

What You Need To Know About BBO...

This was written originally more specifically for the NVBA Collective, but most of this applies to Livingston Johnson's and Kevin O'Brien's games as well, BUT, for questions on their games, you should contact them. Howard Stevens and Gene Schuyler also have their OWN director accounts. Their account names are NVBACSDBC7 and NVBACSDBC6, respectively; make them your BBO friends too.

We do not expect to see in-person play in any area of the USA until sometime in late 2021, at the earliest! IF you want to play bridge, ONLINE is the place! Bridge Base Online (BBO) offers master points through ACBL (All the kinds you need for your Life Master and beyond: Black ones, Gold ones, Red ones and Silver ones); possibly even Platinum points too!

1. Schedule – We have the same basic [schedule](#) as we have had since May; it is on the NVBA.ORG web site. Our approximate schedule is:
 - Open games twice a day, four mornings and two afternoons a week, and three evenings a week.
 - 0-20 games five times a week, 3 mornings, 1 afternoon and 1 evening.,
 - 199er games four times a week, Monday afternoon, Tuesday and Thursday night and Friday afternoon.
 - 499er games every day and twice on Wednesday.
 - 999er game on Thursday morning.
 - 0-2500 game on Thursday evening.
2. We are allowed to have a small percentage of guests as players in our club games. To have a guest play with you, you must tell the Director ahead of time. The day before is best, but preferably BEFORE the signup window is open. The director account for the NVBA Collective is VACB139840, so you can add that account as a Friend on BBO, and if you see them online on BBO the day before or the day you plan to play, send them a message with the BBO name of the partner you want to play with, and have them added. OR you can email Jim Gerding or Marty Bley; give them the BBO user name of your guest and WHEN you wish to partner with them. ONCE the person plays with you in an NVBA Collective game, there is no need to keep adding them. Once IN they are IN! TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, register EARLY so that in case there is a problem, you can MESSAGE the director, and we have time to FIX it.
3. Signing up for a game. The limited-game-crowd usually signs up at least 20 minutes before game time. There are a few who sign up 10 minutes prior, but for the most part we know how many pairs we have and what size game it will be 5 minutes from the start. Thanks for doing that. On the other hand in the OPEN game, rarely is anyone signed up an hour before game time. 30 minutes out you can see a group. With 10 minutes to go, you have a few more who join up, even 5 minutes we get some more (all the clocks in their houses have the same time. We cannot hold up the start time of a game. Once the game is going, we can't add another pair. So, if you want to play, then log into BBO, register for the game 10 OR MORE minutes before, earlier is better, and then wait for the game to start accordingly.
4. YOUR name in your PROFILE! I come across people who have PRIVATE written there, or it is empty. And while that is your right to do, it is slightly rude. If we are all playing in our friendly Club game that WAS face-to-face, we would have acknowledged one another. It has been requested by ALL Virtual club directors in our area that you put your real name there....it doesn't have to be your WHOLE real name. Example; I wouldn't put Martha DeVries Bley. I have Marty Bley....but I could just have Marty too. Something, no matter how small, is better than nothing at all. IF you choose to leave it blank, please introduce yourself when you arrive at the table or new opponents arrive to your table.
5. Robots will only be used as SUBS in "limited" games (games that are Open only to players within a certain master point range) as it is hard to find human subs who meet the limited game criteria – but we try. Robots do not win master points; BBO/ACBL makes this happen.
6. Convention cards (CC) - It is necessary for you and your partner to have a card filled out and uploaded or maintained in BBO. Once you fill one out and you put your partner's BBO user name in the partner slot, it will

FOLLOW you and your partner EVERYWHERE you go. If you do NOT have a convention card filled out for the person you are playing with for a game, the Default card will be the Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC). You will be expected to USE that system if that is the card that is loaded. When you played in-person bridge prior to the March Shutdown, you had a card with you for every partner you played with. THIS is not different; it is required and expected and as we find partnerships with no card, we will request that you fill one out. Repeated abuses of this will be dealt with accordingly. We do not look to see a CC for people unless we have been informed that they don't have one previously. IF YOU NEED help filling one out, ASK!!

7. When you first 'arrive' at a table, it is nice to give a brief overview of your playing style. As in "Hi Opps! 2/1, standard carding" or whatever is pertinent for you and your partner. Likewise N/S could say, "Hi, Opps, Welcome, Precision, o/e discards". There is a way to save these in the "Chat Manager" so that you don't have to type them over and over. Want to know how???? LEFT click in the chat box area, a box comes up, the bottom option is Chat Manager. Choose it. Another box comes up, type your messages, save them. To use them click on the message you want and send it to the table, or privately, your choice. You don't have to type the same thing over and over; you just have to click over and over. Try it, you will LIKE it!
8. Psyching! If an opponent psyches at your table in one of our virtual games, please call the director as SOON as you realize it happened. Excessive psyching and psyching by experienced players against beginners are considered unsportsmanlike and will be treated as disciplinary offenses. If you don't know what I am talking about, educate yourself by googling Psych bids in bridge and read!
9. Cheating! I sure hope no one is talking or texting with their partner on the phone while they are playing in the virtual club. Can we tell? Well, yes...you see when you talk to one another about certain things you might do better than the other people, and when it is suspected that you are doing that, the algorithm is applied and a record is kept. A warning is issued; if it isn't heeded, then the authorities are notified and evidence is gathered and you are notified and the consequences are dealt out. Right now there are 3 ACBL members on suspension from our Unit 218, two of them for cheating. If they violate the terms by playing bridge online, the consequences will be severe. If for the two-year probation period following the suspension they are caught repeating the behavior, their membership in ACBL will be terminated.
10. Lessons on Thursday! If you aren't aware, Jeff Roman, a professional bridge player who lived in our District for many years, is back and doing the lessons on Thursday night before the Unit Game via Zoom! If you don't know who he is, take my word for it, HE is MOST excellent. When Ross and I were playing in the 199er game, he did the lessons every week, until he moved to Oregon. There is a link sent out in the weekly NVBA emails with the time and topic etc. Jeff likes questions, so if you have a question about something, he is your man! After the various sections of the Unit Game are finished, come to the ZOOM meeting armed with questions, and Jeff will answer them! There is also a POST game analysis by Jeff and others of the hands played that night, which is very informative. Joe Hertz sends the links to David Lindley and Howard Stevens. David and Howard put them in the weekly emails to you. The directors tell you about the POST game review during the last round of the Thursday night game. They include the ZOOM link in that message. Come try it out! It is fun!
11. Tournaments! ACBL is running regionals online to allow ACBL members the opportunity to win red and gold points. There will be more as the year goes on – read the weekly NVBA e-mails for updates.
12. Alerting. Some people still do not SELF alert their bids. If you bid 1NT, announce your range – do not WAIT for the opponents (Opps) to ask. Opps shouldn't have to ask. If you are bidding 2D over 1NT to transfer your partner to hearts, you CLICK on the ALERT button, making sure it turns RED, type TRANSFER or XFR and Hearts or Hs on the line and then click on 2D. It is best to announce and alert too much rather than not enough, thereby informing opponents the meaning of your bids, than to not announce/alert and slow down the game by making opponents ASK you what your bid meant. If you happen to click on the bid before alerting, you should then immediately go to "CHAT" and click on "OPPONENTS" and send just the Opponents the meaning of your bid – transfer, Drury, weak jump shift....whatever it was.

13. UNDO'S are NOT permitted. In club and tournament play, the ACBL and BBO as the hosts of the game have decided that there are NO undo's. A card played is played and a bid made is made, there is no fixing it or correcting it. If you have played since March, I am sure it has happened to you at least once. If it hasn't yet, be patient it will happen. Calling the director isn't going to change anything; the director has NO control over this situation. My suggestion is that you LOOK carefully when you are about to bid to make sure you PUSH the right 'buttons' and the same for playing a card. MAKE sure you have the correct card. Another option which some people like is the "Confirm" card Played or Bid made option. You can set this up by going to the ACCOUNT Tab – Click on SETTINGS and scroll down to where it says "Confirm Bid" and "Confirm Card." If you make those two options "green," then you will have to click OKAY for the bid made and OKAY for the card played. It is a personal preference. SO TRY it if you are making a lot of bidding errors or card playing errors. It does take a few extra seconds to confirm your card or your bid, so be prepared for that. At a Casual table, the "host" has the right to grant permission for you to change your bid or your card played. MOST often, undo's are granted at a casual table.

14. Time. The virtual club games are TIMED events. The difference is that the CLOCK is on BBO time. It runs automatically. The director has a little leeway to add a few minutes to make necessary changes to the movement. If the game is to start at 10:30, by 10:30 and 1 second it is going forward, MOST Often! ONE of the things that can hold up the game is if a player is NOT online. As Directors we have the ability to see WHO is online and ready to go and who is not.

If you are playing on an iPad or Tablet and your device goes to "sleep," BBO BOOTS you out! They don't ask, they don't warn, they just DO IT! When that happens, you might THINK you are on, but you are not. At a PC, you sometimes get a message that lasts 20 seconds or so asking if you are ONLINE; if you don't say OK, and then you are booted. It is BEST to register Early! AN Hour before game time is great! Then go about your business, walk, read, do the dishes, laundry, whatever and 10 minutes before game time you should LOG into BBO again and then WAIT to be whisked to the table. If you are not online when the game starts, you will be BOOTED by the director of the game. Your partner is now out of luck. It is the only fair way to run the game so that it starts and ends on time.

15. BBO USER LIST and BBO Club Director USER LIST – Confused? So are we, not really but it seems that way. There is only one BBO user list, which is the [list of BBO IDs](#) that **NVBA created** to help you know who is playing on BBO. There is a link to this list that is sent to you in the weekly NVBA emails and also a link on NVBA.ORG – look up a player's name and find the BBO ID, or vice versa. Then, you can look them up in the NVBA Membership Directory, give them a call and ask him to play online. THE other User list is the list of people who are allowed to play in NVBA Virtual and other games. It is associated with the Club Director accounts. Everyone who played in these club games should be on it except for "FREE AGENTS" (those people who have joined ACBL or RENEWED their EXPIRED ACBL Membership in the last 4 months). If you fall in that category, you will need to be added to BOTH lists if you want people to know who you are, and if you want to play in our virtual games.

16. Partnership and Subbing – If you want to play as a SUB in BBO games that is fine! It is fun! You put your name on the sub list for games (tournaments), and you go where they send you because YOU accept the assignment. You can do it for as long as you would like to play. ON the OTHER hand, signing up at the partnership desk is a WHOLE different can of worms. You should NOT try to do both of them at the same time. IF you put your name in the partnership desk for a virtual game, you should NOT do anything else except wait for a partner to show up and ask you to play.

17. Getting Rid of the Explain box....so sometimes when you DO NOT ALERT properly, the opponents ask for an explanation, and you have to type a response to them and hit ok. THEN it won't go away, no matter how many times you hit the box in the white part, it just pops from side to side until you want to SCREAM!!!! Ever have that happen? Me too....so the BEST thing to do to get rid of it is type to the table, "The EXPLAIN box won't go away. I am logging off and then back on" and then do that QUICKLY. This seems to take care of it. You do realize you wouldn't have that problem if you alerted properly.

18. We have begun to run Swiss Team games online. Check out the **online game schedule** for details, and consult https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/clubs/swiss_player.pdf for instructions on how to take part. The NVBA Collective has decided to hold no more than one team game per week, so there will still be plenty of opportunities for those who prefer playing pairs. Other directors will make their own scheduling decisions. We will do our best to keep the online schedule up to date, but if you have questions you can always contact the game directors, who are listed in the online schedule. Some people are enjoying having the chance to play team games again, but others have not been so happy. The way Swiss Team games run on BBO has some shortcomings: the real-time scoring system is not as informative as it might be, and clicking on a game you have played in does not bring up a full account of the results; there is no pause between matches that would allow team members to discuss their results and strategize for the remaining matches; the masterpoint awards are not what they would be in a face-to-face game. The Thursday night will not feature any team games for the time being. ACBL and BBO are working to remedy these issues.

Special Club and Unit Game Notice

At this time, the face-to-face Unit game is only held every other Thursday. There are also 15 face-to-face club games as regularly updated on the NVBA website (https://www.nvba.org/php/Club_List.php?unit=NVBA). In the meantime, you can also join us online at BridgeBase to play in a local game.

Special E-Mail and Home Address Information

As a member of the Northern Virginia Bridge Association (NVBA), you are receiving our quarterly newsletter. We have modernized our distribution methods and now use e-mail to distribute the newsletter and weekly updates to many of our members. If you are receiving the newsletter and other notices from NVBA via e-mail, you are already on our e-mail list.

If you do not receive these messages or merely wish to confirm this information, we would appreciate you updating your e-mail information with the ACBL. To do so:

- 1) Log onto the ACBL website, www.acbl.org
- 2) Click on '♠ My ACBL Login' (at the top of the ACBL Home page)
- 3) Log into the system with your ACBL Number and password – press 'Log In'. If this is your first time on the ACBL site, click on 'Register for MyACBL' and follow the instructions on that page to register.
- 4) To change your email or mailing address, click on 'Update My Information' (on the top of the screen), click on 'Update My Contact Information', enter/change your mailing and/or email address and click 'Submit'. You can also update your mailing address.
- 5) Then, click Privacy Settings on the left side of the page and after 'Confidentiality' change the entry to 'Share' and click 'Update'.

We obtain your e-mail address, mailing address and telephone changes directly from the ACBL. As a matter of policy, we will not release any of your information to anyone and we will only use it to provide you with the newsletter and important information about Unit activities and events. Please note that we do publish your home address information in the Annual Membership Directory. If you do not wish to have this information included in the directory, please inform us, via e-mail to our Membership Secretary at ny2va@yahoo.com

Thank you!