

This document provides instructions for joining, playing in and enjoying online BBO Tournaments. We are dealing with tournaments only here – Team Matches are covered in another document.

A basic working knowledge of BBO is assumed. If you haven't got this working knowledge, then do something – you are missing out on some interesting bridge.

The last section in this document points you to some ways in which you can learn how to play and get comfortable with online bridge environments.

If you are very familiar with playing on BBO but have not played any tournaments, still have a read of this document. You can understand what is here quickly, but you still will learn a few things about BBO Tournaments that you would miss if you just went in cold.

Sections in this document are:

- Tournament Players Overview
- BBO Tournament Basics
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- Finding a Tournament
- Joining a Tournament
- Registering for a Tournament
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- Tournament Just Finished?
- MyHands Webpage
- BBO – Want to Learn?

## Tournament Players Overview

This document is designed to help you be able to navigate the online tournament world. It does this by focussing on finding and joining a tournament you expect to be there. The VBA, amongst many others, is doing things about providing tournaments for their local and neighbouring players.

Online tournaments and team matches are a way to let you play more bridge in a competitive environment without leaving home.

The reality of online bridge is that players use it to play more bridge not to replace the bridge they already play. Whatever they do, playing online will never be as good as the real thing when we are at the table. There we can size up our opponents and do battle – I like to see the whites in their eyes when playing for blood.

There are a lot of ways to play online. Amongst the advantages of tournaments is they let you not only have a bunch of different opponents, but give you the chance to practice with a new partner or get your game up to scratch with a current partner before an important live game.

The concept I am putting forward here is to have more online bridge with the players we know and hope that we can eventually have better competitive and training games for those who want to improve. This is all on the way.

If you don't know how to play online bridge yet, then read the last section of this document, get a little training and then come back. The online world beckons.

This document concentrates on BBO Tournaments. Team Matches are covered in another document.

In fact, Team Matches are much simpler than tournaments for the players as long as you have an experienced BBO User organising it for you. You will have to do little more than log on when you are told and start playing when you are swept into your seat.

## BBO Tournament Basics

There are some things expected of you when you play online because you have to remember that you basically need to police your own behaviour and there is an expectation of what you know and how you will do things.

1. Basic knowledge of playing on BBO  
Tournaments are not where you should be learning to play.
2. Politeness  
This is crucial. People can't see you so you have to say thank you more than you would when you are all in the same room.
3. Know who your director is  
If there is a regular director, make him your BBO friend.  
You will be informed when you log on to BBO if he is there.
4. Understand the chat language  
Yes, there is one and it is a bit like text messaging on mobile phones.  
You don't have to know a lot of stuff but you should know some.  
Check out the section below on BBO Chat if you are a new user.
5. Play to the tournament schedule.  
It is very difficult to manage very slow play on the internet.  
It is very poor form to not make an effort to keep to the schedule.
6. Tell the table if you leave  
Always tell the table if you leaving, even if for 2 minutes.  
They can't see you leave the room.
7. Understand SAYC  
This is not required when playing with friends but there is a default online system called Standard American Yellow Card or SAYC.  
Get to know this when you have a chance. Even if you play with a regular partner, you can get to know more about what your opponents play.

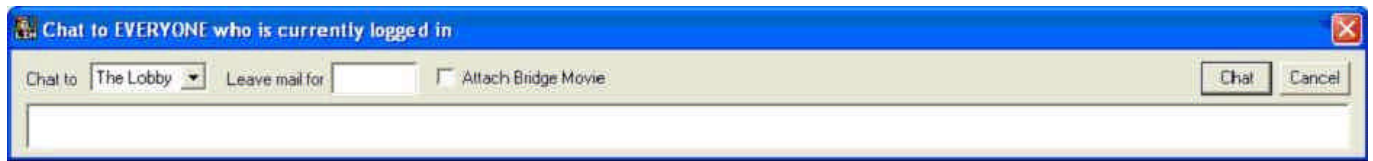
An important concept that recurs in this and other documents I am writing is that there is a degree or control over who gets to play. This makes it easier to have a controlled environment that you can insist on being competitive but friendly.

Also, behaviour and reliability of players (whether they finish a tournament they start, for instance) is much easier to manage if you know who everyone is.

## BBO Chat

Chatting is an integral part of the online game. The Chat Log is always visible during play so you can communicate with the table, the director and with kibitzers when allowed.

You will spend a fair bit of time online entering text into the Chat Window.



With normal settings, just typing text automatically brings up the window and accepts what you are typing. There is a drop down list available during play which will provide you with the ability to select an allowed recipient.

On the toolbar during play there are 4 icons available to open a Chat Window which will be preset to the four logical recipients you will want to (and are allowed to) use:

Chat	Chat to Table
Left Arrow	Chat to Left-Hand Opponent
Right Arrow	Chat to Right-Hand Opponent
Two-Way Arrow	Chat to Both Opponents

Note that you are forbidden by the software to have a private chat with your partner – this should not be a surprise...

Basically just type your text and press Enter or click the Chat Button or Cancel as appropriate. The Button to talk to both opponents (excluding partner) assists with explaining conventional bids or plays to the opponents. Especially, use this button when you forget to alert a bid while entering it.

Always maintain a courteous attitude when chatting online. It is very difficult to correct perceptions of what you say when people cannot see you. Also, remember writing in all capitals is considered to be shouting

Some of the more common abbreviations used in chat follow. Some are obvious but others not so. Don't be afraid to ask experienced players what their abbreviations mean.

<b>brb</b>	Be right back.	<b>lol</b>	Laughing out loud.
<b>thx</b>	Thank you.	<b>glp</b>	Good luck partner.
<b>wpp</b>	Well played partner.		

## Finding a Tournament

The first thing you have to do is to find the tournament you want to join. As you become more adventurous, you might have a look at what is being offered and join a tournament full of strangers.

OK. You know what tournament you are going to play in, so where is it? You need a rough idea of when it is going to start.

The basic process is very simple:

1. Start BBO. You will see the Main Menu. Select:  
Click to Play or Watch Bridge
2. You will see the Play Bridge Menu. Select:  
Free Tournaments
3. You will see the Free Tournaments Menu. Click one of the following list headers to expand the list.
 

Tournaments starting within the hour	Try this list first.
Tournaments starting later	

If the tournament is planned to start more than an hour away, it may not be on either list yet because it has not been created! If so, check if the director is online and ask him what's happening.

Making a regular director you know your BBO Friend will help you here. Then you will be told he is online when you log on looking for the tournament.



If you are within half an hour of the start time you expect and you cannot find the tournament or the director, then do something else tonight.

If you do find the tournament then click the tournament in the list to bring up the Tournament Status screen

## Joining a Tournament

Now to the action. You have found the tournament you want to play in and it is time to join.

First inspect the Tournament Status screen and confirm you are at the right event. Then read the conditions and ensure that they are acceptable.

Most tournaments require pairs to enter rather than individuals, so we will presume pairs are required in the following text.

The screenshot shows the BBO interface for a tournament. At the top, it says "Bridge Base Online - #1413 Pairs VBA Tournament1". The main header features a logo for "2nd CRETE BRIDGE FESTIVAL" with "PRIZE MONEY € 50,000". Below this, a message states: "This tournament will start in 23 minutes. There are 0 pairs registered to play in this tournament (limit 120). Click the Table button on the toolbar below to manage this tournament." A central panel titled "#1413 Pairs VBA Tournament 1" contains details: Host: brownbear, Event type: Pairs, Scoring: IMP Pairs (Cross IMPs), Undos allowed: Unlocked, 16 Boards, 4 Rounds, and a restriction to include a custom list. A description notes it's for local players only in Victoria Australia. A list of 20 players is shown on the right, each with a star icon. At the bottom, a navigation bar includes buttons for "Back", "Home", "Registration", "Partnership D", "Tournament f", and "Options". A chat window at the bottom shows messages from "brownbear" and "suzanna2". The bottom toolbar contains buttons for "BACK", "TABLE", "FEDERAL", "CONV.", "UNDO", "CLAIM", "CHAT", "GIB", "MOVIE", and "HELP".

There is a Tournament Rules Button that might tell you something but this is unlikely to have any real information unless you are playing in a serious tournament.

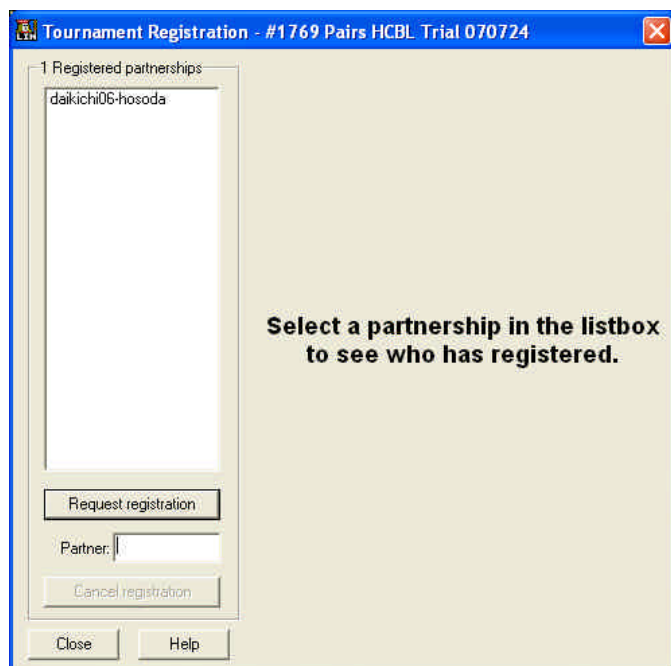
If you have turned up with a partner, then you simply register for the tournament by clicking the Registration Button. See the *Registering for a Tournament* section below for details.

If you have turned up solo, then click the Partnership Desk Button. See the *Partnership Desk* section below for details.

If you are lucky enough to have the ear of the director, then send him a message as well as recording your name at the Partnership Desk.

## Registering for a Tournament

When you click the Registration Button, you will be presented with the form you see below. Remember that you must know the BBO Name of your partner to register – approximate doesn't cut it.

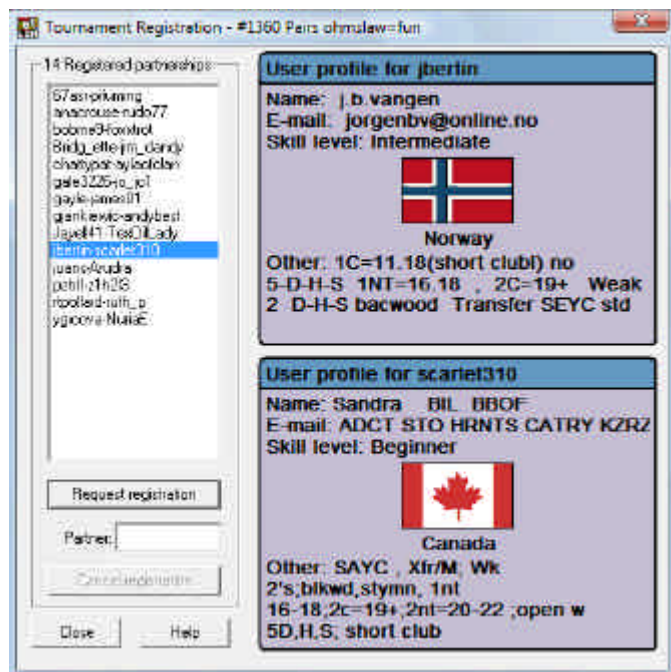


There is nothing complicated about registering. You just enter your partner's BBO Name and click:

### ***Request registration***

Naturally, the software knows who you are, so the two names are entered as a pair. You cannot register two other players – you must be one of them. There are a number of good reasons for this.

The message in the right hand pane of the screen says you can click on any pair to get info about them.



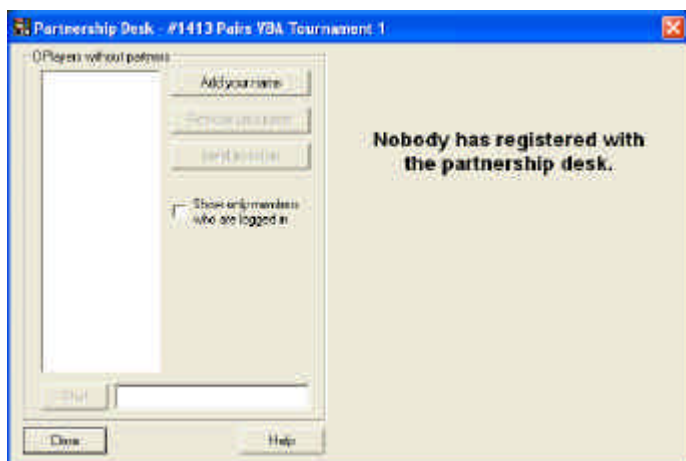
The screen above shows what you get when you click a pair in the list. You get to see the BBO User Profile Summary for each player in the selected pair. This is the public information each BBO User specifies that the world is allowed to see.

## Partnership Desk

Yes, there is a way to ask to offer a pairs tournament if you are on your own. It is called the Partnership Desk. The Partnership Desk Button is next to the Registration Button on the Tournament Status screen.

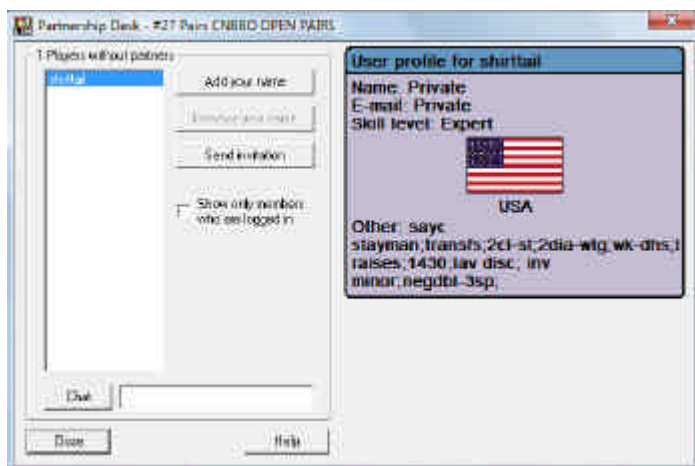
Just press the button to register as a player and wait for a partner. If you are not known by the others in the tournament, you should have filled in your User Profile with some sensible information.

Also, if you are going to play with a partner who is not one of your group of players (you are restricting entries), you are really going to have to learn at least the basics of SAYC – this is what strangers will usually offer as a system on BBO or other online services.



The screen is pretty self-explanatory. Click the button visible to **Add your name** or **Remove your name**.

The screen has a flag which filters the list by removing the players who are not logged on. You won't get a game if you are not going to stay logged on – the players manage the Partnership Desk themselves.



If there is another player in the list, then you can click on the player to see their profile – as has been done above. If you like what you see, then you can click the **Send invitation** Button and see if you get a game.

You need to use the Chat control to talk to the currently selected player if you want to arrange a game by discussing things before issuing an invitation. If you and another player come to an agreement, then one of you has to enter.

There is no automatic matching and it is not the director's problem in a real tournament to find partners. However, the director will keep track to see who is interested and also to see if he has candidates for substitutes – you never know when a substitute is going to be required.



## Playing

Once you have entered for an event, stay on line near the start time and do what you like on BBO. Once you have entered you will be swept into your seat once the tournament starts. If you are doing something else on BBO at the time then tough – tournaments take precedence over normal tables.

When the event starts, then it is really just like playing at any other BBO Table. The only things you to keep in mind during play that might be different from normal are:

1. Remember the form of scoring  
The event determines the form of scoring
2. Remember each round is timed  
Try to stay with the agreed timing, especially if the event is Unlocked.  
If the event is Clocked, play will be curtailed once you go over time.
3. Scheduled finishing time  
Each tournament has a scheduled finish so you have a good idea when play will be over.  
Then you can go off and do what you like.
4. Bridge Movie Available  
You can check out the Bridge Movie for your completed hands during the tournament.  
Something to do when you are dummy or when your table finished early.

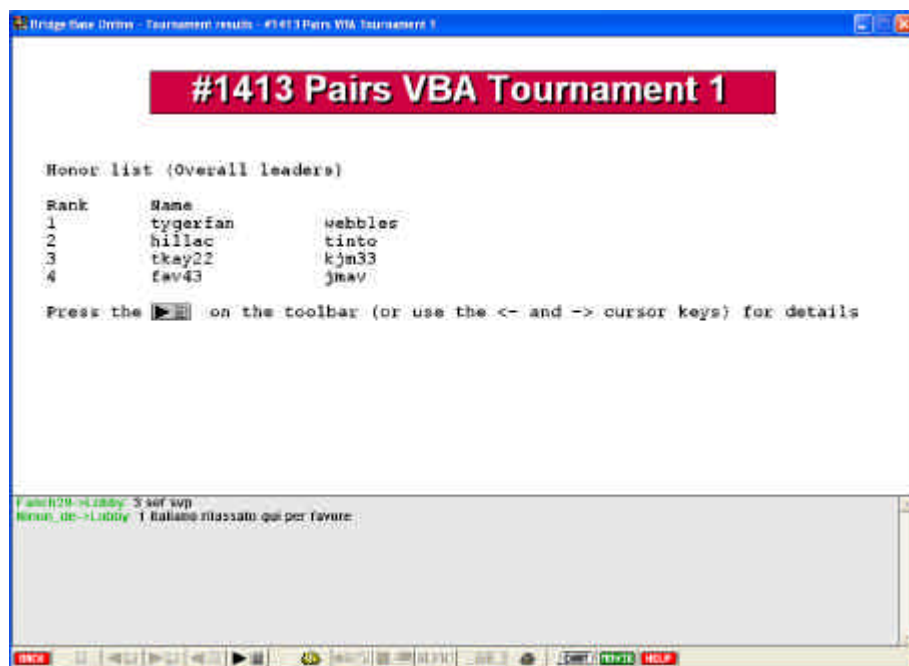
### Tournament Just Finished?

When the tournament completes you will be taken to the Tournament Status screen which will have changed from its active state to a completed state and inform you whether the tournament completed OK and who the major placegetters were.



Thank your partner and the director and you can be on your way. However, you might want to check out the scores before you go.

Firstly, you can press the Tournament Results Button to get greater detail about the tournament results. You will be shown the Leader Board:



You can get more information as instructed. The Leader Boards will be visible for about an hour and will then go away. After that you need to look in Completed Tournaments list.

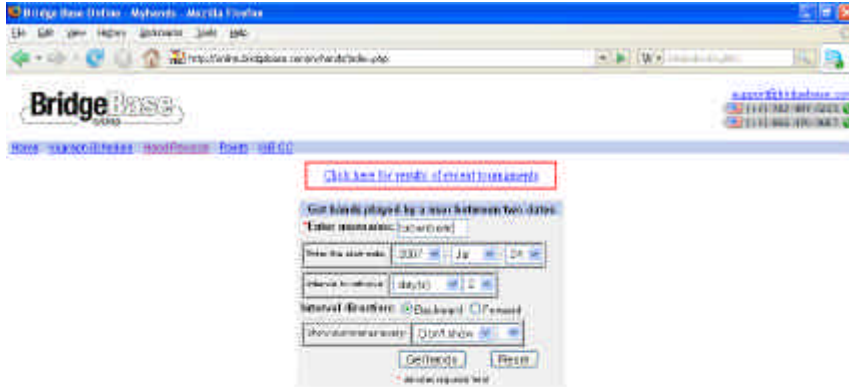
Also, remember that on any screen you can try the Bridge Movie Button which will give you the full story of your boards when available.

## MyHands Webpage

There is a webpage where those that want really gory detail about their tournament results can go.

[www.bridgebase.com/myhands](http://www.bridgebase.com/myhands)

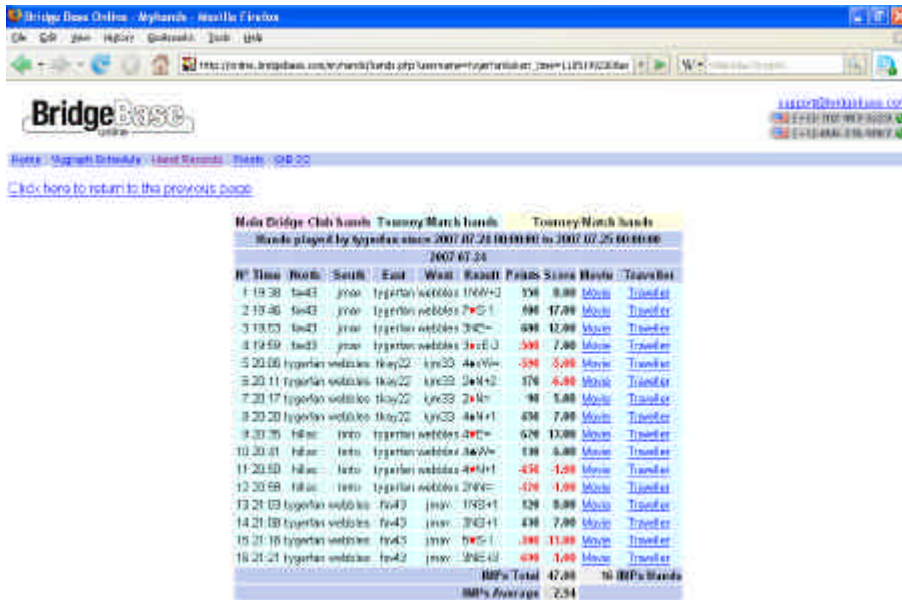
Go here to see details of the tournament. BBO players who like to pour over details can have great fun here. This gives access to all of the hands played by a user – not just tournament hands.



**Opening a Movie**  
 When you click on a Movie, your browser may ask you which program should be used to open the file. Select either Bridge Base Online or BridgeBase.com. The MIME type of the download is application/mov.

Name

Enter your BBO Name (plus other search parameters if you like) and you will get all the detail that is available.



Click here to return to the previous page

Name

From this level of tournament detail, you can look at the summary, check out the Bridge Movie which shows exactly what happened on that hand for you or bring up the traveller for the board. That should be enough detail for anyone.

**BBO – Want to Learn?**

There are a lot of ways to get to know how to Bridge Base Online and the many other online services that have been made available to enhance your enjoyment of bridge.

The first and most important is to ask people. There are a lot of players who regularly go online and you should make use of this. Get one of them to give you a tour of BBO, show you how it works and help you create your own BBO Name so you can use it at home.

Easiest is to get someone to come to your house and install the software for you prior to providing a demo. The install site for grabbing BBO from the web is below. Remember it is free.

<http://online.bridgebase.com/>

Also, once you get started playing (or even before you do) you can learn a lot by referencing the Bridge Base Online Help.

This is the help system that is provided when you click the Help Button on the BBO Toolbar:

[www.bridgebase.com/help/3/common/text/index.html](http://www.bridgebase.com/help/3/common/text/index.html)

Go to the contents by pressing the Contents Button and have a look around for tournament material.

As the help is just a set of web pages, you don't need BBO installed to check it out.