SBU Regulations and Advice for Online Bridge.

Note the guidance for clubs is on the Tournaments page of the SBU website some of which is duplicated in this document.

https://www.sbu.org.uk/images/content/documents/tournaments/online/2021-08-01-Guidance-for-Clubs-and-Districts-on-Running-Tournaments-v2.pdf

Software that uses sound and video will be referred to as RB, environments where only text is used will be referred to as BBO. (*So using sound & video on BBO is sometimes called RB!*)

For Tournament Directors

Setting up / Running Tournaments

Kibitzing must always be off for all tournaments or matches on BBO in SBU tournaments.

Clubs should also follow this advice to avoid any suspicions of self-kibitzing. Putting kibs on for the last round is acceptable.

Playing Directors should be avoided. Where that is a problem, clubs should look to enter an arrangement with another club that plays on a different day. Thereby the club A director can play at club A but direct club B's tournament and vice versa. When there are playing TDs, they must announce this to the tournament at the beginning and the end. Also there must not be more than 10 tables.

Both these points are essential for the integrity of tournaments.

Undos should be turned on in BBO, unfortunately this cannot be set up separately for the auction and play. However the normal Laws of Bridge still apply. You cannot get an undo for a card played, no matter how 'obvious' the misclick. Players should be told never to ask for an undo for a card played and opponents should never allow one.

For online bridge, a card clicked is a card played. Players can turn on double clicking if they are worried about this.

Genuine misclicks for bids are allowed as long as the request is before their partner has bid and/or it is made prior to the end of the auction. The TD should be called whenever an undo request is made and must be satisfied that it was a genuine misclick. Changes of mind or loss of concentration are not reasons to ask for an undo. If a TD decides not to allow the undo that is no reflection on the player, the undo cannot be allowed if it *possible* that it was a change of mind.

An example is a player clicks on an opening bid of 2H and then asks for an undo, they meant to click on 2D. No self alert was given for the 2H and the player has a weak two in hearts. It doesn't matter that the player made a genuine error, it is possible that they forgot they were playing the multi.

An extended time can be allowed for any round as in f2f bridge. However, for the last round on BBO clocked tournaments, an extended time must be allowed, otherwise the wrong result is given to players as BBO averages all uncompleted boards. Any table taking an undue amount of time over the last board may have it curtailed and the 'double dummy' score awarded if the TD deems it appropriate.

STOP bids

On BBO there is no stop card and players tend not to pause. The TD needs to be careful about allowing claims of hesitation after a stop bid, if the next person hasn't paused they have robbed their LHO of their 10 seconds thinking time.

Claims

If opponents object to a claim, the hand still has to be played out. However they can still call the TD who can judge on the line taken whether the result should stand. Unfortunately it is very rare for any statement to be made when claiming, so the TD has to be careful in allowing a claim when the declarer has seen all the hands.

If the claim is accepted but the opponents subsequently disagree, then Law 69B applies. If one defender concedes and the other objects but the declarer accepts the claim/concession, then play ceases – there is no option for play to continue. In this case, Law 71 applies.

Connection failures

Robots are not allowed in SBU tournaments.

There are no subs or robots on RB. Tournaments have to move on and disconnections will necessitate awarding a board(s) Ave+ / Ave. Extended lost connections (unless towards the end) will necessitate the removal of the pair and all results for the pair (played or not played) changed to Ave / Ave.

Lost connections on BBO can be substituted fairly quickly to keep tournaments to time, clubs / TDs can decide whether they use robots or subs but using a human sub half way through a board and/or for a board or two is questionable.

However, there are no Master Points for anyone playing even a board or two with a substitute. When submitting the file for Master Points a note should be sent about anyone who did not complete the entire tournament with their partner. For this reason Clubs might wish to use Ave/Ave+ for short term disconnections on BBO.

Correction period

A result becomes final to BBO 20 minutes after the last board is played, the Director cannot change any result after that. Normal rules for challenges to scores are 30 minutes after the results are posted. However the club or SBU result can be altered even after that depending on an appeal or obvious error in scoring, use BBO-to-XML. The RB result can be changed until the event is 'destroyed'.

For **Players**

There is a great deal in the Tournaments section of the SBU website, some of which is duplicated here.

Ideally pairs should upload a system card to BBO or provide a link to their card on the SBU website if they in SOL. Even so, the pair should provide basic details at the beginning of each round – this should include basic bidding system and carding arrangements. Examples:

Weak, 4 card Ms, 3 weak twos, McKinney and standard count. Standard leads

5 card Majors, better minor, 15/17 NT, Lucas & Multi, UDCA. 2ⁿᵈ & 4ᵗʰ, strong 10s.

Opponents can ask for clarification of any of these terms.

Do not put in unnecessary information e.g. RKCB 14/03, Stayman etc.

All conventional bids must be alerted (including above 3NT and doubles) and as full a description as possible should be given. 'Lucas' or whatever is <u>not acceptable</u>. You must write *6-10, 5 Hearts & 5+ minor* OR *5-9, 5 hearts & 4+ other* etc.

It is a fundamental principle that your opponents are entitled to the same information as your partner. Players must go out of your way to ensure that their opponents have that information including any understandings. You might have to message them to provide full information. The idea that you don't say unless asked is totally wrong, even more so for online bridge.

You do not however, have to describe your hand, just what your partner expects. So if you decide to open this hand a weak 2H :

x   AKQxx   xxxx   xxx

Then in the alert box you type, *6-10 pts, 6 card suit*, because that is what your partner expects. However if you are known to open with 5 sometimes then you must type *6-10 pts, 6 card suit (sometimes good 5).*

Announce all NT openers and rebids. Doesn't matter if you have told opponents you play a weak NT, it is good practice to type in 12/14 when opening 1NT. When rebidding, type in 17/18 or whatever it is.

Likewise, opening 2NT, type in the range.

An opponent can request an explanation by clicking on the call. The opponents can also ask questions by chatting to the player making the call – when answering a question, a player should send the answer to both opponents (using 'chat' to 'Opponents') and **not** send a message to the 'Table'.

However you cannot ask the bidder's partner any question, only the bidder can comment on their bid.

Players must be very careful with chat and must not post anything during a board. Comments after a board should of course be friendly.

There is a browser extension available that allows auto alerts in BBO, preferably this should not be used. A misclick can cause an alert and explanation to go out that you are not aware of which could cause considerable problems.

STOP bids

You are supposed to pause 10 seconds after any stop bid, however there is no stop card in BBO and players are failing to do this (often with no interest, you don't notice it was a jump). However if there is a stop bid on your right and you pass immediately, do not be claiming for hesitation by your LHO unless it is a considerable time. You have taken away their right to a ten second think.

RealBridge automatically imposes a pause unless playing with screens when the pause doesn't apply.

'Auto play singletons' should not be turned on in BBO, it disrupts the tempo of playing the cards.

Players may consult their own system card and other notes at any stage as long as it does not delay the tournament.

In play undos are allowed for genuine misclicks of bids, never for changes of mind. Players should call the TD when an undo is requested. However you cannot ask for a bidding undo after your partner has bid. There is a serious issue of Unauthorised Information if you ask for an undo after your partner has bid. It must be declined and the TD called at the end of the hand if there is any doubt about subsequent bidding or cards played.

There are no undos after end of auction.

There are no undos for misclicking on a card and you must never ask for one, no matter how obvious it is. Players are not allowed to make their own rulings at the table and opponentss must never allow an undo for the playing of a card.

Players are recommended to turn on double clicking which should remove any problems with undos.