

## U3A Bridge – A Guide to Playing On Line

In the current situation bridge players may wish to play on line but are unsure how to do it. This short guide outlines how to set up a table for four players and play on line.

There are a number of on line bridge sites, some free and some chargeable. This guide describes using the free site Bridge Base Online (BBO) – probably the largest site across the world. Users can go to the site as individuals and join a table but I would not recommend this as the experience can be difficult and at times unpleasant. You can finish up playing with partners and opponents from different countries and of widely different standards; players often get fed up and leave in the middle of a hand to be replaced by someone new.

This guide therefore describes setting up a table for four players which means that you must agree beforehand what time you are going to play and all four must logon to the site for that time. One player must agree to setup and manage the table as described below.

The example screens are for a Windows browser, screens for tablets will be different but the processes are the same.

Apps for iPad, Android and Kindle tablets are available from the appropriate app store and are the best interface for these devices

### Joining BBO

1. BBO can be accessed at <https://bridgebase.com> – the following page will display (you may on some browsers get messages asking to 'Allow Flash' – just confirm OK)



The screenshot shows the Bridge Base Online login interface. At the top, the title "Bridge Base Online" is displayed in large, bold, black letters. Below this, a red banner reads "Members please log in:". The login form contains two input fields: "User name" with the text "donp287" and "Password" with masked characters "\*\*\*\*\*". To the right of the password field is a checkbox labeled "Remember password" which is checked. Above the password field is a checkbox labeled "Log in as invisible" which is unchecked. A yellow "Log in" button is positioned to the right of the form. Below the login fields is a blue link that says "Forgot your password?". At the bottom of the page, a red banner reads "Get started right now!". Below this banner are two buttons: "Become a member (free!)" and "Look around our site".

2. Click on 'Become a Member (free)' and fill in the displayed form:

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Become a member (free!)" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the title, a note states: "The following information (other than your password and e-mail address) will be visible to other members:". The form contains several input fields and dropdown menus, each with a "Required" label in red text to its right:

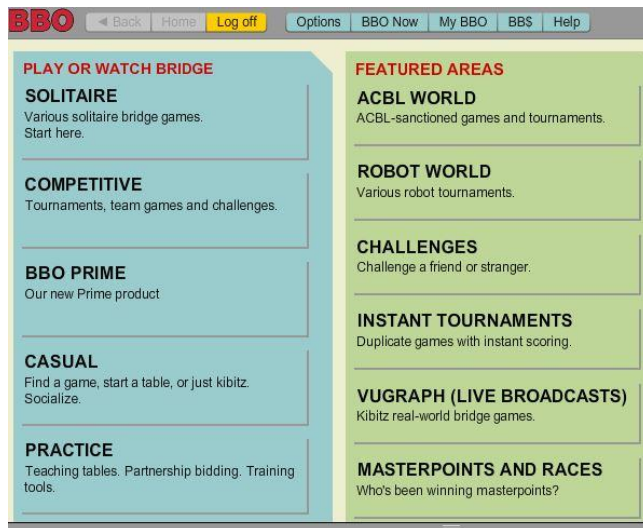
- User name: text input field
- Password: text input field
- Confirm password: text input field
- E-mail address: text input field
- Real name: text input field
- ACBL Number: text input field
- Country: dropdown menu with "Other" selected
- Skill level: dropdown menu with "Private" selected
- Other: large text area

Below the input fields, there is a checkbox labeled "I agree to the [Terms of Service](#)". At the bottom of the form, there are four buttons: "Register", "Cancel", "Help", and "Privacy policy".

3. Select a username for yourself – can be anything as long as you can remember it, enter into username box
4. Enter a password in box and again in confirm password box, take a note of this.
5. No other details required, click on agreement box and on Register
6. An email will be sent by Bridgebase to confirm your email. You must read this and click on the link provided to complete your registration
7. If an email does not arrive check your Spam folder as emails from organisations often arrive there
8. It may take a while for your username to be active so you should register some time in advance of playing.
9. At the agreed time players should use the logon screen by entering their username and password – click on 'Remember Password' and you will not have to enter these details again
10. Click on 'Log In'
11. If the player designated from your group as the Table Manager has already set up the table you will be taken directly to your seat and can start play when all players seated. If the table is not yet set up just wait and when the table is ready you will be taken to it. In this stage you are waiting in what BBO calls the Lobby.
12. The remainder of this guide is for use by the Table Manager in setting up a table

## Setting Up a Table

1. Login to BBO 5 or 10 minutes in advance of your agreed starting time, you will then see the following main BBO screen



2. Click on CASUAL



3. Click on START A TABLE



4. Click on START AN IMP PAIRS TABLE



5. Click on RESERVE SEATS AT YOUR TABLE

**Table options** X

**Reserve seats**

North fred

South joe

East edith

West helen

OK Cancel

6. Enter your player names in their positions and click OK

**TABLE OPTIONS**

**RESERVE SEATS AT YOUR TABLE**  
Save a spot for your partner/opponent by writing their names here

**PRIVACY OPTIONS FOR YOUR TABLE**  
Choose privacy options for your table here

**DESCRIPTION OF YOUR TABLE**  
Add table descriptions to make your table stand out from the crowd

**SET DEAL SOURCE FOR YOUR TABLE**  
Select from advanced dealing options

**START AN IMP PAIRS TABLE**

**START TABLE - COMPETITIVE GAME**  
Your table will be created in the Main Bridge Club. Use this if you are looking for a more serious game.

**START TABLE - RELAXED GAME**  
Your table will be created in the Relaxed Bridge Club. Use this if you are looking for a more casual atmosphere.

7. Click on START TABLE – RELAXED GAME

Back Home Log off Options BBO Now My BBO BBS Help

S Reserved: frensham42 Clear

E Reserved: Clear W Reserved: Clear

N donp287

Table 100 100 100 100 100 100 Deal source Results

Lobby  
Table  
Kibitzers  
Table

Chat Options

8. This is the main play screen. When all players are seated the first hand will be dealt and you can start to bid and play by clicking on bids and cards when it is your turn.
9. During play you can type into the 'Chat' box to talk to the rest of the table, to thank partner for their hand or congratulate them on their play – useful shorthands are wdp (well done partner), ty (thank you), brb (be right back) if you have to leave temporarily for phone call or comfort break)
10. Your score in International Match Points (IMPs) (+ or -) will appear in a window – see Appendix for explanation of IMP scoring
11. When finished just Logoff

## Problems

If someone loses a connection the Table Manager can click on the 'Table' button and reserve their seat again, when they get back in they should be taken to their seat

Please feel to contact me by phone, text or email if you would like advice.

My wife Margaret and myself would be happy to set up a table and play with any pair wishing to practice

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pto for Appendix on IMP scoring

## Appendix – IMP Scoring

International Match Points are the most widely used method for scoring large events. When you are playing an IMPs game your score is being compared against the average of 20 or 30 other pairs also playing the same hand on-line. The difference between your score and the 'par' average score is converted to IMPs according to a scale. A few examples will suffice to show how this works.

1. You play in 2H and make +1 for +140 – par is +110 – you gain 1IMP
2. Same contract but you go -1 for -50 – difference is now -160 – you lose 4IMPs
3. You play and make 4S for +620, par is +170 so score +450 against par – +10IMPs
4. Same contract but you go -1 for -100 so score -270 against par so -7IMPs
5. You sacrifice in 4S over opponents making 4H are doubled and lose 500, if they are vul you gain 120 for 3IMPs but if they are not vul you lose 80 for -2IMPs

As you can see the scoring rewards making your contract as against making overtricks.

The running score you see will constantly change as more on-line players play hands you have already played so changing the par.