

Dear Fellow Locked Down Western Cape Bridge Member,

We have had a very good run with BBO with our daily tournaments and team events, and we have to be extremely grateful that this platform has been available to us to pursue our bridge addiction for little or no cost during the lockdown period. But BBO is, after all, a business, and they were inundated with requests to run free tournaments from all countries around the world – they were making no money from the excellent service which they provided.

From **01 August 2020**, there will be no more “free” tournaments offered on BBO. They have approached each national bridge federation to sign contracts for allowing tournament bridge to continue, but only on a paid basis. I think we should be thanking BBO for having allowed us to continue for so long, but we must recognize that our holiday has come to an end.

Like most other countries, the SABF has signed a contract with BBO for future events. Those countries who did not sign contracts will no longer be afforded the opportunity of free bridge on BBO. We thank the SABF for formalizing these arrangements on our behalf, so that we can continue to have our daily tournaments. That is the good news. The bad news is that the entry fee to our daily events will now be \$2.50 per session. That effectively means that the entrance fee per session will rise from the R25 that you were formally paying, to approximately R40. The good news again is that this is still less than you were all paying for a session of bridge at the club prior to lockdown – so it will still remain one of the cheapest forms of entertainment available to any of us.

So from 01 August, instead of going into **Free Tournaments** you will now go into **Virtual Clubs** to enter any Western Cape event. There you will just look for **SABF events** and all of the daily events for Western Cape will be on display. You can also go to **All Tournaments** and search WCBU as before. But please note that the method of payment will be different. You will no longer be paying money into the WCBU bank account, but be paying to enter with BBO\$. **If you do not pre-purchase BB\$ you will not be allowed to play in the event.**

When you go to the BBO screen, just before you log in, there is a **BB\$ icon top right of screen next to the Login button**. Here you can purchase either by credit card or Pay Pal account, an amount of BB\$ at any one time, to ensure that you have enough to play in our events. As there will be bank charges that would apply to either payment method, we suggest that you purchase enough BB\$ to lessen the charges and enable you to play bridge continuously without having to repurchase. Detailed instructions here:

[https://www.bridgebase.com/help/v2help/bb\\$.html](https://www.bridgebase.com/help/v2help/bb$.html)

By entering the tournaments this way, the WCBU will receive a percentage of the revenue. So please continue to specifically support the WCBU events into the future. This will mean that the WCBU can still support its staff and administrative costs without putting too much pressure on our existing reserves.

We do understand that the increased cost may be slightly prohibitive to some. For those who cannot afford the increased cost, please remember that the Friendship Club is there to support you. The Friendship Club is specifically designed to support who cannot afford the costs that the passion might entail, and is supported by some generous donors and the WCBU. Please feel free to contact either Shirley Phillips or Joyce Hessen should you need assistance from the Friendship Club. Remember, the Friendship Club maintains absolute anonymity, and even the WCBU does not know who are the recipients of the Friendship Club’s largesse. (Please also feel free to make a donation to this worthwhile cause for fellow bridge players).

Existing BBO credits

If, come 01 August, you still have any remaining credits with WCBU, we will transfer these credits into your own personal BBO account. It may take us a few days to reconcile the hundreds of accounts that we currently maintain, but be assured that your accounts will be duly credited with any balance in BB\$.

Functionality of BBO Virtual Clubs

By joining the arena of virtual clubs, we will not be limited by the amount of tournaments that we are allowed to run, the number of entries, or the number of sections that we can run at any given time. There will also be improved functionality of the types of movements we can run, such as Mitchell, Howell, Swiss and many others; and improved TD functions which will help to make your online bridge experience better. We hope that this will add to the enjoyment of your game.

Sundays on BBO

We are having a very successful Bay Open that is currently running on Sundays at 2pm. Prior to this event the Sunday entries were always the lowest of the week. This may well have been due to families being together for a Sunday lunch, and perhaps our timing was therefore not perfect.

In future we intend to do away with the Sunday pairs event, and starting Sunday 02 August, making this our Teams day. Initially this will be a Swiss teams event run over 5 consecutive Sundays, and will be directed by Mark Kenyon. Everyone seemed to enjoy our last teams event, and we hope for a bumper entry for this tournament. Please start getting your teams together and send your entries to Mark. This event will be run at the old price of R25 per person, which will still need to be paid into the WCBU account. **The starting time of this event will be 3.30 pm**, which should give you plenty of time to finish off any Sunday activities.

Other BBO activities

Apart from the tournaments, all other BBO activities will remain free. So, you can still start casual team games, play casual pairs, or use the practice area for teaching or partnership bidding. We thank BBO for their generosity in this regard.

Your WCBU team continues to work hard to provide you with a full array of bridge activity at your fingertips. Please help us and your local clubs by continuing to support our events.

Yours in bridge,

Tim Cope (Chairman WCBU).