**RUNNING A BRIDGE TOURNAMENT ONLINE**

We have had a number of enquiries about running bridge events online, given the current concerns about the coronavirus. The most widely used online bridge platform is [Bridge Base Online](https://www.bridgebase.com/) (“BBO”), and it is indeed possible to run a tournament on it. The tournament organiser needs to be a registered member on BBO, and will have to apply in advance to BBO for authorisation to create tournaments. This will activate an instruction button to allow them to “CREATE TOURNAMENTS”.

There is an extensive set of instructions for aspiring tournament organisers on the BBO website - <https://doc.bridgebase.com/Help/Guide_for_BBO_TDs.pdf>. You can play Pairs or Individual events, but not Teams, and you can play as many boards as you want, set your own movement, and allow kibitzing or not as you wish. Anyone intending to play in your tournament must be registered on BBO (it is free to do so) and the recommendation is to build a list of players who can register for your tournaments, to make sure outsiders cannot sign on to your competitions. You will need to know the BBO registration name of anyone who wants to be included (you do not have to use your real name to play on BBO). You can use prepared deals that you load onto BBO, or random ones, and you can allow players to see their running scores during the event, or not. There is an “Undo” function in BBO (to allow players to correct errors they make); you can choose to have this function active or not for your tournaments.

There is quite a bit of work involved in running a tournament, and you also need to act as Tournament Director. So the site strongly advises you to have a dummy run with a small number of participants first, to get familiar with the system, and allow you to troubleshoot any problems that may arise. We are hoping to recruit some BBO experts who will make themselves available to offer their help for those new to running tournaments on the platform; we would recommend that you are familiar with BBO as a player before you even attempt to run a tournament on it. The online tournaments cannot cope well with sitouts, so you need to know for certain in advance how many participants you will have and/or have some substitutes on standby.

BBO is essentially free to use (you can purchase robots as partners or opponents in some situations), but there are also a number of platforms that charge fees to join and/or play. One reasonably popular one is Funbridge, which also offers the possibility of hosting tournaments. We are currently exploring this option with Funbridge, and will report back in due course.

Finally, it seems to us that the online tournament facility is most suitable for essentially social bridge, with no entry fees and no serious prizes, given that (a) there is no facility to request table money, and (b) directing and policing the event is clearly very difficult.

We would welcome any feedback from members who have run tournaments on BBO or elsewhere.

**Contract Bridge Association of Ireland March 2020**

**ENTERING AN ONLINE TOURNAMENT**

In order to participate in an online tournament being organised on BBO, you will need:

* To be registered on BBO – you can use a nickname rather than your real name, and it’s free to register;
* To send your BBO nickname to the tournament organiser, so that they can register you on their list of permitted players – you should do this well in advance of any competition you intend to play in, because it takes a bit of time for the permission to be granted.

In relation to playing in a particular tournament, you should note:

* Upcoming tournaments only become visible on the BBO site around 2 hours before they start;
* To join a tournament, log into BBO, select “Competitive”, then “Free Tournaments”, and under the “Pending” tab, find the tournament that you wish to play in, click on it to join, and follow the prompts;
* If you don’t have a Partner, BBO will rent you a robot for a small fee; you’ll need to play the robot-standard bidding system;
* To hire a robot, you need a credit balance on your BBO account, which you must set up in advance and pay into via the BBO site, using a credit card or equivalent;
* If you are playing with a Partner, they must also be online to register;
* Anyone registered for a competition that is Offline (i.e. not logged into BBO) will be removed two minutes before the start of the competition.