



LBC VIRTUAL CLUB GETTING STARTED ONLINE - FAQs

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Can I earn regular ACBL masterpoints for playing at the Virtual Club?

Absolutely! Virtual Club games award ACBL black points. The games are stratified according to the Masterpoint holdings of the registered pairs, with awards for each strat. To encourage play, ACBL has increased awards to 150% of the scale used in regular club games.

Who can play in the LBC Virtual Club games?

LBC games are restricted to LBC players, or those of other clubs (St. Thomas, Chatham and Tillsonburg) that have agreed to allow their players to be added to the club roster. BBO will not allow players to register for an LBC virtual club game unless they are on BBO's LBC roster.

ACBL and BBO have set up the virtual club facility to support duplicate bridge clubs during the COVID-19 closure. Running virtual club games online enables clubs – and the ACBL - to generate some revenue towards covering fixed expenses.

May I bring a guest?

Yes, you may. Guests may play as the partner of a member. To arrange this, at least 24 hours before the game, send an e-mail to Bruce Moor (bmoor@sympatico.ca) with the subject line "LBC Virtual Game Guest." In the e-mail, include the BBO username of your guest. There is a multi-step process that we must follow to add a guest to our BBO roster so that they can register for a game. The guest will be subject to the same masterpoint restrictions as other players.

Do I get assigned a partner, or can I bring my partner?

Just like at the regular LBC club games, we expect that most players will arrange to play with a partner, who must also be on BBO's LBC roster. There is an on-line 'Partnership Desk' for each event. If any players are registered with the partnership desk, you may invite one to be your partner. Unattached partners can see each other and can communicate with each other by chatting. If you are unsuccessful in getting a partner before game time, stay online for 5 minutes after the game starts. If we need to fill a half-table and do not have volunteers standing by, the director will invite you to fill in.

Is there a Director?

Yes. Your on-line game Director will be one of our LBC Directors. We identify them in the announcements at the start of the game.

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

BB\$ are simply credits that a player may purchase for their account through the BBO site. One BB\$ = \$US 1.00. A credit card or PayPal is needed to buy BB\$. Information can be found on the BBO site by clicking on the BB\$ tab at the top right of your screen (next to your name) after logging on. We recommend buying BB\$ on the secure BB\$ website while logged in through a web browser and NOT while using the BBO app.

Note - If you are using the BBO app on a tablet or phone, using the "Shop" button to buy BB\$ will incur additional fees or higher exchange rates from the third-party vendors.

How much does a session cost to play?

An LBC virtual session costs \$US 5.00 collected by BBO. About 70% of this will come to LBC to help pay our rent and other fixed costs. Your support is truly appreciated!

How do I pay?

Fees are deducted from your BB\$ account when the game starts.

How many boards will we play?

A regular scheduled session for Open pairs or 0-500 will consist of 20 boards, 2 boards per round, or 21 boards, 3 boards per round. The choice depends on how many pairs enter. For 0-50 pairs, we will play 18 boards.

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

Open and 0-500 pairs games allow a maximum of 14 minutes for two board rounds or 18 minutes for three board rounds. 0-50 pairs allow a maximum of 7 minutes per board. If all tables in a section have completed play before time is up, the computer will start the next round. You can expect to finish a session in 2 hours to 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Must my ACBL number be on my BBO profile?

In order for you to receive your masterpoint awards BBO will need your ACBL member number. If you have not entered your ACBL number with BBO, please do so before registering for the virtual Club game. (To do this, log on, click on “ACBL World”, and locate the blue tab that indicates “Update Your ACBL Number”.) If you are not sure if your ACBL number is on your profile, go to that same tab to check.

Must the players be ACBL members?

No. If you do not have an ACBL member number but are an LBC player we can add you to our BBO roster so that you can join our Open game. BBO deems any player without an ACBL number to be an expert. You will be in the top strat in the Open game, and will not be admitted to any Limited Masterpoint games. If you were an ACBL member but have dropped your membership, enter your previous number; it does not have to be current. If you have never been an ACBL member, a free guest 120 day memberships is available.

What should I do if my Internet connection fails during the game?

Log back in to BBO as quickly as possible. If a substitute has been seated in your absence, the BBO software should bump them out and return you to the table. If that does not happen automatically, message the director **vacb272120** or use chat to ask someone at the table to call the Director.

Should I play on my computer, my tablet or my smart phone?

It is possible to play on any of these devices, although most players avoid the small screen of a phone. Many players prefer the larger screen and keyboard of a computer, although others like the mobility of a tablet. If you use a tablet, keep the message function on the screen as that is how you communicate with other players and the director.

What happens if I can't keep up?

The computer is keeping track of the time, and if the time runs out in a round, you will be taken directly to the next round in the middle of a hand. If that occurs, the computer will try to determine what would have occurred and will assign a score. In the event the computer is not able to determine the expected outcome, the computer will either assign a score of average, or ask the presiding Director to review the board and play and determine an adjusted score.

What else is different about playing on-line?

There are several things that you should be aware of when playing on-line. See our separate FAQ sheet on that subject.

All results are recorded automatically by the BBO software, you do not need to enter them on a Bridgемate or personal scorecard. After the game, the history function lets you go back to any board and see a review of the bidding and play.

Are BBO points the same as ACBL Masterpoints?

No, although they are similar. For all games, BBO uses the point scale that ACBL uses for Open Pairs. When the game results are sent to ACBL, ACBL will calculate masterpoints using the ACBL system, which allows masterpoints on lower scales for limited masterpoint games. Special games will award ACBL masterpoints on an enhanced scale, sometimes silver, red or gold. These games are announced several days in advance.

When should I expect to find games on-line?

They will appear in the BBO listings two hours before the scheduled start of the game.

When and How do I pre-register for a game?

- Registration opens two hours before game time. Log in to www.Bridgebase.com.
- Find the section for “Play or Watch Bridge” (blue stripe).
- Click on “Competitive”.
- Under “Tournaments” (green stripe), click on “ACBL Virtual Clubs”.
- Look under “Pending” for games identified as London Bridge Centre. Click on the game to see details about the game or to send an Invitation to your partner for play in the event.

Hint: Arrange with your partner to log on at the same time to register; one of you issues the invitation, the other accepts, and then your registration is complete. Please stay on-line until this occurs and you receive a confirmation that your entry has been completed. Once the registration is complete, you do NOT need to stay on-line. Please log back on 10 minutes prior to the game start time to make certain you have no connection issues.

How will my LBC friends recognize me by my BBO username?

When they are at a table with you in BBO, they can click on your user name to see your profile. If you have entered your real name on your BBO profile, they will recognize you that way. Another approach for LBC members is to add your BBO user name to your Pianola contact information.

- Log in to Pianola
- click on the down arrow in the small box in upper right (where your name appears)
- click on “my account”
- in the Online Bridge Accounts section, enter your BBO user name under Bridge Base Online
- Scroll to bottom of page and click “Save Changes”

When other players look you up on Pianola, your BBO user name will appear with your contact information.

How do I link my existing BBO account to my ACBL number?

Log in to BBO, go to ACBL World, and near the bottom of the screen will be a link to Update Your ACBL Number. Follow that to enter your number. If you are a Life Master, you may enter your number starting with the letter code. Enter your number carefully; once it's in, you can not change it.

Are robots used in the Club play?

Generally, no - you will play with other people. Substitutes will be called in (if possible) if they are needed to fill a half table. If a player becomes disconnected and does not log back in right away, a robot will be used as a temporary substitute until the player returns.

Anything else I should do before playing in an LBC game?

If you have not played on BBO before, it will be helpful to watch some of the free tutorials on the ACBL website. <https://www.acbl.org/bbotutorials/>. We also recommend logging in and playing in the free solitaire bridge to get familiar with the basic bid and play functions. Then play in a free casual game, either pre-arranged with friends or just sit in at an open casual play table.

Also, become familiar with the chat function. Tip – when chatting, you have a choice of sending the chat to the others at your table, or a private chat to another player or director, or to the lobby. Check that your chat is directed where you want it to go. During the play of a round, you may not chat privately to your partner.

The entry fee seems a bit high, compared to our regular LBC games?

A fee of \$5 US or higher is common for the ACBL Virtual Club games, as all bridge clubs (including LBC) have lost their regular revenue streams. ACBL and BBO have quickly set up this function to provide some financial support to those clubs who still have rent and other bills to pay. We appreciate their support – and yours!