
Bridge News March 2025

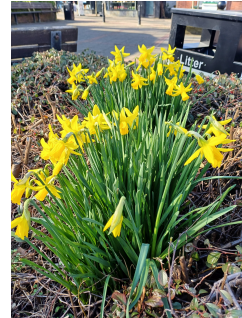
1 message

Nicky <bridgeforpleasure@79572582.mailchimpapp.com>
Reply-To: bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com
To: Nicky <nickyrbainbridge@gmail.com>

29 March 2025 at 14:30

[View this email in your browser](#)

Spring FORWARD?



MARCH 2025



www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk

In this edition...

Chess beats Bridge to the BBC

EBED Progress, especially with Youth

Just who is an EBU Member?

An Observation on the Teachers Association
from Ned Paul

EBU Goals in 2025

How are clubs doing?

For clubs

For teachers

Thanks to everyone who gives feedback about the newsletter!

Did you receive this from a friend? If you would like to have it delivered directly to you, you can subscribe at:

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

NEWS

This newsletter launched in August 2020 during the pandemic to provide information and support for duplicate bridge clubs. Back editions on the web site.

CLUB DATA

Bridge club data is collated to provide a picture of life, and trends, in club life. Analysis, updated fortnightly. Taster below. Full analysis on the web site.

TEACHING SCHEME

A teaching scheme is available, entirely free of charge.

DISCUSSION

For almost four years we held monthly Zoom meetings to discuss anything of interest to clubs. Recordings on the web site.

WEB SITE (Hosted by BridgeWebs)

<http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk>.

Please forward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe for free, no adverts.

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

CHESS BEATS BRIDGE TO THE BBC

The general public is not aware of bridge. Many younger people have not handled playing cards. To engage with bridge as a leisure activity, or a mind sport, they need to know about it, and preferably to have seen it.

Monday night is quiz night on the BBC. University Challenge, Mastermind and Only Connect fascinate and stimulate. Only Connect has reached its grand final and finished, and its slot has been taken by "The End Game". Congratulations to chess on this huge win.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m0027tm2/chess-masters-the-endgame-full-matches>



EBED Progress, especially with Youth An update from Richard Croot, EBED CEO.

An update on my recent successes. I recently conducted a successful taster session for Shrewsbury School and held a productive meeting with the co-curricular team at King's School Worcester. Both schools will be launching bridge clubs in counties that currently lack junior bridge programmes, led by Pam Booth Jones and Richard Jephcott, the Chair and Vice Chair of their respective counties.

This Friday, I will visit Hereford Sixth Form College where a small bridge club with five tables is already in place. It needs to be embraced into our growing programme of competitions. My next goal is to establish bridge clubs in sixth form colleges within the same Multi-Academy Trust in Worcester and Stourbridge. Once I have assessed the landscape in these institutions, I will expand my outreach to every sixth form college in England. It is my belief that EBED can

enable about five tables to form in such institutions without the need for external volunteers.

Regarding universities, I am assembling a team of young players to support me at Freshers' Fairs. Ben Norton, Dido Coley, and Liam Sanderson have already offered their assistance. The recent EBED free beer, free pizza bridge taster session at Bristol University has enabled that club to be reestablished.

EBTA and Teacher Training

This email is to let you know about the latest developments with EBTA and teacher training initiatives.

Ned Paul courteously shared the letter below with me before, I assume, forwarding it to you. I had a pleasant conversation with him, and I agree with many of his points. In particular, my colleagues and I fully support the idea that teachers should encourage students to participate in gentle duplicate or supervised play early in their learning journey. The *Red Book* remains highly popular among both new and experienced teachers, although seasoned educators like Ned and you will have your own preferred methods. The programme for junior teaching and the sixth form college initiative is far removed from Red Book teaching. My preferred model does not involve any formal teaching at all (except at the camps). Young people are given play opportunities at school or college and can use Sue Johnson's exceptional website, <https://newtricksplay.org/>, and other resources to learn independently.

The teacher training course has been streamlined to make it more efficient. It now consists of one face-to-face session and two half-day online sessions instead of two full days in-person. This new format improves efficiency while maintaining quality. The first session was successfully held at the beginning of this month in Eastbourne. I would personally never teach a bridge lesson without the hands being projected on a hand demonstrator. While I would always teach maths through doing examples, I would always want to explain bridge concepts by running through hands on a screen. I appreciate this is not for all bridge teachers, but one should teach to the top and assume new potential teachers can skill-up with technology.

I have commissioned 240 hands for a 2-over-1 strong and five-card system. These hands have been thoroughly proof-checked by Charlie Bucknell and Jeremy Dhondy. They are undergoing final revisions and will be completed by the end of March. The hands will not only serve

as a valuable resource for junior teaching, but also enhance the offerings on the Hub.

Following the success of our first Teacher Cluster Meeting for Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire, we have scheduled two more: one in April in Horsham, hosted by Tony Cherrett, and another in July, again hosted by Ian Sidgwick. Clive Turner will present at both sessions. These free meetings will reach more teachers than the biennial conferences previously held by EBED and will help foster a stronger sense of community among educators.

At the end of April, the EBED team will begin developing a new website, transitioning from Drupal to WordPress. Simultaneously, we will enhance the Hub to make resources easier to access. Our goal is to complete this project by the end of May.

Additionally, EBED will invite EBTA members to contribute bridge teaching ideas to its newsletters. We will also be relaunching an online forum.

I did put to the trustees that we should reduce the EBTA membership fee. Their view was that it should remain frozen, but I should be improving the offering of EBED. I am always open to fresh ideas.

Just who is an EBU Member?

The EBU board has taken on a target to increase membership by 5%. This is really good news. At last they have recognised the urgent need to renew our aging and shrinking community of players.

It would be more accurate to say that rather than accusing me of lying because I pointed out the simple decrease in overall membership, the EBU has repeatedly told me my newsletters are misleading.

I thought that an EBU member was anyone who belonged to an affiliated EBU Club. From the Club Terms of Affiliation:

"All members in good standing of an affiliated club will, subject to the EBU Board's right of refusal or expulsion pursuant to its Bye Laws, become ordinary player members of the EBU as defined in the Bye Laws. "

<http://https://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/membership/Club-terms-of-affiliation.pdf>

But it seems this has changed. EBU members are apparently now those classified as UM1 or UM2. Hence a number of 40,000 given in the Board Commitments for 2025 (Reproduced below), or

"This figure is 37,893 members for the calendar year of 2024 and we are therefore aiming to increase membership by 1,895. However, this number will also need to offset members who leave during the year. "

from the draft minutes of the County Chairs meeting of 13th February 2025.

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/minutes-and-reports/county-chairmens-conference/2025/13-feb.pdf>

Hopefully this goal will be the leading objective of the new County and Membership Development Officer.

How does the EBU count "members".

Last months item on the detail is available at https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwor/bw.cgi?club=bridgeforpleasure&pid=display_page50

Who are the UM0 (EBU Inactive) members?

Some of these will have ceased playing, and will not be returning to the game. Covid probably led to many such players remaining listed as club members during 2020, 2021 and 2022. However clubs have updated their records more recently. There will now be members who belong to the club but only take part in lessons, in practice with preset hands, in supervised sessions with help, but not in competitive sessions loaded to the EBU. It seems that the EBU thinks this group just represents players who ought not to be listed as members.

You can find out which of your members are likely to be listed in this segment by logging on to the EBU club account and reports. Look at the wording around this report!



When I did this, I found that 32 of my 130 members were listed. Only 2 needed to be removed. The remainder were active members not playing in our EBU sessions.

Perhaps the EBU doesn't understand how a teaching, developing club works?

Where will "New" UM1 and UM2 Members come from?

Given that genuine newcomers often take a year or so to move from beginners to club sessions, it will be pretty hard to find 1895 real new members.

Will the EBU count current UM0 ("Absent") club members who venture into EBU sessions for the first time this year as "New Members"? This probably does not reflect efforts to bring genuine newcomers?

A fast way to get new UM1 or UM2, playing?, members may be to persuade more unaffiliated clubs to affiliate. Some of their members may already be EBU members, but many won't be. Under the terms of EBU affiliation, newly affiliated clubs must make all their members EBU members. As soon as they run an affiliated session, those members will show up in UM1. Of course, these also won't strictly be newcomers to bridge!

Otherwise genuinely new members are most likely to be recruited by teachers. The relationship between "Aylesbury" and teachers is rather patchy,. Many, most?, teachers don't register new students as EBU members.

Perhaps thought is needed to make the front line recruiters, teachers, to bridge known, and to be able to measure and support their work and to get real growth in membership?

An Observation on the Teachers Association from Ned Paul

Is there a need for a new independent Bridge Teachers Association? A few years ago we had an English Bridge Teachers Association that had functioned well for years, with such as Rhoda Barrow, Pat Husband and John Pain running it. It was like a club for bridge teachers and aspirant teachers and you joined it for a modest fee because you taught bridge or were interested in teaching bridge. There was a regular newsletter, latterly called "The Ruffian", which shared news and views around the bridge teaching community and teaching stories and tips from other teachers. There were general bridge training days for teachers and there was an annual or biennial teachers' "Jamboree" when we all got together for a weekend and shared news, opinions and good practice with other teachers.

All of that seems to have gone now, since English Bridge Education took over EBTA. Now we pay a ridiculous fee, £45 a year, which only those who have a professional commitment to bridge teaching and an income from it can afford. For this high fee you get no social benefits at all. The only thing you are paying for is the right to use the centrally produced Bridge for All material and a few other teaching resources. The teachers' side of the EBED website is difficult to access and navigate and uninviting when you get there. And I could find no mention of the "English Bridge School" which was expensively centrally produced a couple of years back but had no take up and sank without trace. BfA has had its successes but in today's internet age is ponderously slow and long drawn out. Many active bridge teachers do not use it, relying on resources they themselves have produced and feel comfortable with. Please can we stop prescribing everything from the centre, and please, please can we have our socially orientated Teachers Association back.

EBU goals in 2025

1: **MEMBERSHIP** The board has announced its own goal of increasing membership by 5%. This is 2,000 more on an unclear base.

2: **PUBLIC AWARENESS** The public awareness of bridge needs to be raised for bridge to survive.

An effective PR/marketing/communication strategy is needed. It must reach beyond current players and clubs to reach people who have never heard of the game.

Bridge needs a planned, high quality campaign.. Social media is getting more bridge content, but most of it will only be going to social bridge users who curate their feeds towards bridge. We need "pushed" items that reflect youth and enthusiasm, like "BridgeBabe". and "BridgePlusMore".

3: **NEW LEARNERS** When the general public's interest in bridge is raised, there needs to be a place to find out more and offer a first step. Steering learners to teachers, identifying and supporting active learners, and supporting teachers and recognising professional development. The EBU Teachers Directory seems to have become slightly harder to find. It does have 325 entries, providing you know to untick the "has vacancies" box. Otherwise you see about 270. This box relies on listed teachers keeping their vacancies status up to date. Given the difficulty of getting teachers to register at all, it seems rather hopeful to expect they will.

4: **CLUB COSTS** The EBU to manage its costs rather than let them grow and simply pass them on to the affiliated clubs.

ASPIRATION
ASPIRATION WITH TARGET
PLAN (ISH)

EBU Board Commitments for 2025

Our Mission

*To welcome, help and support all players on their own personal journey into and through the world of Bridge
To promote the game of Bridge in England as an inclusive Mind Sport, working with and through our Bridge Clubs and County Associations*

Our Values

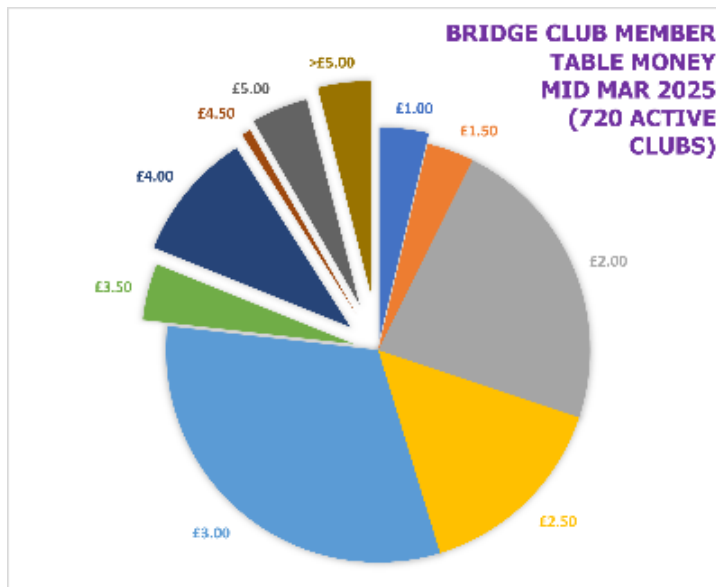
We will build on our foundations and promote diversity and inclusivity of all players across all skill levels, ages and cultures	We will champion the importance of our Clubs and promote pathways for their success	We will commit to a professional approach as a Board and an openness and honesty when we get things wrong	We will do more to support our employed staff and the many volunteers who give their time for free	We will look for smarter ways of working
--	---	---	--	--

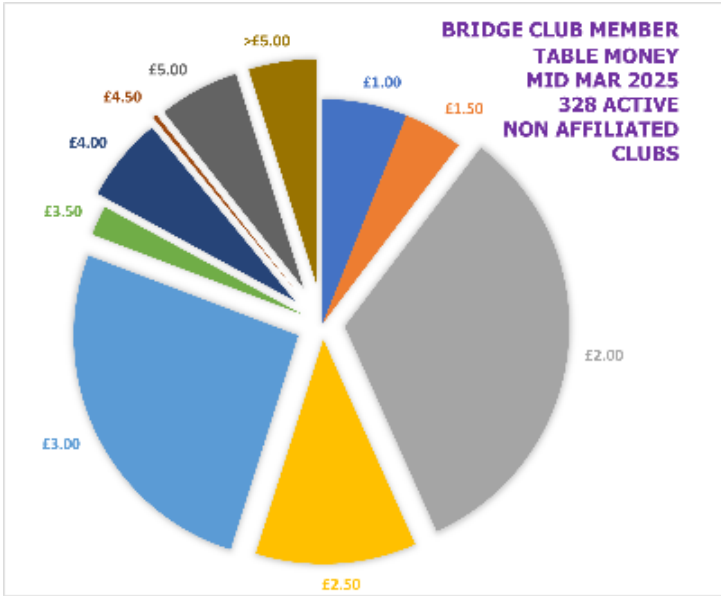
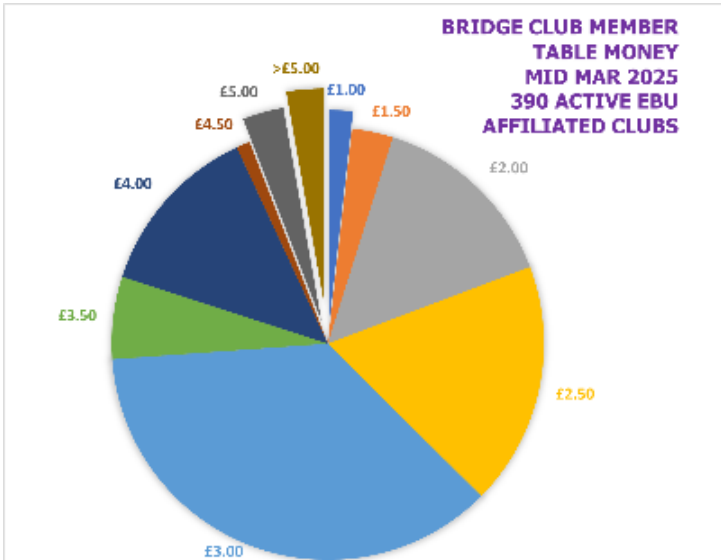
Plan of Action for 2025

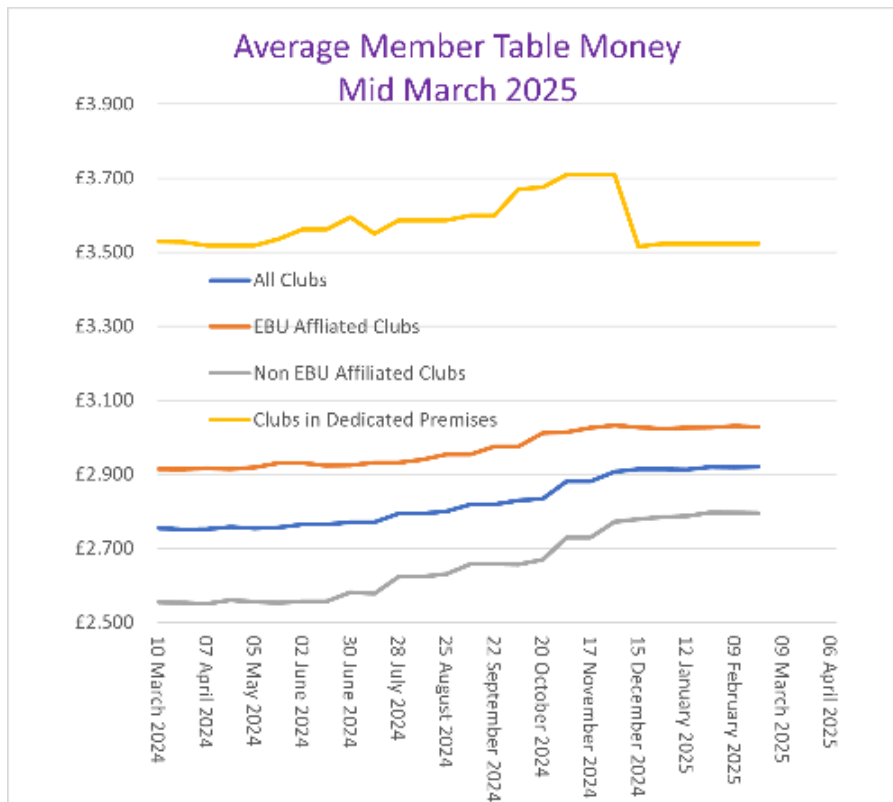
Our Members and Clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainability of our Clubs and growing our membership is paramount ○ Our plan is to help our clubs grow our membership by 5% from 40,000 to 42,000 in 2025 ○ Appoint a new Club/County Liaison Officer by March 2025 to work directly with Counties and Clubs in an advisory and mentorship role ○ Reach out and support non-affiliated Clubs 	Our Junior Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aim to improve engagement with Junior members and encourage affiliation to local Clubs ○ Roll out a Junior Council to include Squad Leaders and Squad representatives ○ Support the aspirations of International players ○ Encourage support for a Brand for Team England ○ Match fund Universities/Initiative alongside EBED ○ Assist EBED's work in promoting Bridge within Schools 	Our People - Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Well-being and enjoyment of their role ○ Look at smarter ways of working ○ Provide a more stimulating working environment Our People - Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure we meet our commitments in terms of compliance and recognition of the time they give ○ Review our Policies and appoint a co-ordinator ○ Offer an annual thank you 	Our Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make a plan to upgrade administrative and book-keeping systems so they are less paper dependent and to reduce input time ○ We will provide a Draft budget for the year ahead at the AGM ○ We will make sure the longer-term financial planning is aligned to our strategic goals ○ When there is a financial surplus this will be invested back into agreed projects 	Our IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand the available resources within the IT team ○ Complete a review of the EBU legacy systems by March 2025 and agree an IT roadmap ○ Implement robust and better integrated systems ○ Improve usability of EBUScore for Clubs and members Our Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete EDI Policy ○ Complete Risk Register ○ Complete Sustainability policy
--	--	---	--	---

How are clubs doing?

How much are clubs charging members to play?







Trends in table numbers.

Details of 1591 sessions have been captured including table numbers. 297 have been revisited over the last eighteen months allowing comparison of two table number snapshots.

There is a decline of more than 2% in the two data points.

Within this sample there are clubs doing better and clubs doing worse.

There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

[BFP Club Statistics Page](#)

For Clubs

Items for Your Newsletter

Bridge Club Newsletters can help to keep members informed, interested and helping to run the club.

There are some brilliant examples about.

It can be tricky to find interesting content on a regular basis.

Here's some ideas you are welcome to copy into your club newsletter.

No charge, no obligation, a credit for "Bridge for Pleasure" would be nice, but not mandatory.

If you edit an item, then no credit please, it's your work now ♥

Here is the latest addition to the library:

Looking after the Board during play

Law 7A: When a board is to be played it is placed in the centre of table where it shall remain, correctly oriented, until play is completed. (Text was added in the 2017 revision of the laws.)

All players should check that boards are the correctly orientated. Listen carefully and check the tablet or table card carefully for "arrow switches".

Many players want to move the board away from the centre of the table, or even off the table entirely. This is not lawful. The board must remain in the centre of the table during the auction. Players need to see who dealer is and what the vulnerability is.

If the board is moved, there is always a risk that the cards go back into wrong pockets and the board is "fouled" for the remainder of the session.

Although there is no law, North should be the only player to touch or move the boards. It is rude for anyone else to touch them.

North can remove other boards in the same round from the table, and this will avoid the masking effect of a "tower" of boards.

If the board is moved slightly towards declarer once card play starts, it will leave room for dummy to be laid down.

In our club the board can be moved to the edge or corner of the table. However, the board **must not be turned**.

This often leads to fouled boards.

If players take the cards out of the board to compare the hands after play, they must be extremely careful to put them back correctly. Again, this behaviour is not lawful. (Law 7C). In our club we do permit this if there is time for discussion, conversation is very quiet, and cards are returned correctly.

CLUBS - PLEASE GIVE A LINK OR CONTACT FOR POTENTIAL LEARNERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

Over 60% of club website home pages make NO reference to lessons or teaching.

Your club may not teach, or have any intention to teach, but you could put a referral to a local teacher on your home page. If there is no local option you could put a link to your county page, the EBU teacher directory, or to the information on learning on the Bridge For Pleasure website.

There are about 1,000 duplicate club websites, please make sure yours has information on how to learn bridge. If we all did that there would be 600 new sites on the net with information for potential learners. At no cost!

BFP Club Newsletter Item Library

For Teachers

Have you tried RealBridge for Teaching

If you teach online you have all sorts of choices for platforms. RealBridge is definitely worth looking at.

RealBridge was designed from the start for the closest possible experience to face to face. All four players can see and hear each other. A director or teacher can also be seen and heard at the table.

Select "Practice" as the type of session and the teacher can watch and comment as needed.

Session settings

General Options MiniBridge

Practice tables Scoring method MiniBridge

Movement

None VP scale

10 Boards per round

1 Number of rounds

0m Time / round (eg 15m, 14:30) Show min only

1 First board

Auto-↔ : NS ↔ EW at half-time

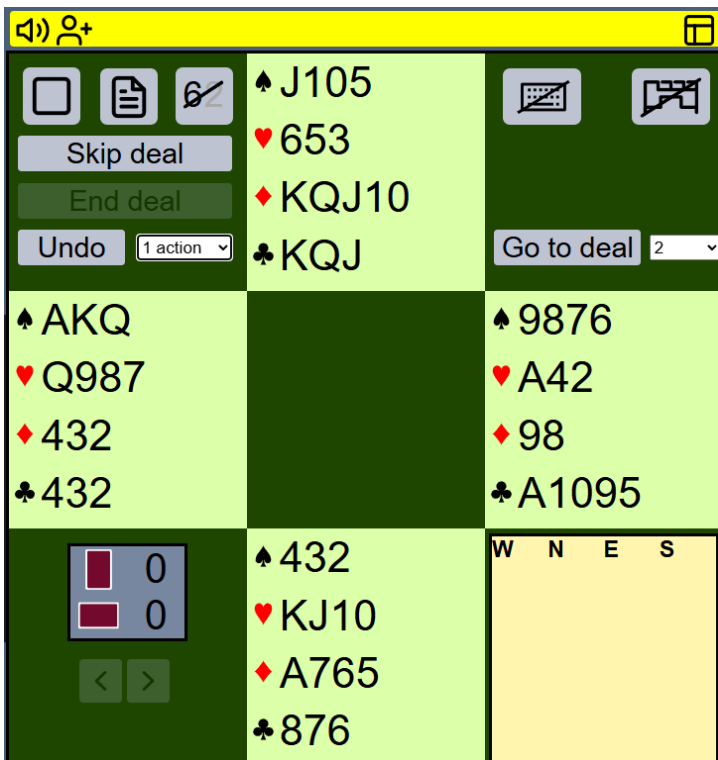
Randomize starting positions

PBN file load

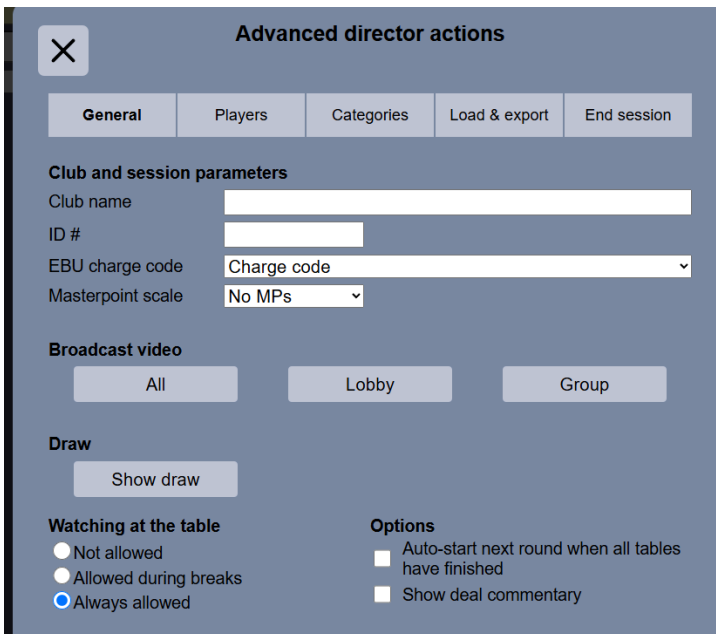
Boards Boards + results Load PBN file

BFP B2 L10 Defence#1.pbn

The teacher can also undo the last action, the whole play or the whole auction. The teacher can change the next board number to be played, and so can go back or forwards in the set. The teacher loads preset boards for play. Using Bridge Composer, the teacher can enforce a particular auction and/or the opening lead, so as to focus on declarer or card play.



Select "Allow watching" and up to four players can watch the play, so a table can have a teacher, four current players, and four watching players, and the current players can swap easily with watching players so that everyone gets a go.



<https://realbridge.online/>

There is a completely free teaching scheme, hundreds of Plans, Notes, Quizzes, Deals, Commentaries etc at this address:

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/bridgeforpleasure>

Let's provide chances all over the country to observe teachers in action; practice teaching and discuss teaching with experienced, qualified teachers. Please contact me if you can provide the same opportunity.

Heart of England Bridge Club (Rugby):

heartofenglandbridge@gmail.com

New contributors

If you would like to contribute an item, please send it. Please make it no more than 200 words. Please make it positive, and supporting the goal of keeping grass roots bridge alive. That will keep elite bridge going.

[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

Your Feedback

You can provide likes, dislikes and comments on the content of the Bridge For Pleasure website by registering on it.

Click on this link to send an email to register:
bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com

To quote the wonderful "Sorry Partner", BE NICE, or we'll call the director.

Subscribe/Unsubscribe

If you don't want to receive this newsletter, click "Unsubscribe" below.
I am always keen on feedback, good or bad, so do tell me...

Copyright © 2025 Rugby Village Bridge, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:

Rugby Village Bridge
Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall
Rugby Road
Dunchurch, Rugby CV22 6PN
United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

