

FAQs About Eastern Iowa Bridge Online Club Games

Who can play in the Eastern Iowa Bridge clubs virtual games?

Our games have been created through BBO to serve the regular patrons of our local clubs. Our roster of eligible players, created by ACBL, consists of recent masterpoint winners at our clubs. If you haven't played for a while, or didn't win points at our clubs in the last year, please send us your BBO user name, and we will add you to the roster.

Must the players be ACBL members?

No. However, (1) members without an ACBL number are placed in the A (highest) scoring strata, and (2) non-ACBL members cannot play in limited-point games.

Why should I be an ACBL member?

There are several reasons why you should want to be an ACBL member:

1. You cannot receive masterpoints from ACBL without the membership link.
2. As an ACBL member, you are automatically eligible to play in all affiliated online Eastern Iowa bridge clubs.
3. Stratification in these games is based upon your current masterpoint holding. As mentioned above, non-members are automatically placed in the A (highest) scoring strata.
4. The Bridge Bulletin alone is worth the price of membership.
5. ACBL staff have done an enormous amount of work to make it possible to play sanctioned duplicate bridge online during the pandemic. We think they deserve your membership support.

See below for how to join ACBL, or renew your lapsed membership.

Can I earn ACBL masterpoints for playing at the virtual club?

Current ACBL members can earn masterpoints at virtual club games. As long as 18 boards are played, virtual club games award ACBL black points at 150% of the standard club award until further notice. Games are stratified according to the masterpoint holdings of the registered pairs. As at physical clubs, awards are by stratification.

In order to earn masterpoints at virtual club games, you must enter your ACBL number in BBO before registering for any online games. (To do this, log on, click on "ACBL World", and locate the blue tab that says "Update Your ACBL number".) See instructions below about how to join ACBL or renew your membership.

How do I register on BBO?

Registering on BBO is free:

1. Go to www.bridgebase.com
2. Click on the “Login / Register” button on the far right side
3. Click on the “Become a member” button. Fill in the requested information. If you have an ACBL number, be sure to enter it.
4. You will get a confirmation email from BBO. You must click the blue CONFIRM box in the email to be able to log in.

How do I find the Eastern Iowa Games?

1. Log into BBO.
2. Click on “Virtual Clubs” under “Featured Areas”.
3. Click on “ACBL – North America”.
4. Our games will be clearly noted as EASTERN IOWA BRIDGE, and shown with one of these hosts: VACB269670 or VACB148601.
5. Our games will appear online and will be open for registration beginning two hours before game time.

How are partnerships arranged?

It's ideal to arrange for a partner in advance of the game (assuming they have registered with BBO for online play). If this is not possible, you can utilize the online ‘Partnership Desk’ for each event. Unattached partners can see one another and can communicate by chatting. If you're unsuccessful in getting a partner, let the director, know, and they will attempt to assign you a partner from the BBO substitute list.

How many boards will we play?

Per ACBL recommendations, virtual games will initially consist of 18-21 boards, depending upon the number of tables registered for the game. We will reassess the number of boards after some experience and feedback.

What's the pace of the game? How long is a session?

Initially, you will have 7 minutes to play each board. You can expect to finish an 18-21 board session in approximately 2 hours, 6 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours, 20 minutes. As players get more comfortable with online play, we may reduce this to 6 minutes per board.

What happens if I can't keep up?

Rounds are automatically timed. If the time runs out in a round, you will be taken directly to the next round (even in the middle of a hand). If that occurs, BBO will determine the result on the unfinished hand, and will assign the appropriate score. In the event the outcome is not determined, BBO will ask the presiding director for a ruling, just as at the club. Keep in mind that play will not be delayed if a table does not keep up a proper pace, and there are no late plays.

If you're having trouble keeping up with the pace of play, you may want to try playing in the free casual section of BBO until you feel more comfortable.

Is there a Director?

Yes. Your online game director will usually be one of the regular directors at the club.

What happens if I'm disconnected from BBO during the game?

If you're accidentally logged off, the directory will temporarily assign a substitute for you until you are able to log back on. Once you're logged on again, call the director if you are not immediately reseated.

How much does a session cost to play?

A virtual session at the Eastern Iowa Bridge Clubs costs \$4.

How do I pay?

Payment on BBO is made at registration time when you invite your partner and they accept your invitation. Payment is through the use of BridgeBase dollars (BB\$).

What are BridgeBase dollars (BB\$), and how do I get them?

BB\$ are credits that a player may purchase (through the BBO site). There several methods by which one can purchase BB\$ (credit card, PayPal, etc). Information can be found on the BBO site by clicking on the "BB\$" tab at the top right of your screen (to the left of your user name) after logging on.

It's best to purchase BB\$ using a computer or tablet phone. At this time, buying BB\$ via a payment app on your phone incurs a 30% up charge, which neither ACBL nor BBO can refund. This includes PayPal, Apple Pay, etc.

What else is different about playing online?

Unlike club games where you are responsible for alerting your partner's bids, online we 'self-alert' our own artificial bids. This is done by entering the meaning of your alertable bids on the "explain" line to the right of the white "Alert button", then clicking on the "Alert" button, and then making your call. YOUR PARTNER WILL NOT SEE YOUR ALERTS.

There are no "undo's" in the online bridge club games. Once you have clicked, your bid or play can't be taken back. Also, it is not legal to chat to the table that you made a mistake. To avoid errors, you may want to change your settings so that you are required to confirm your bid and/or card played. To do this, click on "Account" on the right hand side of the screen, and then click on "Settings". Turn ON Confirm bids and/or Confirm cards.

Chatting at the table is permitted (there is a message button available at the bottom of your screen), but anything you say to the Table is public information and can be seen by all parties. You are able to privately communicate with either or both opponents, but not with your partner. It's a good idea to chat only after you've finished the hands in the current round. Please claim (or concede) the rest of the tricks when possible in order to keep the game moving. (There is a "Claim" button on the bottom left hand side of the screen.)

All results are recorded automatically, so you don't have to worry about checking the accuracy of the final results.

When should I expect to find games online?

We are starting with games at 11:30 AM on Monday (beginning April 27) and Tuesday at 6:30 PM (beginning April 28). If these games are successful, we will quickly expand to include additional clubs and add additional games.

Remember that the scheduled games will not show up on BBO until 2 hours before the start of the game. Registration will be available at that time.

How do I register for a game?

1. Log into BBO.
2. Click on “Competitive” under “Play or Watch Bridge”.
3. Under “Tournaments” (green stripe), click on “ACBL virtual clubs”. Look for games identified as Eastern Iowa Bridge Clubs.
4. Click on the game to see details about the game or to send an invitation to your partner for play in the event. Unless you plan to pay for your partner, your registration will be pending until your partner also logs on and accepts your invitation to play. Please stay online until this occurs and you receive a confirmation that your entry has been completed.
5. Once your registration is complete, you do NOT need to stay online. However, please log back on a bit prior to the game start time to make certain you have no connection issues.

How do I renew my ACBL membership?

If your ACBL registration has lapsed, go to my.acbl.org/membership/renewal.

How do I join ACBL?

1. Go to my.acbl.org/membership/join
2. Enter your information on the first page and click the blue “Continue” button at the bottom of the page.
3. On the 2nd page, choose your membership type, and please fill out the subsequent information as follows:
 - *Recruiting club number:* 148601
 - *Recruiting club name:* University DBC
 - *Recruiting member number:* 6805272
 - *Recruiting member name:* Carol Panzer