



# Bridge CovidSafe

## How You Play Matters

It is everybody's responsibility to be CovidSafe everywhere

### A Message from the NSWBA Chairman

4<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The New South Wales Bridge Association is the state administration body for New South Wales. We appreciate that our affiliated clubs, casual bridge groups and individual players look to us for guidance. Please note that the NSWBA does not have any authority to decide how clubs run their operations. Each club has a different structure, clientele and demographic of customers. We respect each club's decision to resume face to face (F2F) bridge or to remain closed. In these troublesome times, the NSWBA is not resuming bridge on its premises and has decided not to conduct the Sydney Spring Nationals.

Please check frequently on the [government update on Covid-19](#) to monitor and if necessary review your decision. Note that the Government is tightening the policing of its Regulations and emphasising the 1.5 metre social distancing.

What follows are some friendly reminders for bridge during this Covid-19 era.

### For the Club Management Committee

If your club is concerned and has decided to remain closed:

1. Please continue to make use of the Virtual Club facility to run your club sessions on BBO. Please contact our office ([office@nswba.com.au](mailto:office@nswba.com.au)) if you need assistance.
2. The NSWBA has extended their [Introduction to BBO session on Zoom](#) to all players. Please contact our office if you wish to organise a session for your players.

If your club is considering or has decided to resume F2F bridge:

1. Please make sure your club has submitted a [CovidSafe Plan](#) to the government authority. If you hire a venue you may need to conform to the CovidSafe plan already in place for your venue. This plan may not suit playing Bridge as it may have solely a hospitality purpose which limits group sizes to 10 but allows multiple non-mingling groups up to the capacity calculated by the size. Obtain a copy of the venue's COVIDSafe plan and discuss it with the management of the venue you intend to use.
2. Be aware of the restriction on the size of a group. It is presently 20 in some of the Government templates but only 10 in the Hospitality template. This would limit any session size to 5 tables but you could run more than one 5 table section in the same venue if you can show that the spaces used are separate. Players could not move from one set of 5 tables to another. It would be preferable if the sessions had staggered starting times to reduce crowding on entry and exit from the venue.
3. Visit your local police station and discuss your plan. It is the police who enforce the regulations. If their interpretation of the Regulations is that patrons must remain at the same table whilst in your venue (as is required in bars & restaurants) then you can only run social (rubber) bridge. No Howell or Mitchell movements would be allowed. It would be possible to run a session long teams match.

4. On top of the general CovidSafe measures imposed by the government, we would also like you to consider the following bridge-specific points:
- Have you made the Conditions of Entry clear to your players?  
Consider requesting that players bring their own face masks if that would make them feel more comfortable.
  - Have you a procedure for taking temperature and preventing entry of players whose temperature shows a fever?
  - Do you have a self-declaration form containing a legal waiver for players to sign on entering?  
You will need a procedure to digitise these forms within 24 hours of receipt.
  - Can your physical table size be adjusted to comply with the current social distance required by the NSW government?  
You may want to make reference to your fellow clubs who have either combined 4 card tables, put enlarged tabletops on top of existing tables or put acrylic separators on top of their tables.
  - Have you stated clearly the maximum capacity of each space?  
There needs to be a sign stating the capacity of each space.
  - Do you have a plan to avoid multiple touching of fomites (pens, Bridgemates, cards and boards, handles, etc)?  
There are clubs asking players to bring their own pen, nominating one player to handle the Bridgemate at each table and so on in order to minimize the multiple touching of equipment.
  - Have you considered if (and if yes, how) you will provide catering?  
Biscuit barrels, open tins of coffee and the like as well as milk bottles are ideal ways to transmit the corona virus. Even the tap on your hot water urn is a problem. If you decide to provide catering, consider using a volunteer wearing gloves to be the “tea lady” for the session.
  - Have you considered dealing one set of boards per table so that only one player touches any hand of cards?
  - Have you considered a resting time of at least 72 hours before reusing cards and boards?
  - Can you provide separate Entry & Exit routes to minimise crowding?
  - Have you provided sufficient hygiene products for the players to use?  
It seems to be a common practice for clubs to have hand sanitiser or wet wipes for each table.
  - Have you arranged **proper** cleaning after each session?  
This includes the tables, chairs, Bridgemates, toilets, door handles, lift buttons and common areas.
  - Most importantly, have you educated your staff and players to stay home when unwell and to get tested whenever they have any symptoms?  
This is a life or death virus, please enforce rigidly the turning away of any club users who are not well.
5. Please frequently review and assess the risk as the emergence of “hotspots” alter the prevailing conditions. In particular, reconsider opening if there is a “hotspot” in close proximity to your club. Please prepare [a plan to respond](#) if any positive case is confirmed in your club. We would also appreciate if you can inform our office immediately if this occurs.

## For Individual Players

### It is also your responsibility to make our clubs CovidSafe

It is up to all of us to prevent the spread of the corona virus. Please assess the risk especially if you belong to a [vulnerable group](#) as classified by the government.

- It is a personal choice to go to play bridge face to face. Do not go if you don't feel comfortable enough despite there being CovidSafe measures in place in your club that meet or even exceed the baseline restrictions set by the government.
- Stay home when you're not well. Get tested when you have any symptoms like fever, dry cough, sore throat and shortness of breath, however mild they are.

- Wash your hands properly (20 seconds) and sanitise your hands frequently after touching any fomites e.g. cards, boards or a Bridgemate.
- Be mindful of what you touch. Bring your own pen and water bottle. View the results from the Bridgemate in your opponent's hand and accept the result verbally.
- Maintain social distancing or wear a mask if you cannot do so. Do not gather in a crowd when using the toilets or when leaving.
- Respect the staff and tournament director when you are asked to practise COVIDSafe measures or are turned away because of the maximum COVIDSafe capacity of the club has been reached.

This is an unusual time, there will be inconvenience and things that we are not used to. I sincerely ask every one of you to be patient, considerate and understanding and share the responsibility of acting in a COVIDSafe manner.

Stay safe and healthy,

John Scudder

Chairman, New South Wales Bridge Association

*Disclaimer: The NSWBA reiterates that this is a general guide, and that the NSWBA has no authority over individual clubs and their actions. At all times adhere to the NSW Government directives, regulations & advice. If in doubt, delay action and seek a definitive answer. Failure to adhere the Government Directives & Regulations might result in loss of cover under the ABF national liability insurance policy.*