

This document provides instructions for setting up, running and directing BBO Tournaments when you don't know what you are doing. I found it quite daunting trying to have my first go at directing on my own when I only had two tables to run!

This document tries to help new directors find their feet. It ignores all of the complex crud and gives a simple description of what you really have to know. There is a companion document with references to the serious stuff if you want to direct with the big boys – read that later.

I have written this document right after I finished my second tiny tournament so there is a fair chance the stuff you absolutely have to understand is covered here. Sometimes it is better to write things down before you know too much.

I am presuming you have a group of people you want to provide online services for and I want to help you do that. It doesn't matter whether they all come from a single bridge club, a group of clubs or are just a bunch of friends who want to have a structured game together when it suits them.

You know what you want to get done, right? Well let's get the basic stuff over with quickly so you can help your lot play some bridge. I like to use as an objective, a version of what Bicycling Victoria use when running the Great Victorian Bike Ride:

***More people playing more bridge more often.***

Sections in this document are:

- BBO Tournaments Overview
- BBO Clubs
- Director Checklist
- Player Restriction List
- Tournament Create
- Tournament Status
- Tournament Change
- Tournament Registration
- Partnership Desk
- Tournament Just Finished?
- Where Are My Scores?
- BBO Training
- Promotion – Club Website

## BBO Tournaments Overview

Any authorised user can create and run a Tournament. An authorised user is simply a BBO member in good standing who has been granted privilege. Get someone to help you do this, or simply make an EMail request directly to the BBO Support Staff at:

[support@bridgebase.com](mailto:support@bridgebase.com)

A tournament is nothing more than 2 or more tables of players that want to play a game of bridge online and are willing to play a game that has been organised by someone else.

That someone else is you – you are about to become an Online Tournament Director (OTD for those that like acronyms).

The simplest way to learn is to get some people you know to play in a handful of practice tournaments while you find your feet and drum up enough support from the fence sitters to make the concept fly.

The reason that I propose tournaments rather than teams matches is that anyone can turn up before the advertised start time and join in the game.

BBO Tournaments even have a Partnership Desk facility where you can help single players match up with each other and get a game.

Once you have a group of players who play online regularly, the more experienced ones might well want to additionally arrange Team Matches where 2 teams of 4 meet online and have a game together.

This is how the big games are played and is a very simple way to test yourself against strong players.

Anyone can arrange a Team Match, but the players who are experienced OTDs will likely be asked to assist with arranging and running them. Such is life...

Team Matches will be handled in another document.

Maybe in a year or two some of the groups who get together will decide to run Online Interclub Team Competitions.

With the tyranny of distance in Australia this would give a lot more players a chance to have a go at real competitions. You never know.

## BBO Clubs

BBO has tried to form the concept of clubs but their initial stab at this didn't work too well and they called a moratorium on this. Maybe they have improved things and you can run real BBO Clubs now. Worth checking out from time to time.

The concept of having a Virtual Bridge Club is fundamental to what I am describing here. I wanted to create a way for the bridge players in my state (Victoria, Australia) who belong to clubs and who either know each other or know of each other to have an environment where they could play online.

The problem with running open tournaments on BBO is that you effectively invite the world in and this is not a good plan.

Anyone who has played much on BBO knows that playing against a random selection of strangers is OK on occasion can but can be frustrating and you will get your share of rude and incompetent people – who needs that?

The proposal that will now flow through this document is that you have decided to create a Virtual Bridge Club by enlisting the players from your own bridge club.

You plan to run a semi-regular tournament online for the members of your club on a night when there is no game at the clubrooms.

Because you have your club players as your playing group, you will ensure that:

1. You have players who respect each other and can talk to each other.
2. Your online environment will have minimum stress because you all know each other and understand the objectives of the club.
3. Bad behaviour basically disappears as a problem because the director and the other players know who you are.
4. The players will understand during the test tournaments if you have problems, especially if a couple of players disappear because of technical issues and you have to have a sit-out.
5. You have a customer base that can directly help you promote the tournament cycle if you give them a good time!

You may not want to continue exactly like this but at least you will get a foothold in the online directing world with your sanity intact.

## Director Checklist

OK. You have group of players ready to give things a go and it is time to get organised. You have done some homework and are now ready to prepare in earnest.

You must be comfortable with computers to be a director. You don't have to be an expert but you must be willing to get your hands dirty and use your keyboard to do things.

Ideally, run tournaments from a location where you have 2 computers on your desk/table. This is not required but it will let you have better control if you decide to play to fill in a gap. Getting started can be tough if you run short of volunteers.

Also, with a second computer, you can do something useful on the other PC while you look after the tournament. It doesn't take a lot of effort during play if there are only 2-4 tables.

What I have prepared here is a checklist of the things you must address to run your first tournament.

Read the list to try and understand the basic process, which is amplified in following sections:

1. Read this document thoroughly.  
Check out other documents about directing just to get a feel for things.  
You don't need to learn the real stuff yet.
2. Get the BBO Names of your players.  
Check they have the basic know-how to play on BBO.
3. Create a Player Restriction List  
It must include your initial group of interested players who might play.  
If you know other names of players you are OK with, then add them as well.
4. Set and publicise the datetime for two trial tournaments of 2 tables.  
If you get more initial takers who turn up, then you're laughing.  
I suggest 7:30 on non-bridge nights.
5. Have a friend who will be a warm spare for the trials.  
You and the friend can make up a table if required, but try to just direct if you can.
6. Have 2 computers available.  
If you decide to play and direct then one PC is the director's PC.  
Also, you can log on as another user for your playing BBO Session on the other PC.
7. Set up the tournament one hour before start time.  
Earlier than that is a waste of your time.
8. Check the Tournament Registration and the Partnership Desk regularly.  
Do this every 5 minutes and don't panic if nobody turns up.  
If you don't get enough players, try again another time.
9. When the tournament starts just have a look around and talk to the players.
10. You and your friend can work out how to be subs if required.  
If you cannot work this out, then just allow a sit-out during the trials.  
Your players should be patient as you are learning too.
11. When the tournament is finished, thank the players.  
Also, tell them where to find their results.
12. If your trials work, prime the website.  
You need a plan to try to get more players interested.
13. Afterwards, learn how to be a real online director.  
Meanwhile, you hopefully train someone else to help.

## Player Restriction List

This is the simplest way to restrict the players who join your games and is probably the best way to have your first tries at directing and convincing your group of players that you have a good idea here.

Get the names of all of the players who have any interest in playing. They do not have to commit in any way – they just have to supply their names so they are allowed to play in a tournament run by you at any time in the future. Get everyone you can who qualifies in the list.

To create a Player Restriction List just open a text file and enter the BBO Names with one name per line and nothing else. You must leave the last line blank or the last name in the list will be ignored. Do not leave any extra spaces and type in the name exactly.

You should also keep a Supporting Translation File as well which should have the BBO Names in the same order as the Restriction List but contains other information – this must at least be the real name of the BBO User. You can store other data here but you have to know who your customers are if you keep this kind of list – BBO Names can be a little cryptic.

A sample of the Player Restriction List and the Supporting Translation File are below:

bjacobs
brownbear
cathychua

bjacobs	Bill Jacobs
brownbear	Blaine Howe
cathychua	Cathy Chua

See the section below *Tournament Create* to see how you actually load the file. Don't forget you do need to remember where the file is.

Please note that if you want anything less restrictive than this, or if you want to use more than one qualification method, then be my guest. I am just providing you with a simple method that will keep out the riff-raff during your first attempts at running online tournaments.

Now you have a simple way to allow your group to enter for your tournaments but can keep out strangers.

Keep the lists on your PC but keep a master list on a server you and other directors can get at (such as your website) or just EMail the latest copy of the list to whoever has next crack at playing director.

### **Important note:**

You can update the list of players and import a fresh copy of the list at any time before the tournament actually starts. This means you can easily add players on the fly if a new player you want to allow to play pops up on BBO while the tournament has been created and you are receiving entries.

## Tournament Create

Now to the action. You are an hour away from tournament start and are going to create your tournament. 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 the Toolbar Button:  
Create Tournament
4. You will see the Create Tournament Dialog. Finally it is time to go to work and actually set up the tournament. Fill this in and Click **Create Tournament**. The clock is now ticking.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Tournament' dialog box with the following fields and options:

- Tournament name: [ ] Type: [ ]
- Description: [ ]
- Director: [ ]
- Boards to play: [ 8 ] Boards per round: [ 2 ]
- Minutes per board: [ 8 ] Maximum number of entries: [ ]
- Time until start (days/hours/minutes): D [ 0 ] H [ 0 ] M [ 30 ]
- Entry fee (cents): [ ]
- Allow Undos:
- Movement:
  - Unlocked
  - Clocked
  - Swiss
  - Survivor
  - [ ] Cut %
- Scoring:
  - Individual
  - Barometer
  - IMP Pairs
  - Matchpoints
  - Total Points
- Kibitzers:
  - Allow
  - Allow silent
  - Do not allow
- Allow chat to tournament:
  - For players
  - For kibitzers
- Kibitz partner when dummy
- Player inclusion list:
  - Include players by player level
  - Include players from a file on your PC** (selected)
  - Exclude players from a file on your PC
  - Include members of my private club
- Buttons: Create Tournament, Close, Friends/Enemies..., Help

Note that the sample screen has the player include option selected:  
Include players from a file on your PC.

This is the method suggested in this document as a starting method for restricting players. This is optional. You can if you wish use any method at all, especially once you know what you are doing.

Even though you need to know what you are doing, you can change pretty much anything until the tournament actually starts and the players are swept into their seats (I love that phrase).

The items on the Create Tournament Dialog must all be filled in. Don't just take the defaults, even where you should, unless you understand what the item means. Read the suggestions below and other help documents to get this right.

If fact, either have this document or a document from BBO Help printed and available for reference while you set up your first tournament.

Create items are:

1. Tournament Name  
Give the tournament a meaningful name. Otherwise your customers will not be able to find it in the tournament list. Remember that the name should match what you publicise reasonably closely.
2. Type  
Ignore this field unless you have set up a code that belongs here.  
Identifies the organization.
3. Description  
Say something meaningful so your customers can identify the tournament.  
Especially say about entry limitations as you will be asked by someone if you don't.  
See my sample below. Do whatever you think is best for your players.
4. Boards to Play  
Minutes per Board  
Boards per Round  
This is the definition how many boards and how long it will take. I started with 4X4 Board Rounds which gave 16 Boards. I only expected 2 tables for the test.  
If you expect 4 or more tables then make it 2 Board Rounds.  
Everything I read says you should allow 8 minutes per Board.
5. Maximum number of entries  
Probably doesn't matter much but set it to 16 (pairs) for your first attempts. If you get more than that for your first attempt, then you better do your homework...
6. Time until start  
Just type in the minutes, say 60 if you logged in an hour before start time. You can change this if you get all your players in early or if you want to wait a little.
7. Entry fee  
Ignore this field unless you have authority to charge users.
8. Allow Undos  
Say Yes. Only say no if you are running real tournaments.
9. Movement  
Clocked or Unclocked (preferred) for tests. Read up on movements online.
10. Scoring  
Imps I guess, but really whatever you fancy. Forget Barometer during tests.
11. Kibitzers  
Allow. Use Allow Silent for serious tournaments. No would be unusual.  
Also, *Kibitz partner when dummy* is OK for tests at least.
12. Allow chat to tournament  
Click Yes for both Players and Kibitzers, especially during tests.

Are we all done? Yes? Then click **Create Tournament**. If the data entry is OK, you will be asked to load your Player Restriction File as the last act of creating the tournament.

## Tournament Status

While you spend the time waiting for your tournament to start, you should keep in touch with what is going on. The main thing you do is to get up the Tournament Status screen and keep it visible.

This is your job.

To get this up, go to the Free Tournaments menu. If you can't find this now you are in trouble – but you already know where this is, right?

You will find your tournament in the list under:

Tournaments starting within the hour

Note that your tournament name will have a Tournament ID Number in front of it. This is done by BBO to explicitly identify every tournament so they don't have to check you used a unique name. It isn't a bad idea to write down this number somewhere if you intend to find the tournament in the historical lists later.

Click your tournament in the list (remember – only single clicks in BBO for pretty much everything). You will finally bring up the Tournament Status screen.

In the hour before the tournament starts, I suggest you leave this visible on your PC all the time unless you are working on something. Check it regularly.

Especially, check the chat log at least every 2 minutes to see if a player is trying to talk to you. Make this every minute when there are less than 15 minutes to go.

The screenshot shows the BBO interface for a tournament titled "#1413 Pairs VBA Tournament 1". The window title is "Bridge Base Online - #1413 Pairs VBA Tournament1". The main header area features a logo for "Publio Fantasy" and text for the "2nd CRETE BRIDGE FESTIVAL" with a "PRIZE MONEY € 50,000".

Key information displayed includes:
 

- Tournament start time: "This tournament will start in 23 minutes."
- Registration status: "There are 0 pairs registered to play in this tournament (limit 120)." and "0 Registered partnerships".
- Event details: Host (brownbear), Event type (Pairs), Scoring (IMP Pairs), Undos allowed (16 Boards), and Rounds (4 Rounds).
- Description: "Local players only - Victoria Australia - while we get started. No restrictions. 4x4 Board Rounds. Players limited to list set by director. Untimed - hope to finish in 2 hours."
- Player list: A vertical list of 16 players, each with a star icon, including brownbear, mpisak, FFBBO\_1, neduddl, Gerardo, RIOL09, vincenzo, runneru, Walddk, Salokin, tinto, syl, vba1x, Tez, adelof, tokay19, babydol, ucar, donator, uschiwh, EhsanA, vasanti, f\_aydog, vifon e, tuldiRe, gyuri e, hassour, ibridge, Kitta, komurlu, MAMBA, mariefrr, and mons16.
- Navigation buttons: Back, Home, Registration, Partnership D, Tournament f, Options.
- Player statistics: "3661 Players" and "33 Displayed".
- Chat log: A scrollable area showing messages from brownbear and suzanna2 regarding the tournament's creation and timing.
- Bottom toolbar: Includes buttons for BACK, TABLE, FEDERAL, CONV., UNDO, CLAIM, CHAT, and GIB, MOVIE, HELP.



Your tasks between now and the start of the tournament are all about talking to your players as they arrive online and helping them to enter. Specifically you should:

1. Check the chat log regularly, especially within the last 15 minutes before the scheduled start.
2. Keep an eye on the time to start (top of the Status Screen).
3. Keep an eye on the Registered Partnerships count on the screen. If it has changed, bring up the Tournament Registration screen so you know who has turned up.
4. Check the Partnership Desk every 5 minutes.

That really is about it unless you don't get 8 players to turn up – then you don't have enough to get the tournament to start.

If you have to wait a bit to get up to 8 players then extend the time a little (really best if you can avoid this). See the ***Tournament Change*** section below of how to do this and on how to add another pair to your Player Restriction List when they turn up online.

Once you have at least a quorum of players it is really plain sailing – just keep an eye on things, talk to your players and wait for the start time to arrive when the players will be swept into their seats.

Once the tournament has started, you need to immediately check that your tables are all complete.

If they are not, then you either have to get substitutes to fill the vacant seats (you and the friend who is helping for this purpose if available) or have a sit-out.

A sit-out is acceptable for 2-Board Rounds but not really for 4-Board Rounds, unless you are doing your very first test and your players accept this limitation.

## Tournament Change

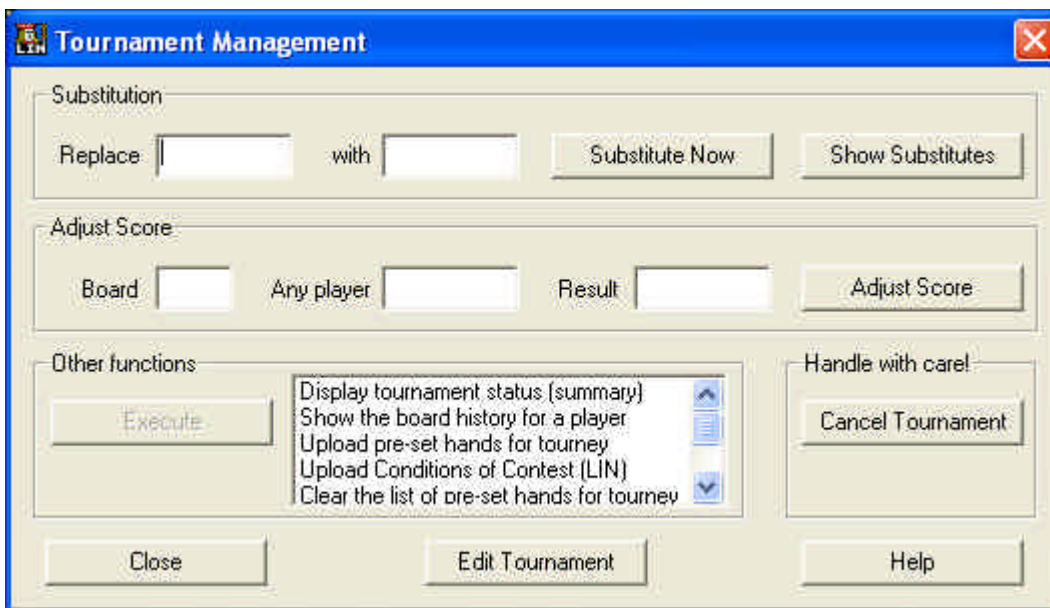
You can change the tournament anytime in any way until it starts. It is really important that you understand this. Do not be afraid to make changes!

It is no more dangerous than editing a word document. Most players don't even enter until the last minute so they won't even notice what you have done a lot of the time.

You change a tournament by clicking the Table Button on the toolbar when you looking at the Tournament Status Screen.



You will be shown the Tournament Management screen.



Unless you want to use the Cancel Tournament Button to delete the whole thing and go to the pub (just joking...), you will pretty much always click the Edit Tournament Button to bring up the Edit Tournament dialog where you will actually do something.

There are a number of interesting options in the Other Functions. You can investigate those in detail later as they will not be of immediate interest when getting started. These options are:

- Display tournament status (summary)
- Show the board history for a player
- Upload preset hands for a tourney
- Upload conditions of Contest (LIN)
- Clear the list of pre-set hands for tourney
- Unregister offline teams
- Stars play free (IND only)

The one you want to know about in principle is *Upload preset hands for a tourney*. This means there is a way to upload a set of hands you have information about nor want to provide as a training set.

There will be uploaded hand sets prepared from Vu-Graphs in my tournaments and team matches which have been exported from Vu-Graphs – this will give an easy way to rub shoulders with the stars. This will be a topic for a separate document.

A copy of the Edit Tournament dialog that I brought up for my second test tournament is below. This ended up being a 2 table tournament, which was fine with me.

You can change anything you like here, but a common one is to change the start time which means changing the number of minutes to go.

Also, when using a Player Restriction List, you may have added a player or players to the file which contains the list. Then you have to get up this dialog and, when you click Modify, you will be required to find and load a new copy of the list.

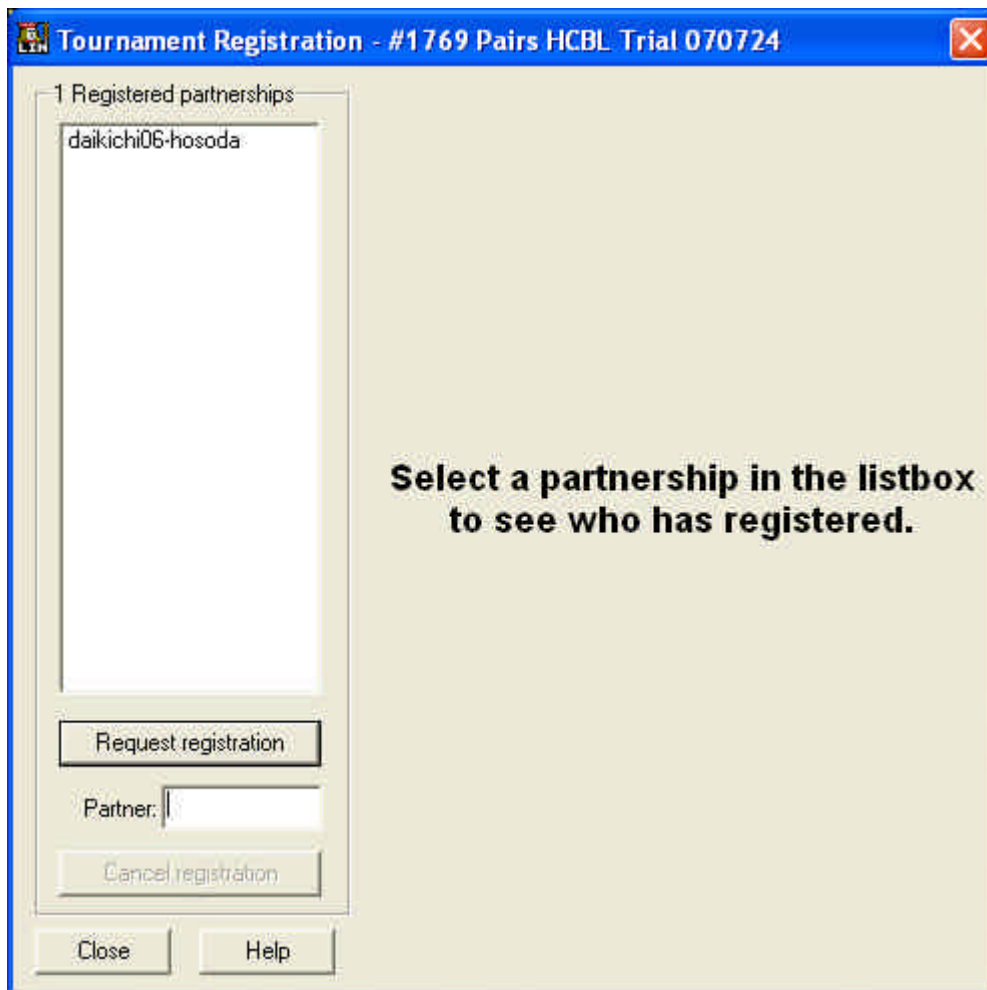
You always have to do this when you do a modify, whether the list has changed or not.

## Tournament Registration

There are only 15 minutes to go and nobody has registered. Don't panic – wait it out. After all, if you really end up with no customers you can switch off your computer and watch television instead. How bad can that be?

Below is a snapshot of a Tournament Registration screen from a random tournament. It shows the pairs or players that have registered.

Bring up this screen whenever you notice that the registration count has changed – this lets you keep track of who has turned up.



If you are the director that is about it, unless someone you don't want is in the list. If you did your homework on limiting your applicants that won't be a problem, right?

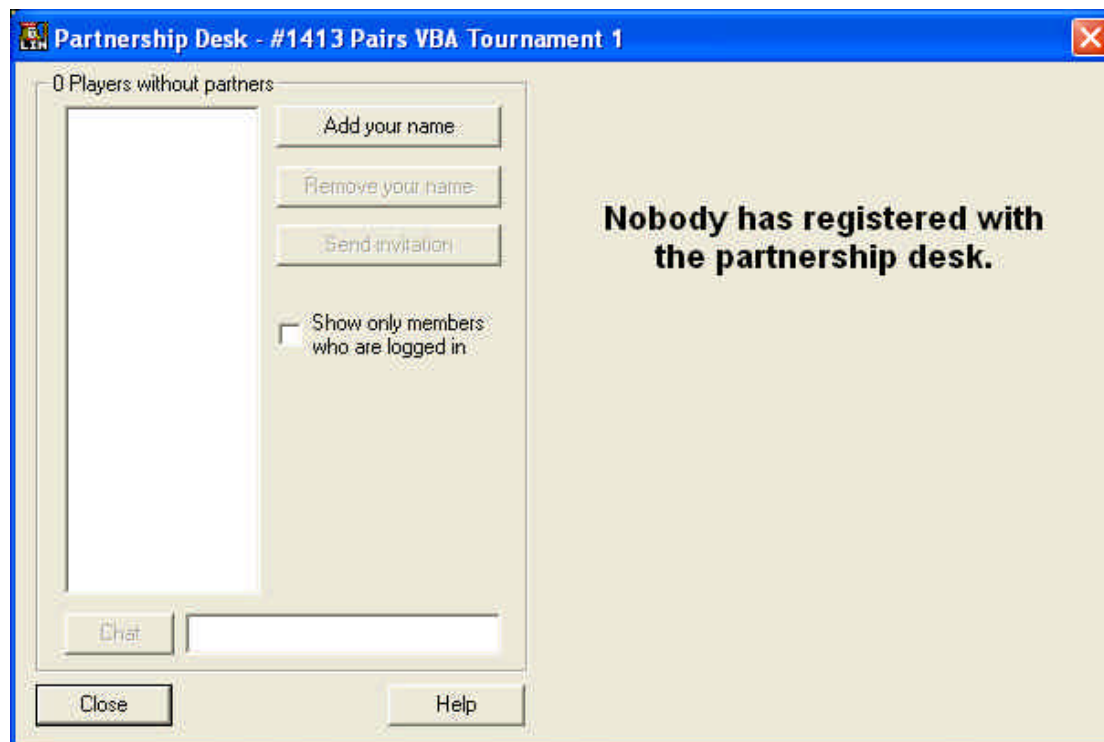
If you are expecting certain players and have a small field planned (like my 2 tables), you may want to check this from time to time and contact expected entrants if getting very close to time.

The Tournament Status screen shows how many pairs have successfully entered. If you don't need to know any more than that, you don't need to open up this screen.

## Partnership Desk

This screen lists players who want to play in the tournament but don't have partners. Click the Partnership Desk Button on the Tournament Status screen.

You will be presented with the Partnership Desk screen which is a very simple list of applicants for partners. There will mostly be none and there will rarely be more than one or two.



If nobody is in the list (likely if the tournament is restricted), then no problems. If there are players in the list try to contact them within BBO. Otherwise call them if appropriate.

Check this screen at least every 5 minutes when you are within 15 minutes of start time.

However, if your tournament is due to start in half an hour or less, then anyone in the list better be on line.

It is not your job to chase after them – they should contact you directly or stay on line if they really want to play and talk to other players in the list themselves.

### ***Important note:***

The Partnership Desk Facility is, in theory, supposed to be totally driven by the players and the director need not be involved at all. Let them find their own partners where possible.

Your degree of involvement, even in friendly clubs is really up to you. A little assistance at least is sensible and keeps you in touch with the players. Helping them specifically to find a partner will depend how much time you have available and the players should understand that.

Be helpful but don't be their slave. Always check the list out from time to time though, because you can remember the players that turned up but did not enter as potential substitutes.

## Tournament Just Finished?

The Tournament Status screen will change from its active state to a completed state and inform you whether the tournament completed OK and who the major placegetters were.

The screenshot shows the BBO interface for the '#1413 Pairs VBA Tournament 1'. The main heading is '#1413 Pairs VBA Tournament 1' with a '\$10,000 in PRIZE MONEY!' banner. Below the heading, it states 'This tournament has been completed' and 'Click the Tournament Results button below for standings and awards'. The tournament details are as follows:

Host: brownbear	Description: Local players only - Victoria Australia - while we get started
Event type: Pairs	No restrictions, 4x4 Board Rounds.
Scoring: IMP Pairs (Cross IMPs)	Players limited to list set by director.
Undos allowed: Unlocked	Unlimited - hope to finish in 2 hours.
16 Boards	4 Rounds
Restriction: include custom list	

The top pairs are listed as follows:

- tygerfan-webbles
- hillac-tinto
- tkay22-kjm33

Navigation buttons include Back, Home, Tournament Results, and Tournament Rules. The status bar shows 'Options 4142 Players 3019 Displayed'.

Once you have reached this point, you are basically finished.

Thank your players and inform them that they can go to the Tournament Status screen themselves to get details of placegetters and some information about the scores of the pairs.

The Leader Boards will be visible for about an hour and will then go away.

You should also tell them about the Bridge Movie Button. This is on their BBO Toolbar and will give them lots of information about the hands they have played. They should try pressing the Bridge Movie Button occasionally during a tournament (preferably when they are dummy) to get a feel for the information that is provided and how they can navigate the available information.

Note especially that a log file of their tournament hands will be placed on their workstation. The directory tree that you need to drill down to find the log files is below. This tree presumes you installed Bridge Base Online on your workstation in the default installation directory.

```
C:\Bridge Base Online
  hands
    brownbear
      Tournament 1413 24-07-07.lin
```

There is a folder for each user in the hands folder and there will be a Bridge Movie file there for each tournament you play in with a name something like the one above. The files are much easier to find than it is to tell you how to find them.

### Where Are My Scores?

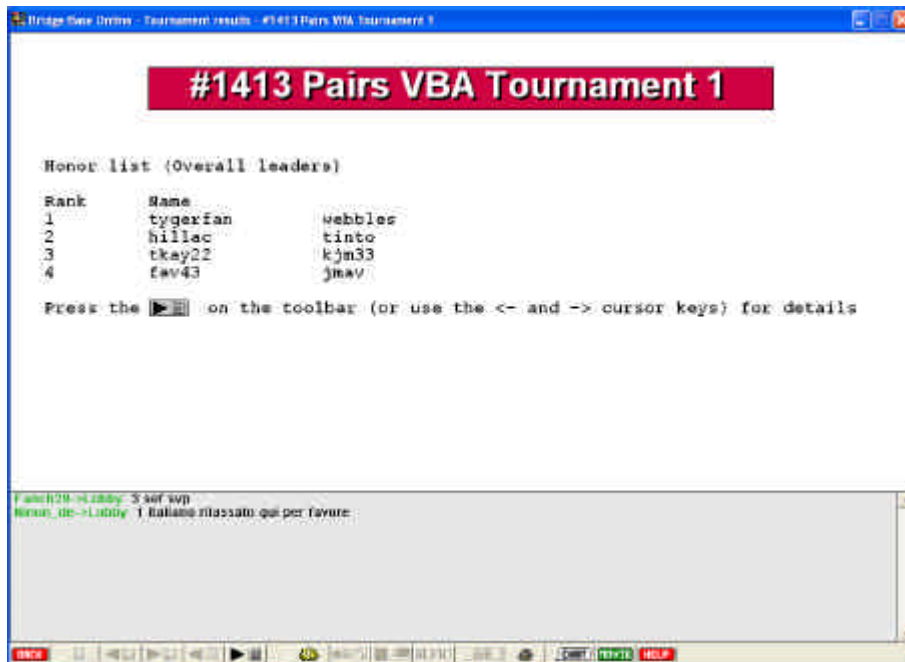
Expectations online are different to those in live games. Players will expect their scores to be available as soon as they have finished and you must be aware of where stuff is.

They will see the Tournament Status screen themselves because they will be taken there when play finishes. They just have to look before they start moving around BBO.

Players can get info for an hour after the tournament finishes by getting up the tournament list for the type of tournament you have played and checking out Completed Tournaments list.

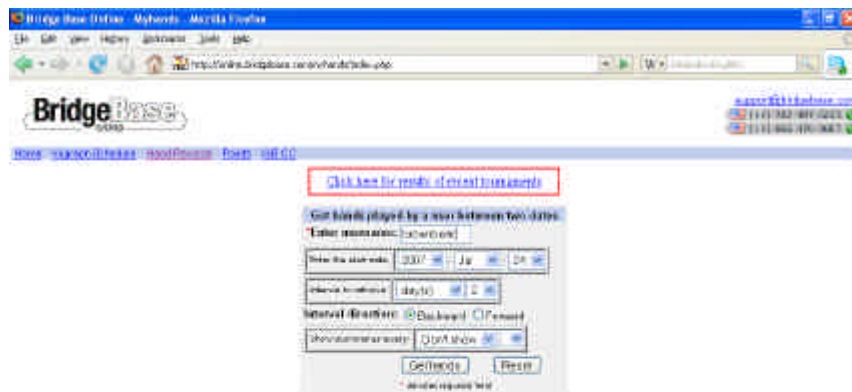


The completed tournaments are highlighted in blue. Just double-click yours to get details of the placegetters and some score information. The results screen they get to looks like the following:



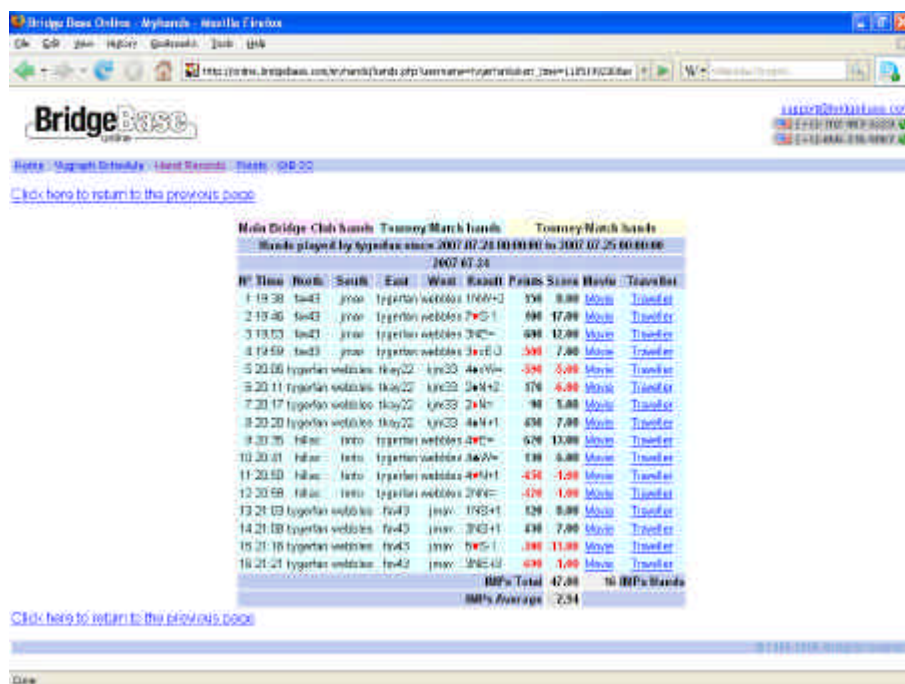
If they ask for drill-down details of specific boards, you can send them to the My Hands Web Pages at: [www.bridgebase.com/myhands](http://www.bridgebase.com/myhands)

You should tell them about this page anyway. BBO players who like to pour over details can have great fun here.



**Opening a Movie**  
 When you click on a Movie, your browser may ask if a certain program should be used to open the file. Select either Bridge Base (C:\Program Files\bridgebase.exe) or the MIME type of the download is application/x-boltm.

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



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 Training

Now you are ready to have a go at online tournaments, you are going to find that you have players who are interested but simply do not know how to play on BBO.

There is no way out of this one, you are going to have to help. Either you or someone you know needs to supply a little online training.

Without a shadow of a doubt, the best way to do this is to arrange training sessions where you have a number of computers in one place so that you can get a bunch of trainees logging on to BBO at the same time in the same room.

Then the trainer can get the players doing things at their own pace while they learn how to play. If you want some help setting this up, either call the VBA to get assistance or use the documentary help (including the use of GIB Robots) in the Virtual Bridge documents on the VBA Website:

[www.vba.asn.au](http://www.vba.asn.au)

As you probably don't have a facility at your club like the Victorian Bridge Association where there are 4 computers which can connect to BBO in the same room you are going to have to make do at your house or that of a trainee.

If your trainees all have laptop computers with wireless facilities you might be able to set up a complete table but I am going to be practical and presume that you have two trainees who are going to come to your house for an online lesson.

To be able to conduct a lesson you need the following:

1. A Broadband connection to the internet.
2. A Wireless Router connected to the Broadband Modem.  
This is simple to do and costs less than \$100.
3. Two computers. Likely you will have a desktop computer connected directly to the router and with luck you either have a laptop or one of your students can bring one.
4. A BBO Username that has a license to use GIB Robots plus extra BBO Names which your students can use.  
The VBA uses a set of names: vba1n vba1e vba1s vba1w  
These were created explicitly for training purposes

Now I will summarise how you set up a training session for two students:

1. Connect your two computers to the router and ensure the students when seated will be able to see each other's screen.
2. Start BBO on both workstations. Connect one using the BBO Name that has GIB Robot privileges.
3. Start a table with the two users as North and South and the GIB Robots as East and West. The robots will simply play when boards are served up and allow the students to take as long as they like over any decision during training.
4. Make sure the scoring method is Total Points or Rubber. Never use Duplicate Scoring for training as you will spoil other peoples scores and you cannot cancel hands.
5. Sit your students down, bring up a hand and start talking.

It isn't that hard to teach interested players how to play online. You will be doing your club and the game a service. Finally, remember that getting people playing online will not reduce the number of times they come to your club – it does not work like that. People who play online use the facility for extra games not replacements for live sessions. Trust me...

## Promotion – Club Website

To get players interested in something new and maintain the momentum required to give it a life of its own, you have to do some promotion. This is essential for your own sanity unless you really want to stay in charge of this new beast all the time.

Promotion requires, firstly, a little personal cajoling. Have yourself and the players who come on board for the trail tournaments talk up the concept and have some enthusiasm about what is possible in a few years.

Secondly, talk about how promoting your bridge club is the surest way to keep it alive and kicking. Your new players have to come from somewhere and keeping your players in touch more and playing extra games online – where your club will be visible – is a good way to do this.

As part of this you must have a web presence. Any bridge club which wants to survive long term should have a website where the games you play and the results of the completed sessions are available for your current players and any new players in your area who might come across the site.

If you only get one new player a year that you welcome to your ranks, a website as more than done its job.

Naturally, the promotion of online games will work a lot better by being similarly promoted on the web.

You should have access to a website and it should at least do the following:

1. Tell your players when online games are scheduled.
2. Provide major results. These can be found on the BBO site but at least listing the placegetters of your tournaments on your website is a good thing – it will encourage others to play.
3. Provide training documents online or, better, provide links to good ones you have discovered that other have written.

By running a few games, organising a little training and doing a modicum of promotion, you will have done your club a good service and provided the framework where others can take over some or all of the work you have done to get things started.

As everyone who has had responsibility for starting or running a bridge club has found out, it is hard work but the rewards are good – especially when it works and have some responsibility for a bunch of players you can see enjoying themselves playing the great game.