

The Bridge Center's Obsession

Bridge players strive to improve their game. We take courses, read books, learn new conventions, cultivate new partnerships and play, play, play. The Bridge Center of Buffalo focuses its efforts on providing a learning environment. Of course we have activities ranging from courses to mentoring of brand new players to open games against high caliber competition. Much of it is more subtle. I often see players getting guidance on a hand from one of our many experts. I'm always impressed by the gracious and friendly attitude that prevails at our BCB. We all strive to improve the level of our competition.

There is a technique we have developed over the years to improve the educational environment in our club. Many of you may have taken advantage of it without understanding how unique it is or the effort behind it. We insist on providing detailed hand-by-hand results including hand records at the end of each round. You should receive a summary of your results with a hand record before leaving the building. A recap of the game with results for all partnerships on every hand is posted on the back wall for review and also available on our website. You will usually be able to study results online by the time you reach the parking lot. Hand records and summaries are also available from our website after each game. Our hand records include "makeable" contracts on hands. Understand these are "double dummy" results but still represent an excellent guideline to assess your performance.

You should appreciate first how unique this is. It takes a huge investment of money and time to provide this level of educational support. It requires a computerized dealing machine costing thousands of dollars plus regular maintenance surrounded by a cast of volunteers to keep it running. We must generate random dealing files, deal the hands, print hand records, manage the website, report results to the newspaper etc. Our Game Directors do a fabulous job during the round but, behind the scenes, there is an amazing operation supporting them.

Even more importantly, you should take advantage of this opportunity if you desire to learn as much as possible from every round. Understand how the experts did well on a hand while you faltered or how you went down while others made it. Or why you made it while others did not. Where did your partnership communication shine or break down? Why did you miss a slam or stop just in time?

I have often sat in on post game discussions with players unable to remember their hands. That should never happen to you after a round at the BCB. We are obsessed with providing as much information and support to each of our players as soon as possible after every game, while it is still fresh.

And there is more to come. Our recent addition of BridgeMate scoring has done more than speed entry of results. Our Directors have been relieved from entering scores freeing them for more player support during the game. We now have a record of the contracts and results in addition to the final scores. We hope to have this information available to our players in the future.