell them they are welcome to bring a guest partner but "selling" this too much may jeopardize your ability to stay under the allowed threshold.
- ♣ Guest pairs are allowed but will count as two visitors. This should be used for circumstances such as a couple that moved away from your area a couple of years ago or for limited point pairs looking for a game because their options are limited.
- ♣ You can check on the number/percentage of visitors you have had in a way on the VPortal under BridgeFinesse.

The mechanism to allow a visiting player into your Virtual Club Game is to "follow" them on BBO with your VACB ID. The problem is, once you have "followed" them, that player can register for your future Virtual Club Games without visibility to you. Nevertheless, you are responsible for keeping your visiting players under 15% of your total entries!

Violations of Visitor Policy Repeated violations of this Visitor Policy will lead to consequences up to and including removal of the club's ability to run online games. Please remember that your ability to run your club games online is a privilege, not a right. None of the ACBL's 2020 club sanctions included anything regarding running games online – any sanction was solely for face-to-face games. While on the topic of violations, this also applies to other issues that may arise. Most bridge clubs have shown a great sense of cooperation and community and have been more than willing to assist other clubs. There have been a few incidents of what the ACBL considers as unfair business practices (examples: unreasonable price undercutting, purposefully scheduling games to mirror a competitor's schedule, naming events to appear as a competitor's events). Please be aware that unfair business practices (including allowing too many visitors) will not be tolerated. Depending on the flagrancy and level of these violations in the ACBL's sole opinion, warnings, suspension and revocation of a club's VACB rights will be considered.

VACB Portal or VPORTAL

- ◆ Get a report while the game is running and display missing acbl numbers so we can resolve directly with players online.
- ◆ Allow directors to add acbl numbers for players.
- ◆ Server changes required
 - ◆ send chat to potential Subs
- ◆ Easy start Tournament setup.
- ◆ Pending Tournaments - be able to see future tournaments!
- ◆ Preloaded TCG Hands - Batch job to auto-create (and purge) TCG folders
- ◆ Allow the director to look at the Registration list and see who is online and ready to go and who isn't directly, without clicking on every name (will make rounding up the whole flock of registered players much easier.)
- ◆ Daily report: Vclub friends who are not in the include list (all clubs, csv)
- ◆ Auto-Scheduler - It is IMPERATIVE that you modify all of your tournaments at the beginning of each day for the following reasons:
 - ◆ Include list and Friends list have probably changed from the day before and need to be updated in the tournament.
 - ◆ The BBO start clock has probably shifted by an annoying 1-2 minutes.
- ◆ Visitor Status of Club- Under the BridgeFinesse link, you will be able to see a daily update on the percentage of "visitors" you had at your games on a weekly basis.
- ◆ Link to VPortal https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/vacbl/vacbl_login.php
- ◆ Link to VPortal Tutorial <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/tcEgc-D5qG03EobBtASDVP55W9S7K6us03MYrvBemUe0B3QGNlenNLFgzrRK9HVkLr-IDKcCuC46CbhL?startTime=1589485872000>

WARNINGS FOR YOUR PLAYERS

- Advise players not to buy BBO Bucks on an APP... there is a 30% premium charged. Tablet users CAN use the browser to buy BB\$ and play in the app.
- Discourage players from using Flash V2... Flash is going away and they may not see “ACBL Virtual Clubs” in the list, therefore, they will not find your games. They may not be using it on purpose, they may have an old bookmark. If they are having mysterious problems, you might check into that.
- Android users may need to update if they cannot see ACBL Virtual clubs line.
- Advise Players to be online and ready to go 10 minutes before start time. Also let them know that the game may start a couple of minutes late if you do that.
- Advise players to check their screen occasionally, BBO might boot them for inactivity after a while. Scenario: register to tourney, go off to do stuff, come back, you are logged off for inactivity, the game starts, and the player does not get in.
- If the ACBL number is not present or wrong they will not receive masterpoints, which is fixable after the fact, and they will be in the A strat which is not fixable. If they do not have an ACBL number in their profile, they will NOT be able to register for a limited game.
- New friends are not known to a tournament unless you edit the tournament, make a fake edit somewhere e.g. description and MODIFY (save)... There may still be a minute delay before it takes effect. If a player enters his ACBL number within 24 hours of the tournament, Live4Clubs will not present the player's name. Make sure the player logs off and back on so that his masterpoints will be updated and the stratification will be accurate.
- If a player is playing an Instant Tournament and wants to quit in order to be able to join the VACB game: Click blue box with 3 lines -> Withdraw
- Have a discussion with your players about unethical behaviors that are easily picked up by the algorithms (talking on the phone while playing, playing in the same room, playing as 2 different people in a partnership). BBO can automatically detect such things as unusual bidding, unusual results, etc.

TUTORIALS FOR CLUB DIRECTORS AND PLAYERS

SO... YOU WANT TO DIRECT A BRIDGE GAME ONLINE.... ZOOMs and TUTORIALS TO WATCH

Player Training Resources

- ◆ [New to Bridge Base Online? \(BBO tutorial\)](#)
- ◆ [What you need to know to play on BBO \(BBO tutorial\)](#)
- ◆ [The Basics for New BBO Users\(PDF Guide\)](#) - Susan Powell

- ◆ [How to Join BBO](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)
- ◆ [How to Join Bridgebase](#) (Bridge Academy of North Dallas)

- ◆ [How to add BB\\$](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)
- ◆ [How to Add BB\\$](#) (Bridge Academy of North Dallas)

- ◆ [How to Add your ACBL number](#) (Bridge Academy of North Dallas)

- ◆ [How to find YOUR club's games](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)

- ◆ [Need a Partner? Learn how to use Partnership Desk](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)

- ◆ [How to Bid & Play on BBO](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)

- ◆ [How to Alert bids on BBO](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)

- ◆ [How to make a BBO Convention Card](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)
- ◆ [How to Save Convention Cards](#) (Bridge Academy of North Dallas)

- ◆ [COMPREHENSIVE Tutorial \(38min\) for new players](#) (Sagamore Bridge Club)

- ◆ [How to Save Convention Cards](#)

Club Host Training Videos

1. How to set up a game (Sagamore Bridge Club)
 1. [How to create a game, add blocked players and direct on BBO](#) (first part of the video)
2. [BBO Director Training Video: \(Sagamore Bridge Club\) Over-the-Shoulder with Silvana Morici](#)
3. [How to create a game, add blocked players and direct on BBO](#)
4. [How to run Howell for small tourneys](#)

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VPortal – What is it and how to use it

1. Directing a Virtual Game on BBO Tutorial
2. <https://zoom.us/rec/play/tJlpcOGpqD03E4LD5gSDBaJxW420K6us03Qc-gclyRrnU3EDOWLyYrQbZuFtSLCvXkYmHrEHkzQbI7Lu?startTime=1585759726000>
3. Comprehensive Tutorial for Players and BBO in virtual Games
4. https://zoom.us/rec/play/v5Qolen8_Tw3TleVtwSDBf8sW428KK2shCdKq_MPzhn_gB3MGYQLzZ-ETarQldA4pJknxulvSF_E015qY?autoplay=true&startTime=1587477529000

Makeable Contracts add-in for Chrome

1. Download Chrome Extension here: <https://tinyurl.com/s6j4r7r>
2. Watch TDDon explain how to use it: <https://youtube/vrb0TUqZCJs>
3. Update: Can also be used on Table History file opened in Chrome.