

# Using BBO and Pianola to improve your game

## -- Alex Martelli and Anna Ravenscroft

### Pianola.net

#### Find a partner

Update your profile to show "Bridge Details":

Click on your picture/name in upper right, then click on **Bridge Details** tab to

- Checkmark systems you play (Standard, 2/1, Precision...).
- You **MUST** list a single "preferred" system for it to show up on the advert
- Create a bio, can be very brief

Clicking on an advert will let you see info about the potential partner, including other systems they play, their masterpoints, Pianola average and best-ever, and contact info (you can keep more privacy, but...).

#### Review your game

Click on **Results** to see your results for a certain period of time (from *Today* to *Last 12 months*).

Click on a particular result on the graph to see more about that game.

**Ranking** shows a leaderboard with your ranking, score & any masterpoints you earned

**Session Report** summarizes how you did as declarer, dummy and defender. You can filter by role.

**Traveller** shows hand by hand info, one at a time.

**Hands** shows a grid of all the hands with info.

**Scorecard** (my favorite!):

- **Sort by percentage:** low % hands help find places you can improve. (Note: Scorecard may rate your bidding & play; based on playing **double dummy**. Ignore it.)
- **Click on a hand**
  - **Compare** your contract and results with other pairs in your section (and other sections!)
  - Pianola Plus lets you **replay** with card by card guidance
    - Subscription \$10/month or \$84/year
    - Other "analysis" available which may or may not be useful.

For more info, see the Pianola user guide:

<http://nhbridge.com/TinyFileManager/resources/files/85///pianola%20player%20user%20guide.pdf>

bridgebase.com (BBO): see <http://www.bridgebase.com/help/v2help/>

BBO is extremely rich of features, and many of them are free; most can be used on a desktop, phone or tablet.

**Vugraph:** watch the experts (both live and archived sessions) sometimes with commentary

**BridgeMaster** - Deals at 5 different levels to practice declarer play

Many ways to play anonymously, without logging in:

**Just Declare** is a free solitaire bridge game.

- Live scoreboard
- Robot partners/opponents
- Total points
- No bidding, the contract is pre-determined

**Just Play Bridge, Bridge 4, MPs, IMPs...**: all free, anonymous, w/robots.

Whenever you've played a hand (for free or for pay), and are logged in, you may save it as a "favorite". A folder of favorite deals can be used as the deal source for a teaching or bidding table.

**BBO robots** play a [basic 2/1 system](https://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib_descriptions.php): 5 card majors, 15-17 NT, gadgets. **Always Hover** on a bid (that's been made, or that you're considering making) to see what it means! See [https://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib\\_descriptions.php](https://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib_descriptions.php) for terminology  
The bots, mostly, don't signal when defending. More on bots' bidding and defense at [https://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib\\_system\\_notes.php](https://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib_system_notes.php)

**Tournaments**: many free ones (no MPs), individual (w/and against robots) and pairs (humans)  
You can *challenge*: a friend, a stranger, a star, a robot (optional: "best hand" and/or "just declare"), a group of up to 4 friends -- all free (except if you challenge an advanced robot: that's \$0.25).

For-pay (as you go):

Rent robots (basic: \$0.25/week; advanced: \$0.25/day)

MP and IMP tournaments (individual w/robots, or pairs w/humans) give "BBO masterpoints" (\$0.29 and up)  
(BBO has its own scale of "levels", depending on how many MPs (BBO or ACBL) you earn there)

MP and IMP tournaments (w/robots, or speedball pairs w/a human partner) yielding real "ACBL masterpoints" ("colorless")

Types of tournaments

3 times/year: 3-days NABC Individual (w/robots), 3x24 hands, yielding gold and red ACBL masterpoints  
"Instant tournaments" == deal-by-deal barometer scoring

Daylong tourn. == play any time (many BBO MPs for high finishes!); free, or \$0.39 BBO, \$1.39 ACBL

Tournaments running at specific times: plain \$0.29, race \$0.25, "rebate 55%" \$1, "reward" \$5...

**Casual tab**: (free unless you want robots)

**Start a table** to play random (or VuGraph archive) deals with a partner against rented robots or humans.  
You can also **watch** as a kibitzer or **join** a table as an individual or with a partner or **find** an online club.

**Practice tab**: (free unless you want robots)

**Start a bidding table or Start a teaching table** (if you are a bridge teacher...)

To invite your partner, you can reserve a seat (click on a seat and "reserve" is an option)

To add robots, click on a seat, click the "robot" option and pick basic or advanced, if needed.

You can either have random deals or:

**Click on the three parallel lines at the top to change the deal source**

You can bring in "favorite" deals you've saved, enter deals, upload deals, or set constraints.

- To upload deals from a PBN file (commongame &c) first turn it into LIN format, using the free online converter <http://johnfromarran.org.uk/Bridge/PbnToLin.html>; then Account/Deal archive/+/Import LIN file
- **To set constraints: Click on a constraint set**

*If this doesn't work on your browser, try a different browser. Firefox worked for us, Chrome didn't.*

Brings up a form: decide who deals, range of HCP for N/S, then click on Constraint button to constrain a specific hand, such as N or S, to fix how many (a range) of HCP and cards of each particular suit the hand has. (Each "constraint" is about a specific hand.)

<http://www.bridgebase.com/help/v2help/deals-to-be-used-at-teaching-table.html>

"GIB" (free) offers card-by-card guidance for double-dummy play of any hand.

There are also **forums** for discussion, but not as good as those on [bridgewinners.com](http://bridgewinners.com)

Subscription: BBO Prime, \$5/month, a few extra services