

What's different about playing On-Line?

Playing in the Virtual Club (or anywhere else on BBO) requires better visual skills than playing with actual cards. The screen can be distracting, it may be harder to see available bids, and the size of the screen may be an issue. It also requires more manual dexterity. Generally, bids and plays are made by moving the screen's mouse to a location and clicking on a selection. This effort is more difficult for those that are less experienced using a mouse, and can result in frequent mistakes in bidding and play. Before you play in a Virtual Club game, you should make certain that you will be comfortable with the operation of the software. Try playing some practice hands on BBO (use the Solitaire feature) and be certain that you will be able to play at a reasonable pace without subjecting yourself to undue stress regarding the 'non-bridge' challenges of the game.

The Clock BBO has a clock that displays the number of minutes remaining in the current round. It is visible in the upper-(or lower-) left hand corner of your screen. When the clock reaches zero, you will forfeit the opportunity to bid or play the remainder of the current hand and any unplayed hands remaining in the round. This cannot be overridden by the Director and will be very frustrating for you and others at the table. It will also be annoying to the Director, who may have to go into that hand, determine the likely outcome and assign an 'adjusted' score.

HINT: If you're running late in the current round, there is a good chance the Director is watching your progress and will know the source of the tardy play. You may even receive stern warnings during the round to speed up the pace of play. Do not expect favorable treatment if you are the cause of the delays. Whose turn is it to bid or play? When it is your turn to call or to play, your name (located beneath your cards) will turn to a bilious yellow color (as it does for others at the table, as well). When that occurs, please be prepared to call or play. Each hand is given sufficient time on the clock to be bid and played, but inattention to whose turn it is to act wastes time and often results in hasty play at the end...

What is "Self-Alerting"? How does it work?

At the physical Club, we Alert our partner's artificial bids. At the Virtual Club, we Alert our OWN bids. Whenever we are about to make a call (bid, Pass, Double, Redouble) which is artificial or has a meaning to partner that the opponents would not expect in a 'standard' auction, we must notify the opponents of that meaning. On-line we do this in the following manner.. when it is your turn to call: - Click the ALERT button - Type in the meaning of your call (try to explain concisely, but fully) - Click on the key(s) to make the call Any failure to Alert bids and calls that materially affect the outcome of the hand (either in bidding or subsequent play) will likely result in a Director call (see below) and a potentially unfavorable ruling.

What happens if I misclick? Be careful. Just as making a misbid or a misplay at the table in the Club is, with very few exceptions, not revocable, neither is it at the Virtual Club. Once clicked, a bid or a played card cannot be changed. If you have concerns about doing this frequently (a legitimate concern), you MAY set an option to force yourself to approve all bids and/or played cards before they become 'final'. This gives you a chance to make certain that you are performing the action you intended (not necessarily the CORRECT action...). To set these options:

- Go to your Account tab - Click on Settings -
- Look for the blue ribbon labelled 'Playing'
- Find the options 'Confirm Bids' or 'Confirm Plays'
- Slide the button to the right There are many other options available regarding the way cards are presented, sounds that the software makes, etc. Your changes are saved when you exit this screen.

Bids out of rotation, illegal or insufficient bids, revokes... Thankfully, none of these things can occur at the Virtual Club, because you are never offered the opportunity to make a call out of rotation, an insufficient or illegal bid, a play out of rotation, or fail to follow suit. You are, however, not prevented from making silly or illogical bids and plays.

- Calling the Director

When you are playing, you will see a blue rectangle with three horizontal lines “the hamburger” to the left (or right) of the cards, near the top... Click there to see either partnership’s posted Convention Card, or to CALL DIRECTOR. You will be able to post a comment to the Director about the nature of the call. Neither your Director call nor your comment to the Director will be seen by others at the table. The Director will honor your call as soon as possible, but (similar to the Club) may be resolving a call at another table or busy on another matter.

Chatting at the table

‘Chatting’ at the table BBO has the capability for players at the table to send messages to one another. At the bottom of your screen you should see a small blue rectangle that has a right-arrow and a destination (Kibitzers, Table, Lobby, Private). To talk to the entire table (opponents and partner), choose Table, and type your message in the field labelled: ‘Message’. Hit ‘Enter’ to send your message to the selected destination. (This game will NOT have Kibitzers, so that will not do anything useful.) There is a Chat Window directly above this line that shows your running conversation(s). To clear that window, click anywhere in that window and select ‘Clear Chat’. The capability to chat with your partner (except when chatting to the entire table) is disabled during bidding and play, but is activated when the current round is complete.