

This document details what you need to know to get started with BridgeBase so you can play Bridge Online quickly and effectively.

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The target audience is players who have had a session or two with a trainer or experienced player and want to view a summary of the key BridgeBase functionality.

Experienced BridgeBase players may discover functionality they did not know existed because they did not read the online help.

Welcome to computers...

Overview

Bridge Base Online is a free service offered to bridge players everywhere. You need to download and install the program before you can play bridge online or use the engine which will automatically display Bridge Movies and BridgeBase VuGraph. To do this simply go to:

www.bridgebase.com

BridgeBase presents frequent "VuGraph" broadcasts of live matches from around the world and they are enhanced by expert commentary. The ABF makes use of this capability to display some of its international fixtures. For instance, Australian participation in the recent 2005 Far East Championships is available on:

www.abf.com.au/events/overseas/pabfc/2005.html

Bridge Movies are used extensively as teaching aids and will be the standard for developing interactive teaching software in the future. Check out the public PCs in the VBA which provide examples of this software which you can use at any time.

The online bridge service runs 24/7 and rarely drops below 100 concurrent tables in play in the main bridge club. The member community is large (100,000+), active and multilingual.

BBO is a business and offers ACBL-Sanctioned club games as well as the occasional advertisement. To check the games out go to:

www.acbl.org

There is also a second major online bridge service – this is OKBridge. This is not a free service but it offers a valid service. It has a ratings system which provides the means to filter your opponents and get the right standard of game. This service is particularly useful to experienced players who want to play against a good standard of opposition.

To find out about OKBridge just ask senior VBA members. If they are not a member of OKBridge they can point you to someone who is who can assist with information about the service.

BridgeBase Website

The BridgeBase Website offers online bridge and a lot of other interactive and support facilities. If you go to the parent site you can then navigate the various features and learn about what the software provides. Just go to:

www.bridgebase.com

Amongst the available features and types of activity available are:

1. Volunteers are usually online to help with questions and problems. When you are logged on to BridgeBase, you will notice that some names are highlighted in yellow – these are support volunteers who are willing to take queries from participants.
2. Authorized members can organize duplicate IMP/MP/Totalpoint tournaments (Individuals and Pairs). They usually see well over 100 tournaments each day, each organized and run by one of these Tourney Directors. A few are authorised to run Pay Tournaments.
3. Any member can organize a two-table team match (IMP, BAM, or Totalpoint scoring). Hundreds of team matches are run each day. When Victoria can get other states and clubs to join the online world, we can organise interstate and interclub matches.
4. Any member can open a table for duplicate or rubber play, either with strangers or friends. Duplicate results are achieved by comparing scores to other tables. Thousands are opened each day.
5. There are several private and public clubs on BBO. Some are organized by language, others by skill. The typical private club regularly offers free tournaments for its members.
6. Any member can open a partnership-bidding room and have BBO generate hands for practice bidding. Members can also open teaching tables, controlling up to 4 seats, and (optionally) uploading specific deals.
7. Any member can open a chat room – they make it easy to present hands to the room.
8. Discussion boards of various topics (forums.bridgebase.com). There are also methods for EMail contact – check the site for details.

Online Bridge Words

This is potted dictionary of some online bridge terminology so you can learn the buzzwords that online players throw around.

- Lobby
This is the main screen of the online service. It shows all of the computers currently logged on to BridgeBase. I say computers because the player who connected may have left the computer and gone to dinner or gone to sleep!
- Serve a Table
That is what they call creating a new table. The player who serves a table gets to select the scoring method and is in charge of who does and does not play.
- The World
All of the players currently logged on to BridgeBase.
- Virtual Table
The four players logged on to an online table and the game they are playing.
- Kibitz
Watch a bridge game. Apparently the term comes from Chess. When you watch online remember that you may not comment on a hand during play.

Also there is a shorthand language like the stuff children now use to send text messages endlessly to their friends. Some of important ones that will be recognised by all experienced onliners are:

tx	Thanks	
ty	Thank You	
typ	Thank You Partner	
np	No Problem	
pls	Please	
gl	Good Luck	
glp	Good Luck Partner	
brb	Be Right Back	
lol	Laughing Out Loud	This one is frequently misunderstood.
wdp	Well Done Partner	
wdo	Well Done Opponents	

You might send a message such as “brb pitstop” – I’ll let you work that one out yourselves. You might log on at the same time as a friend. “Shall I Serve?”

Scoring Options

The types of games and scoring methods that are on offer include:

- Duplicate Matchpoints
- Duplicate IMPS
- Rubber Bridge
- Duplicate Tournaments
- Team Matches

Most of the time you select either Duplicate Matchpoints or Duplicate IMPS depending on your preferred method for the day which you and your tablemates are happy with.

When you finish playing a hand, a score is immediately posted and added to your total.

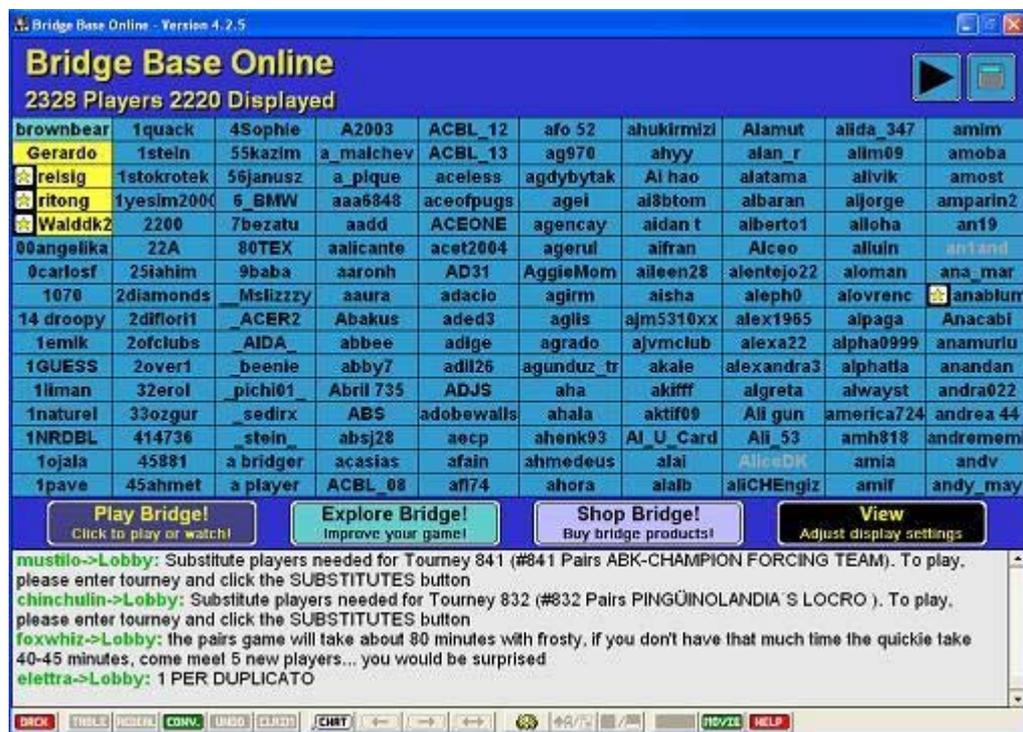
Hands are added to the hand pool all of the time and are left for a reasonable time but not too long. If you are the first to play a given hand, your score will initially be zero for that hand.

However, as any table plays a hand you have played in the current session, the hand is instantly MatchPointed or Imped and your running score updated. That is why your session score is regularly being updated.

When you are playing and you lose and gain a player, it is common practice for the Table Owner to reset the running total to zero.

The Lobby

The Lobby is the main BridgeBase Screen. When you log on you are taken to the Lobby and everything happens from there. The screen shot below was taken at 9:30AM on a Friday.



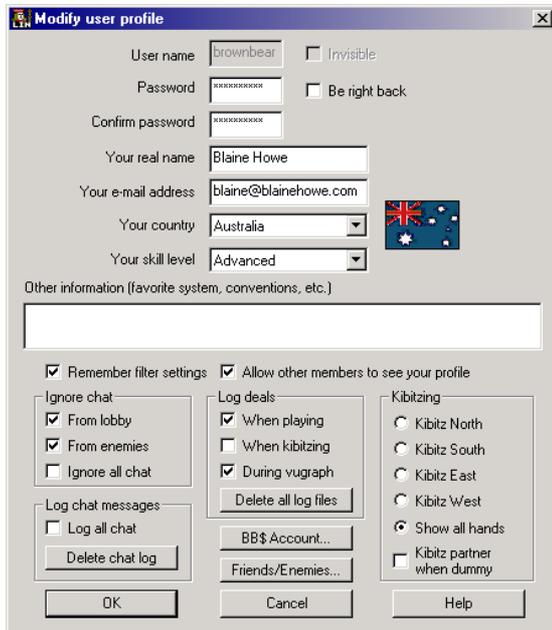
Key features are:

1. Players List. Shows all current users. The Arrow top-right scrolls pages of players.
2. Chat Log. Basically always there. Shows who is talking. In the Lobby you see all public chat but at a table only the stuff that relates to you is shown.
3. Toolbar. There is always a toolbar on the bottom of the screen which allows you to perform common actions. The Help Button is useful for new players. The Chat Button is used all the time to talk to people. The Back Button is very important – it sends you back to the previous screen you were on – this is how you leave a table or a function without quitting BridgeBase. The gear wheel is for your playing options.
4. Play Bridge Button. Provides access to the Main Bridge Club and online tournaments etc.
5. Explore Bridge Button. Provides access to Partnership Bidding, Chat Rooms, Bridge Base Standard, Learn to Play Bridge etc. These are interactive features other than normal online bridge tables.
6. View Button allows you to make minor adjustments to what you see in the Lobby List and how the display is realised. Try it out by changing the options.

There are now a lot of places where there are context-sensitive menus like in a lot of other windows applications. Try the right mouse-click to see where you can get shortcut menus.

User Profile

Your User Profile is accessed by double-clicking your name in the lobby (top left-hand corner). It is an important element of BridgeBase Online because it allows you to configure ways you interact with the system and how you are presented to others. A sample dialog is:



Firstly you can set details that are visible to your partners and teammates such as your name and country. Don't hide info about yourself unless you have a reason. At a minimum, your name and country should normally be visible and you should let other members see your profile.

Your skill level is not as good as you think it is. If you really think you are advanced or better, ask your peers. They may even tell you the truth...

Other information is where you can shorthand your favourite system components and make it quicker to agree methods with strangers.

For the other options you should consider:

1. Ignore Chat From Lobby

This can drive you crazy, but it's your choice.

Enemy chat should be OK. You don't have any do you?

2. Friends/Enemies Button

You can add/remove players from these lists.

Having listed friends is good because you can find each other easily.

3. Log Deals

This can be useful if you want to review hands you have played. Using the log files is not difficult once you can find them.

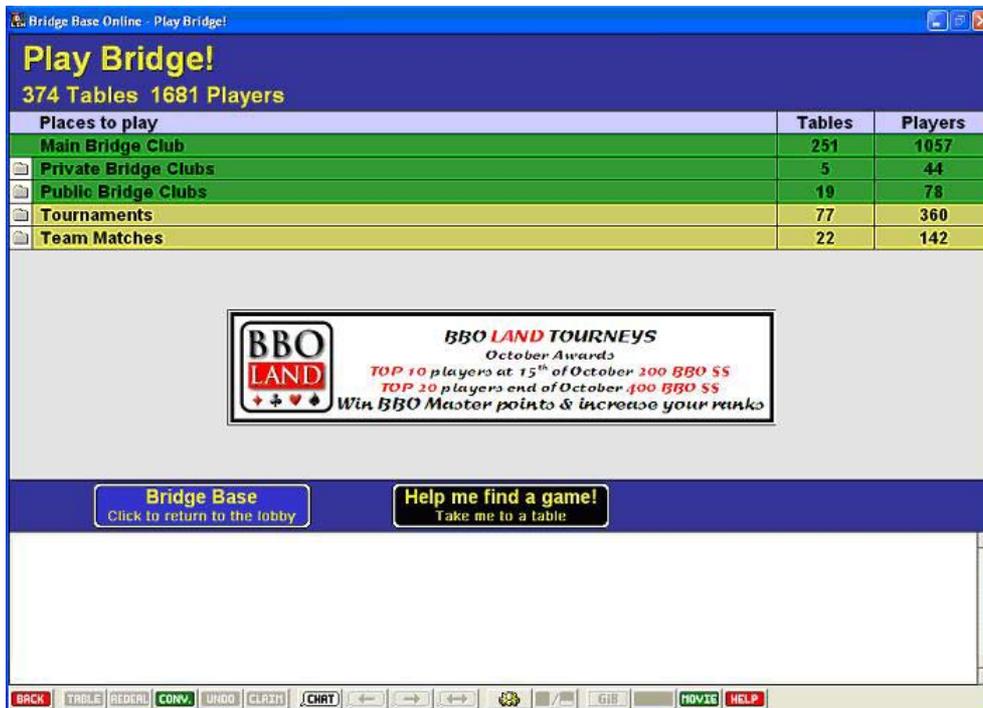
4. Kibitz Partner When Dummy

Some like it, some don't. I prefer to relax...

Start a New Table

A lot of the time you play, you or your partner/team-mate will have to start a new table that you will play at. After you log on to BridgeBase you are placed in the Lobby.

From here you get to the action by clicking the **Play Bridge** button. This is a big button in the toolbar above the Chat Log. This will present you with the Play Bridge screen which is where you start to get to any online game being currently played, or to create a new one of your own.



The real action is in the Main Bridge Club. If you want to you can click this option and then browse the available tables to find a game to play in or to watch. This method of finding tables is fine once you know your way around BridgeBase.

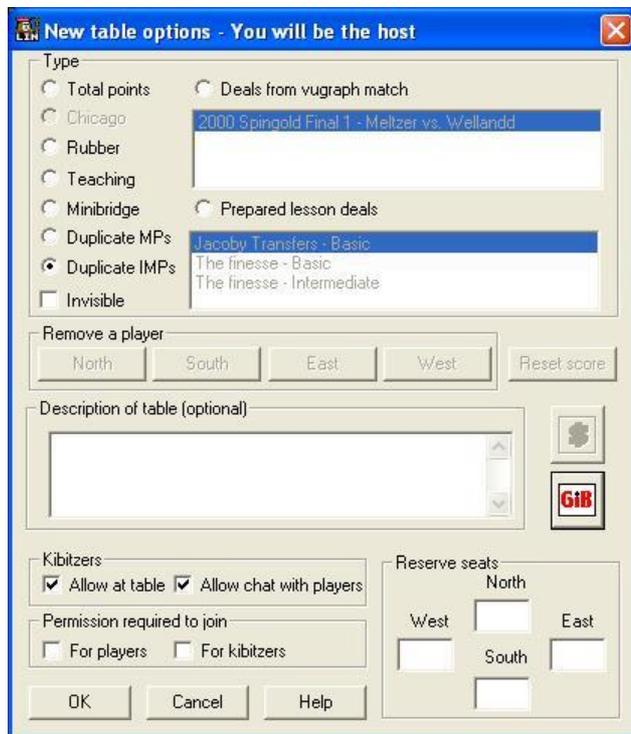
Otherwise start a new table of your own by clicking the button:

Start New Table

After this you will be presented with the dialog where you start a new table. Finally you have to do something...

Serving a Table

This is what you have to do if you want to create a new table in the Main Bridge Club. After starting a Serve, you will get the New Table Options screen.



When this appears, you set the options as follows:

1. Click an option button for the scoring type you want to use. Duplicate MPs and Duplicate Imps are the options most commonly selected. Preset deal options also available.
2. Invisible Checkbox. This makes the table invisible to other BridgeBase users except those who have seats reserved. May use this during training.
3. Kibitzers. You can specify whether you want to allow online kibitzers and whether they are allowed to chat to the players.
4. Permission Required To Join. You can specify whether players and/or kibitzers must ask permission before they join the table.
5. Description of the table. Allows the world to read what the table is about. This is optional.
6. Reserve Seats. Always fill this in if you are reserving for specific players. This means you should know each others usernames when preparing a set game on BridgeBase for a four.
7. Use the GIB Button to set up to 3 seats at the table as GIB Robots instead of real players. See the **Robots** section later in the document for details.

At any time during play, the Table Owner can press the Table Button in the toolbar to bring up this screen to reset any option. This is most commonly done to Reset Scores when a new player arrives at an existing table. Rarely, the Table Owner may remove a player from the table.

Logging on The Internet Room

These are the instructions for logging on the computers in the internet room. If you don't have one of these, find someone who has some technical skill who can help you set one up.

All you need is a cheap router, a few network cables and some donated old PCs that will do nothing other than play bridge. People upgrade computers regularly and chuck perfectly good machines that can play bridge. Below is how we log on the machines in our internet room.

1. Turn on the 4 computers. The main ones have a compass point and the BridgeBase logons for them will be presumed to be:

North	VBA1N	Password:	vba1n
East	VBA1E	Password:	vba1e
South	VBA1S	Password:	vba1s
West	VBA1W	Password:	vba1w

As players may log on with their real logons when using the facility, you may need to type the Username/Password rather than using the last saved values.

2. Log On the North computer only to BridgeBase.
3. Buttons to Serve the Table:
 - Play Bridge
 - Main Bridge Club
 - Start New Table
4. Configure the table as per the *Serving a Table* section above. The important things you have to do are:
 - Permission Required to Join True
 - This stops random players jumping onto the training table.
 - Reserve Seats
 - Put the usernames for the 4 computers into the correct seats.
 Click OK when finished. You should be in the correct seat – check before continuing.
5. Logon the other 3 computers on to BridgeBase. As each is logged on, you will get a message saying a seat is reserved for you. Click Yes and you will be taken to the Virtual Training Table.

When all of the computers are logged on to the virtual table, start play...

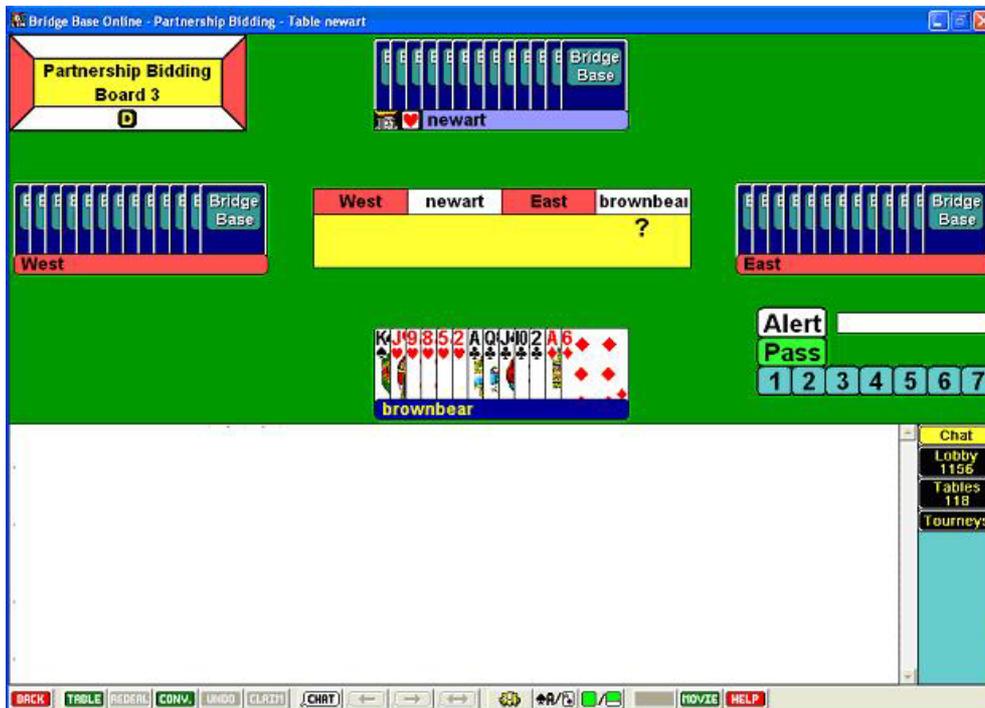
There is also a Logon called VBA1X with a Password of vba1x. This user was created to be able to use the fifth computer in the Internet Room. This computer is there for 3 reasons:

1. Warm spare in case one of the main 4 computers breaks down.
2. Allows an extra student to practice being an online Kibitzer.
3. Allows a trainer to Logon as a Host when running a session for playing or for Partnership Bidding.

Bidding

Bidding and play are fairly straightforward once you have seen it happen. If you have sound available on your computer, you will hear a beep when it is your turn to play or bid. Use the mouse to perform most bidding and play actions.

When it is your turn to bid you will be presented with the bidding tools as below with the bidding summary displayed on screen.



This screen shot is the bidding display for you as Dealer. No bids have been made yet and all levels and strains are available.

Note the Context Box in the top left hand corner of the screen. It displays a game/application title where appropriate, a Board Number, specifies the Dealer and shows who is Vulnerable by providing a colour highlight where appropriate. For this screen: E/W are Vulnerable and South is the Dealer.

As you are normally the bottom of the screen, the screen compass can change depending on which seat you are in. However, your position can be changed if you want by setting the appropriate option.

The Alert Button and Alert Box allow you to specify that you making a conventional bid and what the meaning is – fill these in before making the bid. Note in online bridge that you alert your own bids. Also note that alerts are displayed to the opponents only – your partner does not know that you have alerted.

When you make a bid you specify the level and then the strain. You cannot make an insufficient bid online – if the bid is not possible, is not available for selection.

If you make a mistake when bidding, such as clicking Hearts instead of Spades, you can ask for an undo by clicking the Undo Button – do this as quickly as possible when you realise your mistake. Your opponents are asked whether they accept an Undo – they can accept or refuse.

Playing

Playing the hand is just a matter of double-clicking a card when it is your turn to play.

You know it is your turn to play when the application beeps. Also, the player whose turn it is to play has the title bar of his hand (which displays his/her username) highlighted. Check this when are unsure whose lead it is.



During the course of a trick that has started, you can tell whose turn it is because the played cards are displayed in the middle of the screen. The screen above is a double dummy display for a teaching hand. The first trick has been completed and North is on lead.

If you make a mistake when playing, selecting the wrong card, you can ask for an undo by clicking the Undo Button – do this as quickly as possible when you realise your mistake. Your opponents are asked whether they accept an Undo – they can accept or refuse.

During the play, the number of tricks for each side is displayed on screen. The total is updated after each trick is completed. Also, the contract is always displayed.

If you move the mouse over the contract or the played cards display, a window of the last completed trick will appear on screen. Kibitzers can review the play to any trick by pointing at the appropriate turned over card. This capability is not always available.

Finally, when the hand is completed, you will see the Bridge Movie Pop-Up. The shows you the complete hand, your result as if you had filled in a travelling scoresheet and the other results for the hand. You can do a few things with the form – try them out when you are playing a practice hand in the Internet Room.

Chatting

Chatting is an integral part of the online game. The Chat Log is always visible during play so you can communicate with the table 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.

At any time you can click on the name of a person in the Chat Log to open a Chat Window to enter what you want to say to him/her.

There is a drop down list available during play which will allow you to select the message recipient as Kibitzers, The Table or The Opponents.

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.

When leaving a table it is good manners to tell the opponents and partner you are leaving. You should try to inform the table before you start the last hand you intend to play.

Finally, writing in all capitals is considered to be shouting.

Playing Options

When you click the Options Button on the toolbar you will be presented with the Playing Options Window. This will allow you to configure the playing arena to suit your preferences.



The main options available are:

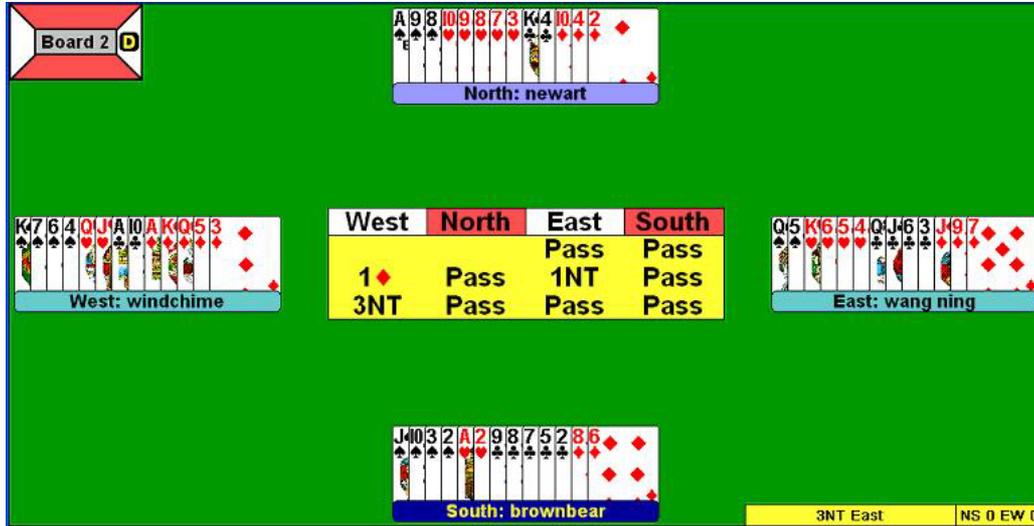
- **Pictures of Cards**
Picture or text display toggle – see next section for details.
- **Confirm End of Trick**
Turn the confirmation window on or off. Try it.
- **Show Played Cards**
When logically available, allows you to see all of the cards which were originally dealt. Played cards are dimmed.
- **Font**
You can select from the available fonts.
- **Language**
Change the language used to display text.
- **Player at Bottom**
Change the compass orientation of the players.
- **Colour**
There are lots of colours that you can set. These are available in a group of settable items. You can reset any colour or restore the defaults if things get out of hand...
- **Keyboard Entry for Bidding/Play**
A biggie for those that like the fast lane. You must try this if you play regularly.

Not all of the options are available in all game types and some change slightly in their implementation.

Cards/Text Toggle

A very important option is the ability to choose how the cards themselves are displayed.

Firstly you can choose to have the hands displayed as pictures of playing cards. This display will look like:



Secondly you can choose the cards to be displayed as large text characters within hand windows. This display will look like:



To toggle the card display you can click the appropriate checkbox in the Player Options Window or click the Display Toggle Button on the toolbar.

Also, there is a Toggle Button on the toolbar for the Deal Size. When in playing mode, this makes the Chat Log larger or smaller, thus leaving more or less screen room for the display of the hand.

The text display tends to be better if your eyesight is not 100%, if you have sit a fair distance from the monitor you are using or if it is a sunny day and the screen points to a window.

Bridge Movie Pop-Up

This screen shows the results of the hand that has just been played. It usually pops up after each hand is completed.

A very important feature you need to know about is how to get rid of it! Even if you are interested in looking at the result details, you want to be able to get back to the game quickly. You do this by pressing the [Esc] key. This is in the top left-hand corner of your keyboard and is used by most windows programs as the way to get pop-up forms to go away without doing anything else.

The screenshot shows the Bridge Movie software interface. On the left is a table of results for a session. The current hand, table 12, is highlighted in yellow. The table shows a score of 600 for NS and -2.2 for EW. On the right, there are four player cards: newart (♠A85, ♥K1093, ♦KJ432, ♣4), ergenekon (♠1043, ♥J854, ♦Q987, ♣106), troubrdr (♠K96, ♥Q76, ♦A65, ♣J932), and brownbear (♠QJ72, ♥A2, ♦10, ♣AKQ875). Below the cards is a summary of the hand: Pass, Pass, 1♣, 1♠, Pass, 3♦, Pass, 3NT, Pass, Pass, Pass. At the bottom right, it shows NS: 0 and EW: 0. A menu bar at the bottom includes Send, Clear, Open, Save, Next, Prev, and Help.

Table	Results	By	NS Score	EW Score	NS IMPs	EW IMPs
9	4♠=	E		620	-4.9	4.9
10	1♠+1	N	110		4.1	-4.1
11	3♦-1	N		50	-2.6	2.6
12	3NT=	S	600		2.2	-2.2
Duplicate Results	By	NS Score	EW Score	NS IMPs	EW IMPs	
1	3NT+2	S	660		3.9	-3.9
2	3NT+2	N	660		3.9	-3.9
3	3NT+2	S	660		3.9	-3.9
4	3NT+2	N	660		3.9	-3.9
5	3NT+1	S	630		3.0	-3.0
6	3NT+1	N	630		3.0	-3.0
7	3NT+1	N	630		3.0	-3.0
8	3NT=	S	600		2.2	-2.2
9	3NT=	S	600		2.2	-2.2
10	3NT=	S	600		2.2	-2.2
11	3NT=	S	600		2.2	-2.2
12	6♠-1	S		100	-9.8	9.8
13	3NT-2	N		200	-11.0	11.0
14	6NT-3	N		300	-12.5	12.5

You see all of the scores that have been posted for the hand and the Matchpoints or Imps you have scored based on the current scoring method.

Your score line will be highlighted. You can save the current hand to disk for printing or viewing later. If a printer is not available, you will need to use a memory stick or floppy disk to save the output to so you can take it away.

Basically you get to see equivalent of a travelling scoresheet after each hand.

In some circumstances you can see previous hands in a session by using movie scroll arrow – top left. This allows you to go back to a previous hand for the session to check the scores or details of a particular result.

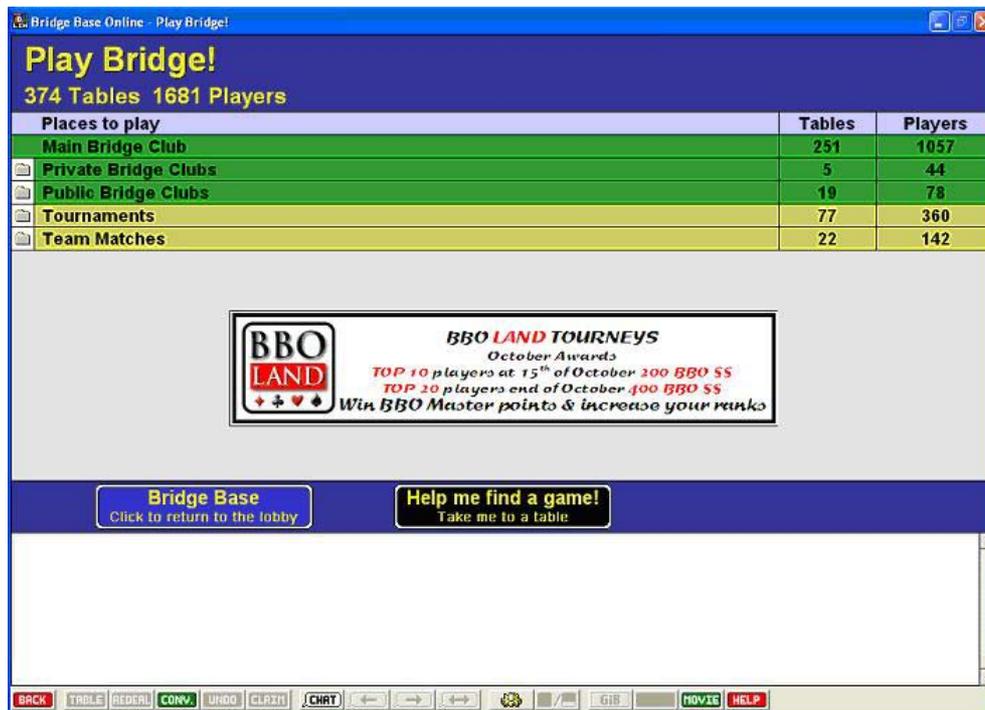
Also, if you click in the right-hand pane of the Bridge Movie screen, you can get the software to play out the whole hand a trick at a time so you can see what another table did to get a result you are interested in.

This screen will no doubt be enhanced from time to time, so you need to explore a bit if you are interested in all of its features.

Find A Game

This is an important feature in BridgeBase for players who just want to quickly log on solo and play for a while or just watch a little bridge. In fact, using the feature described here to kibitz a game in progress is a terrific way to get to know how online bridge is played.

After you log on to BridgeBase you are placed in the Lobby. From here you get to the action by clicking the **Play Bridge** button. This is a big button in the toolbar above the Chat Log. This will present you with the Play Bridge screen which is where you start to get to any online game being currently played.



There are tournaments you can look at and also ad-hoc teams matches. These will not be addressed here. If you are interested when you get to know how the software works, the Teams Matches area can be used by anyone to set up a two table online teams match. The VBA will be doing some of this in 2006. Stay tuned.

The Private Bridge Clubs and Public Bridge Clubs are features that are on hold at present. However, hopefully we be able to create our own online club in the not too distant future to provide a controlled training environment for Victorian Bridge Players.

Otherwise, all of the action is in the Main Bridge Club. If you want to you can click this option and then browse the available tables to find a game to play in or to watch. This method of finding tables is fine once you know your way around BridgeBase.

Otherwise use the **Help me find a game!** Button to go to a table to play or Kibitz.

When you press the *Help me find a game!* Button you will be presented with the following screen:



Using this screen you can either play a game or watch a game. All you do is to press the *Play* or *Kibitz* button to be taken to a table without any further input required.

There are options you change on the screen if you like, but you can ignore them.

The Kibitz button will take you to a table where you can watch a game and get used to the mechanics of online bridge. This a terrific way to get a feel for the BridgeBase environment for virtually no effort.

When you are a Kibitzer you can come and go as you please. There is no need to speak to the players or other Kibitzers and when you want to leave – just leave.

The Play button will take you to a table where you can start playing immediately. You don't have to bother to go searching through the tables of the Main Bridge Club looking for a game. You will be placed in a seat where you can start playing.

You may be placed at a table where you are currently dummy and you will have to wait until the current hand is played out before you have to do anything. Otherwise the bidding will likely start very soon after you arrive.

Don't be afraid to chat to your opponents and saying hello when you get there is a good idea. Simply typing *hi opps* when you arrive at a table is fine. Using the kind of shorthand used in telephone SMS Messaging is accepted practice online.

If you do not discuss system with the opponents, you will be expected to play Standard of some sort. See the System section below to get details on how you find out what the default systems are and how you get details of them.

Especially note that once you get to the lobby, it only requires 3 mouse clicks to either Kibitz or Play!!

System

When you play online bridge you need to agree a system quickly when you are going to play with a new partner.

When you are experienced you can play variants of any major system and even store your preferences in your profile.

However, there needs to be a common system that you expect to play unless you make other arrangements. This is Standard. Even if you do not play Standard at present you must learn a basic version of it if you wish to play online with strangers as your partners – there is no escaping this basic issue.

The primary system that is played online is a variant of Standard called:
Standard American Yellow Card

This is commonly referred to as SAYC.

There is both a basic and an advanced version of this. Your best shot is to get hold of a copy of the basic version and read it. It is a good idea to have a printed copy of this available for when you play at home. You can purchase a copy from the VBA or there are many places online where you can view and download a copy.

Amongst these are OK Bridge which has a good online system library if you are a paid-up member but the best source for such things is the American Contract Bridge League Website:

www.acbl.org

To get a copy yourself, go to the site and type sayc into the ACBL Site Search box near the top of the home page and hit the Enter key. When you get a list of search hits, look for the one that says:

ACBL Standard Yellow Card System Booklet

You can view or print the PDF document. If you are savvy with printing, you can use the double-sided format of the file to print and put together the document as a small booklet. Keep this for reference.

On BridgeBase Online, you can find their version of SAYC by doing the following:

Go to the Lobby

Click **Explore Bridge**

Shows the Explore Bridge Screen

Click Bridge Base Standard

Presents an Online Document

Click Bridge Base Standard System Notes

Presents Table of Contents

You can then browse the online document to view the Basic or Advanced BBO System. You cannot download the whole thing but you can print any page you are on.

If nothing else, print the Bridge Base – Basic – Summary page as a ready reference.

Robots

This is an important new feature of BridgeBase Online and allows you to play either on your own or with others but to use instances of the bridge playing computer program GIB instead of other players.

This was a free service during a trial period, but there is a charge for the service which started October 1st 2005. The charge is \$3 per month for the table Host.

This means that a regular group of players can nominate a regular Host who must purchase GIB for the group. Personally, I am happy to just call the \$3 a month a charge I am happy to pay to help support such a terrific service whose core activities are free.

When you start a table, click the GIB button during set-up. This lets you set up to 3 seats as GIB Players instead of people. You are not allowed to set up all 4 seats as GIB players – this would be fairly pointless and a waste of BBO Resources.

The first way you would want to use this is for partnership practice. When you start a table, specify that you and your partner occupy North and South, say. Then specify that GIB occupies the East/West chairs.

Now you and your partner can play at your own pace and even take breaks without inconveniencing your opponents – computers don't get impatient...

The other main way you would use the service is for solitaire. Place yourself in one seat and GIB Players in the other three. Doing this is the equivalent of logging on to Jack or any other bridge program and playing against the computer – this is, in fact, the default mode of operation of Jack when you start it up.

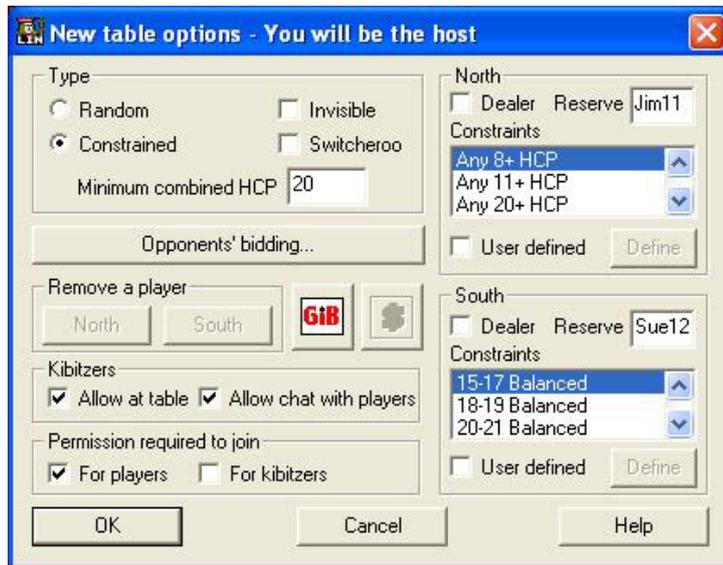
To get the feel of doing this, you can try it out on the public computer at the rear of the VBA that has Jack installed.

If the fee turns out to be reasonable, then this feature will provide a way for travelling bridge players to while away the time at Internet Cafes playing online bridge while they are waiting for...

Partnership Bidding

This is a very cool feature of BridgeBase Online and is highly recommended to any pair wanting to practice system, especially new partnerships before a major event. Most of the time you will want to log on yourselves as a pair and do some practice.

First click the Explore Bridge button from the Lobby and select the Partnership Bidding item from the list. The following set-up screen will be presented:



The Kibitzers and Permission options are similar to those available when you are playing a normal online game. Also, it will be normal for the Host to specify who is playing North and South.

There are two likely scenarios you would set up for Partnership Bidding and they are described in detail below. Note that the use of GIB Robots may well be an option for a session you want to run – if so the player who creates the table and wants to use GIB must have purchased a licence for \$3 per month. This is not much of a charge if you plan to use the feature regularly.

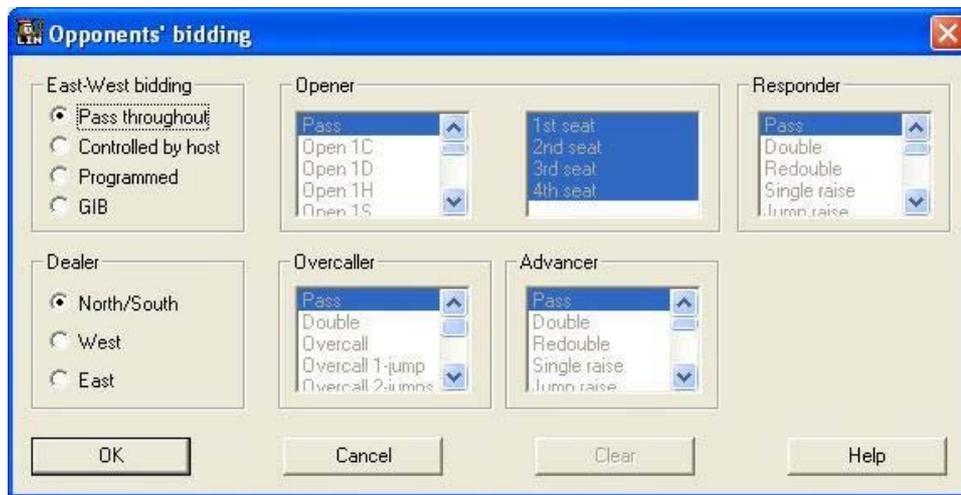
Also, it is important to specify something for the Opponents' Bidding unless you are bidding pairs of very strong hands. Bidding practice ignoring the opponents reasonable actions gives you a false picture of the effectiveness of your methods.

The following are suggested for setting the session:

1. Always set some constraints after you have got used to the tool.
2. Use an independent Host to control the Opponents' Bidding or use GIB Robots to provide input.
3. Use it regularly. Failure to practice is a particular failure of bridge players when trying to develop their game. Ask people in other sports about this...

Opponents' Bidding

This is the dialog that allows you to specify the way the opponents bid. Click the Opponents' Bidding button on the Table Options screen. This will present the following:



The Dealer Option may be appropriate in certain scenarios. Otherwise, just specify whether the Opponents' Bidding is controlled by the Host or by GIB.

Other Bidding Options are available but they will only be sensible for experienced users.

Two Player Practice

Create a new table pretty much as in the dialog entries above. You will normally specify the following:

1. Select Constrained rather than Random in the Type Options.
2. Specify a Minimum Combined HCP of at least 20. This will ensure that your partnership has something to bid. Don't make the count too high unless you are explicitly practising slam bidding.
3. Select Constraints from the lists for both of you. The sample above specifies a Strong 1NT Opening opposite 8+HCP so constructive bidding can be explored.
4. Click User Defined and then click Defined to bring up the Constraint Definition dialog for either or both players if you want to specify ranges of suit lengths or values. This provides a much finer definition that just selecting from the list. You should play with the tool a little before using this.
5. Specify Dealer if your Constraint pattern warrants this.
6. Click Opponents Bidding to set the options for the unseen hands. Normally the pair should have a host player with a GIB licence to create the table so GIB opponents can be specified.

Supervised Training Session

This is using the Partnership Bidding feature as a training tool where a trainer has two pupils who will get set up for a supervised bidding practice session.

You will be able to do this in the VBA Internet Room where a trainer could start up 3 PCs in the Internet Room and use one to define the teacher who would create a Partnership Bidding table as the Host.

The trainer will normally run the set up as follows:

1. Log on to BridgeBase using his/her login on a PC from which the training session will be monitored.
2. The trainer will bring up the Table Options screen to set the basic options for the training session.
3. Most importantly, the BridgeBase Usernames of the pupils will be entered into the North/South Reserved Seats in the appropriate boxes. Always specify that Permission is required to join for players when operating in this mode.
4. Then specify the bidding constraints as mentioned above. The trainer will determine these and may or may not tell the pupils what hand ranges to expect during the session.
5. Bring up the Opponents' Bidding dialog and select the Controlled by Host Option. This means that the trainer will be responsible for executing the bidding of the opponents.

Sometime the trainer will set GIB as the opponents for the session so the trainer can concentrate on things other than the defensive bidding.

Note that the trainer will be able to provide hints and commentary where appropriate during sessions.

There is also the ability the save specific hands to file for later printing or review.

When this is a possibility, the player running the session should have access to a printer or be able to have write device pugged into one of the computers – a memory stick is the best option if hands are to be taken away.