

FAQs About On-Line Play at Bridge Club of Lexington

Who can play in the BRIDGE CLUB OF LEXINGTON Virtual Club games?

The game has been created through BBO to serve the ‘regular’ patrons of local clubs. The ACBL has a list of who has been playing at which clubs, and the roster of eligible players begins with the list of our recent masterpoint winners. If you’ve been away for a while (or didn’t win points at the Club in the last year), you can request us to place you on the roster, but the intent is to re-create the normal Club experience on-line, not to recruit outside players. We will be offering both Open and limited master point games.

Must the players be ACBL members?

Yes. Each player in the virtual game must be an ACBL member; if you have not entered your ACBL number with BBO, you must do so before registering for the virtual Club game. (To do this, log on, click on “ACBL World”, and locate the blue tab that indicates “Update Your ACBL Number”.)

Why?

There are several reasons why players need to be ACBL members. BBO needs to identify you in some other way than through your screen name. You cannot receive masterpoints from ACBL without that link. Additionally, the ACBL needs to affirm that you are a patron of the Bridge Club of Lexington. And finally, stratification in these games is based upon your current masterpoint holding. BBO stratifies the field by thirds. Top third. Middle third. Bottom third.

Do I get assigned a partner, or can I bring my regular partner?

You should bring your regular partner (or a new partner) to the game, assuming they are also ACBL members and have registered with BBO for on-line play. There is an on-line ‘Partnership Desk’ for each event. It is best if you arrange a game with someone you know. Unattached partners can see each other and can communicate with each other by chatting. If you recognize someone, invite them to be your partner. If your unsuccessful in getting a partner let me know and you will be assigned a partner from the BBO substitute list.

Do I need a convention card?

Your convention card will default to SAYC if it is not set to something else by you.

Are robots used in the Club play?

NO! You must play with a real person.

Can I earn regular ACBL masterpoints for playing at the Virtual Club?

Absolutely! Open pairs games at the Virtual Club award ACBL black points at the same rate as play at the physical Club location, as long as a minimum of 18 boards are scheduled for play. The games are stratified according to the Masterpoint holdings of the registered pairs. Awards are (as at the Club) by stratification.

Okay, how many boards will we play?

A regular scheduled session will consist of 18-20 boards, depending upon the number of tables registered for the game. Smaller games will be Howell movements.

What's the pace of the game? How long is a session?

Initially, the game will be conducted at a pace of 7 minutes per board. You can expect to finish an 18-20 board session in approximately 2 hours, 6 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours, 20 minutes. As players get more comfortable with on-line play, we may reduce this to 6 minutes per board...

What happens if I can't keep up?

The computer is keeping track of the time, and if the time runs out in a round, you will be taken directly to the next round (even in the middle of a hand). If that occurs, the computer will determine what would have occurred, and will assign a score. In the event the outcome is not determined, the computer will ask the presiding Director for a ruling, just as at the Club. But play will not be delayed if a table does not keep up a proper pace.

So, is there a Director?

Yes. Your on-line game Director will be one of the regular Directors at the Club. This means that you will probably know the Director. The bad news? They will also know you. So, much like the physical Club, please treat your game Director with some respect...

How much does a session cost to play?

A virtual session at the BRIDGE CLUB OF LEXINGTON costs \$5. 80% of revenues collected by BBO are returned to the local club(s) to help keep the clubs in business until the CoronaVirus has retreated. Your support is truly appreciated. We advise that you do NOT use Apple Pay to buy BB\$, they charge you a 30% premium.

... and how do I pay?

Payment on BBO is made at registration time when you invite your partner and they accept your invitation. Payment is through the use of BridgeBase dollars (BB\$). You are advised not to use Apple Pay.

What are BridgeBase dollars (BB\$), and how do I get them?

BB\$ are simply credits that a player may purchase (through the BBO site). There several methods by which one can purchase BB\$ (credit card, PayPal, etc). Information can be found on the BBO site by clicking on the BB\$ tab at the top right of your screen (next to your name) after logging on.

What else is different about playing on-line?

There are several things that you should be aware of when playing on-line. The pace of play is a bit 'brisker' than at the club. While there remains a social aspect, it usually occurs after the hands in the current round are concluded. And we expect that if you can claim (or concede) the rest of the tricks, you will do so promptly to keep the game moving. There is a "Claim" button on the screen when you are playing or defending a hand.

Additionally, players 'self-Alert' their artificial bids. Unlike the Club, where you Alert your partner's bids, on-line we Alert our own bids and calls. You do this by entering the meaning of Alertable bids on the line provided when it is your turn to call; then hit the Alert button before actually entering the call you are making (bid, pass, double, or redouble). **YOUR PARTNER WILL NOT SEE YOUR ALERTS.** When you receive an Alert from an opponent, they are NOT CHEATING... remember, their partner cannot see their information to you.

Chatting at the table is permitted (there is a message button available at the bottom of your screen), but anything you say to the Table is public information and can be seen by all parties. You are able to communicate privately with either or both opponents, but not privately to your partner. And (fortunately for the game Director) there is no Bridgemate upon which you can enter or approve wrong results. All results are recorded automatically, so you don't have to worry with checking the accuracy of the final results.

When should I expect to find games on-line?

The schedule is posted on the Club's website.

Remember that the scheduled games will not show up on the BBO website until 2 hours before the start of the game. Registration will be available at that time.

And where, exactly, do I pre-register for a game?

Log in to [www. Bridgebase.com](http://www.Bridgebase.com). Find the section for "Play or Watch Bridge" (blue stripe). Click on "Competitive". Under "Tournaments" (green stripe), click on "ACBL Virtual Clubs". Look for games identified as BC OF LEXINGTON. Click on the game to see details about the game or to send an Invitation to your partner for play in the event. Hint: Unless you plan to pay for your partner, your registration will be pending until your partner also logs on and accepts your invitation to play. Please stay on-line until this occurs and you receive a confirmation that your entry has been completed. Once the registration is complete, you do NOT need to stay on-line. Please log back on a bit prior to the game start time to make certain you have no connection issues.

How will the Director and the opponents know who I really am if my BBO screen name is make believe?

If you have not already done so, please let Bob Korten know your BBO screen name, email it to rkorten@yahoo.com. He will maintain a list for use ONLY by the game directors.

If you are willing to let your information be available to our Club members please say so in in your email to Bob.

Why was I placed in the A strat?

This is an indication that she do 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.

How are the games stratified?

Games with fewer than 6 tables are not stratified.

[This algorithm is imposed by BBO]

Stratification occurs with $\frac{1}{3}$ in A, $\frac{1}{3}$ in B, $\frac{1}{3}$ in C.

If the player is a 'BBO star' his pair will be in Strat A.

A player is considered a 'site newbie' if he has no ACBL number and fewer than 50 BBO points. This will place his pair into Strat A.

After this the level is ordered by points described below. The points of the two players are combined, where A player's points = the greater of his ACBL masterpoints and BBO points