Bidding Practice on Bridge Base Online (BBO)

<u>Note:</u> The following procedure applies to an IBM-compatible PC. The procedure for Apple or any tablet will be different (not available yet).

<u>Summary:</u>
The following is a procedure for two partners to practice bidding on Bridge Base Online (BBO). There is no feedback on the soundness of the final contract, but the partners can see both hands when the auction is over, and can do their own analysis. What you'll need:

1) For each partner, a computer with an Internet connection and a web browser.
2) A telephone connection between partners if you actually want to talk to each other.

<u>Getting Started:</u>
Both partners must be members; membership is free, and the process is simple. If both partners are already BBO members, skip this section and go to <u>Setting up a bidding table (P1)</u>

1) Open a web browser and navigate to http://bridgebaseonline.com
2) In the upper right-hand corner, click on **Login**/**Register**.
3) Toward the bottom of the next screen, click on **Become a member (free!)**.
4) In the next screen:
   a) Select a **User name** and a **Password**. Memorize or record these for next time. Note: the user name is often called a "**handle**".
   b) **Confirm password**.
   c) Provide your **Real name** and **ACBL Number**.
   d) Click on your **Skill level** and **Country**. Don't worry about your skill level; take your best guess.
   e) Click the check box to **agree to the terms of service**, and then click **Register**.

You're now a member and can login any time.

<u>Setting up a bidding table (P1):</u>
You'll have to set up a bidding table for your practice session. Let's call one partner P1 and the other P2, and assume that P1 is more comfortable with Internet stuff than P2. Here's a suggested procedure:

P1 does the following to start the table:
1) Login to BBO with user name and password.
2) Under **PLAY OR WATCH BRIDGE**, click on **Practice**, then **Start a Bidding Table**.
3) Set the **Privacy** and **Opponents' Bidding** options as follows:

Note: These settings will force the E-W robots to PASS throughout. For contested auctions, there will be a new procedure, not yet available.
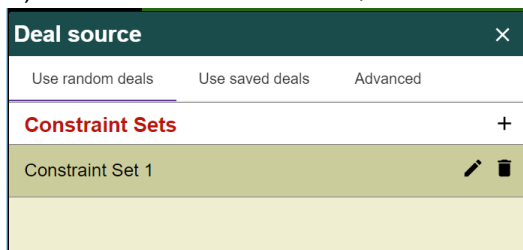
4) P1 will be North and P2 will be South for this session, although you can choose which seats to use. Click on North, enter P1's handle and click **OK**. Click on South, enter P2's handle and click **OK**.
5) Click on **Start Table**.
6) A screen will pop up, showing P1's handle in the North and P2's in the South. Note that P1 is already sitting in the North seat, whereas the South Seat is **(Reserved)** for P2. This means that, when P2 logs in, there will be an invitation waiting to join the table.
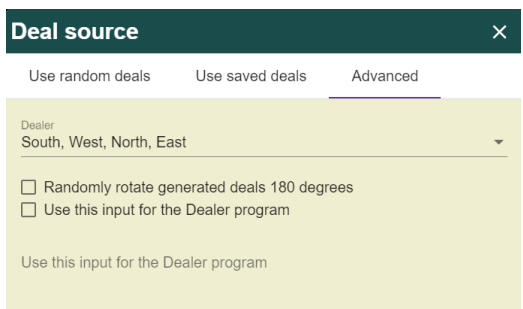
Joining the bidding table (P2):
1) Login to BBO with user name and password. There should be an invitation waiting to join the table.
2) In response to the question to join, click **Yes**. You'll see the table that has been created, with you sitting South and your partner sitting North.
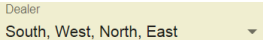
Setting the bidding constraints (P1):
1) I will provide you with a text file that you'll use to set the constraints. E.g., there will be a file to set up the North and South hands to practice, say, Transfer Auctions after 1NT. You will later Copy and paste this file into BBO.
2) Click on the ☰ icon, then on **Deal source**. You'll see a screen like this:

3) Click on **Advanced**. The window will now look like this:

4) Click on the down arrow here Dealer South, West, North, East ▼ , and uncheck all but North. This will set the dealer as North on all the hands we will generate.
5) Back in the **Deal Source** window, check the box **Use this input for the Dealer program**.
6) Open the constraints file that I provided to you.
7) Copy the contents of this file and paste into the area below the check box shown in Step 3.
8) Hit the **<ESC>** key to return to the table.
9) Back at the table, click on the 🟦 icon, then on **Redeal**. North should have a hand that is a 1NT opening or close to it: 15-17 HCP, no singletons, possibly 5-4-2-2. South should have a hand that is at least 5HCP with at least 5 hearts. Other constraint files will allow you to practice other auctions.
10) P1 and P2 just bid their hands. E-W are automatically silent, imagine! When the auction is over, P1 and P2 can both see each other's hand and can analyze how good the final contract is. BBO does not provide an analysis, but it is a useful exercise for the partners to do that themselves.

Switching seats (P1 does this):
After bidding several hands, you might want to switch seats. P1 is currently sitting North and P2 South. For this example, P1's (North's) handle is **victeach**. P2's (South's) handle is **victeach1**.

Here's how:
1) Click on the South seat and click **Remove**. Click on the South seat again and click **Clear**.
2) Click on the North seat. You'll be asked if you want to leave the seat. Click **Yes**. You'll notice that this seat is now empty.
3) Select the South seat (the one you're moving to) and, in the drop-down, click **Sit**. You'll see yourself sitting in that seat.
4) Select the North seat (the one you're moving from) and, in the drop-down, click **Reserve**. Type in P2's handle. Voila! You've changed seats.

Note: BBO is sometimes finicky, and P2 might have to logoff, then login again.

5) Continue generating hands as before, by clicking the 🟦 icon, then **Redeal**.