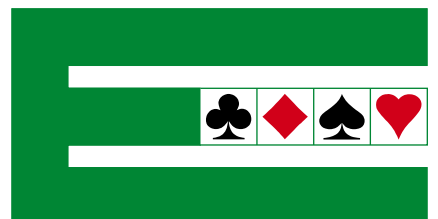




The Recruit

' An initiative to help clubs and districts to recruit juniors '

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Welcome to

The Recruit

A very warm welcome to The Recruit, an initiative to help clubs and districts to recruit junior players.

Since the late 90s the number of juniors at bridge has decreased alarmingly. This is hardly unique to bridge, rather a normal phenomenon regarding all youth activities. From football to clay pigeon shooting it gets increasingly harder to recruit juniors.

Sitting still and doing nothing is not a successful approach, hence this initiative. The Recruit is first of all aiming at you as a supervisor, mentor or leader of a club.

In Sweden, the country behind the initiative, the hope was to start a network of junior leaders. The idea of the network was to have a platform in order to enhance ideas, debate all kinds of questions and train people for

all necessary subjects. At this point this is in progress and developing.

Print off this document, lean back in your favourite armchair and read it. When you later, at your club and/or district, have decided to come aboard, then get going! It would be ideal if your federation has someone who can co-ordinate and support the project domestically.

We really hope that you will contribute in order to make juniors understand how much fun bridge is and, first and foremost, make them start playing!

European Bridge League/Swedish Bridge Federation

Do you need help?

Contact the EBL Youth Committee. Check www.eurobridge.org for more information.

1. Create a clear goal

In the year ahead it is our goal to train our juniors, integrate them into tournament bridge, and make them addicted to our wonderful hobby.

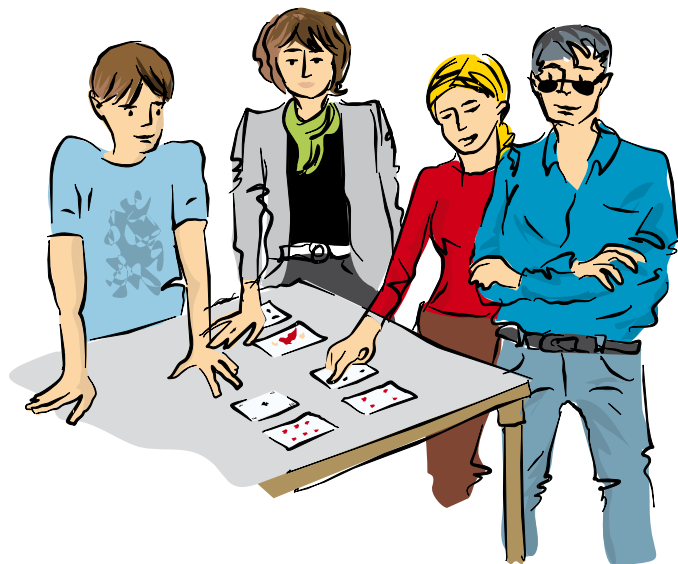
A tip is to, as soon as possible, direct their focus to national camps or a one-off tournament for juniors. Making them feel that "we must be there". Get former and current juniors from all around the country to play bridge virtually non-stop and make people feel that they are having a smashing time together.

2. Leader Meeting

It is a good idea to start around spring-time in order to be prepared and ready for the autumn when schools restart. Get all junior leaders to attend a weekend seminar and exchange thoughts and ideas, and teach them how to go about this.

Apart from group work and seminars we are going to find something that is not related to bridge, first of all to create the "buzz".

The Recruit is not a one-off thing, rather something that should be repeated year after year. In other words, an activity that has come to stay.



The Recruit

The material is basically provided by Förbundet Svensk Bridge for registered clubs. The funding came from bridge players through sponsorships in something named "Club 1933"! Its then given by the Swedish Bridge Federation to the EBL and there are no limitations and its free to use for all and everyone to get new young players to our beloved game!

3. Marketing and Funds

We need a group of volunteers who take on the job of becoming responsible for the youth at the club. Other than that we also need to recruit. The most obvious place to recruit new juniors is the school, so for a start we need a school and its pupils. So first thing up is to get in touch with the school and make an arrangement regarding our phase of recruitment.

Planning

The most important issue of planning is to know how you must act when your phase of recruitment is complete. Sadly, it is all too common that mentors visit schools without having a specific continuation on hand. In that case people rarely succeed. Occasionally, they are a bit surprised to see people turn up and perhaps even shocked to learn that they want to learn more. To sum up, make sure you have a plan in advance for those you are going to teach!

REMEMBER! Travelling to a school with an introduction to bridge without having papers to hand for the students who have become interested (with information regarding the next get-together) makes no sense.

In other words, "All ready from the go" is what this is all about. Many tend to be reluctant with regard to working like this. Perhaps you think that it went badly when you tried at an earlier stage, and then you therefore avoid making a new attempt. But this is also a reason why you do not achieve a satisfactory result.

The starting point is Minibridge

Arranging Minibridge, in principle whist for four people with a dummy where the aim is to take as many tricks as possible, is by far the most common way of promoting bridge. Facts about how Minibridge can be arranged, with pictures, a scheme and other stuff can be downloaded for free at www.svenskbridge.se. Most probably your local NBO has similar download areas at their webpage. Words like "course", "school" or "lessons" will make many students stall when you talk about their spare time. Perhaps you succeed with getting time for a lesson, and then it is different.

If not, then let it be "bridge, in short". Leave out the rest. As for the future activities you planned after the Minibridge (for which you also sent invitations) it does not have to be a course or the like. A "get-together" is enough. Bear in mind that some may want to come but are unavailable.

Therefore, it is important that you take notes and register those who are interested when you are there to show your Minibridge, or whatever activity you prefer. Ask the youngsters to give you their names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Internet (BBO)

The Swedish Bridge Federation (FSB) has set up an interactive bridge course that is available on the Internet. It is a programme downloadable to your PC, where those who are interested can enter, learn more and practice.

Recruitment in schools

We have a variety of means. The following are by far the most common sorts of presentations you will be facing:

* Presentations in the school hall for more classes simultaneously during school hours. In principle, this is useless and not to be recommended.

* Presentation in a class in a teaching room during school hours. The place to arrange Minibridge!

* Free presentation at an assigned place. Interested students come and go while you are there. Those who come have a break or the like.

Minibridge is a sure thing!

Our audience must get the chance to come to the tables as quickly as possible and start playing - playing a game similar to bridge at the very least. Lecturing people standing up has no effect; it is no different from watching paint dry.

Methods to get across

Marketing and recruitment are very important ingredients. Your Minibridge arrangement, however, is the best way of recruiting and, eventually, getting the juniors to play. But how do we make them attend? Here are some variations:

Posters

Order posters or create your own with local flavour. Make sure that all bulletin boards are covered. If you are at a sports school, do not forget to set up posters in places where they train!

Investigate

Look through the archives with club members and check if they have children or grandchildren in school. Try to make them tell the students what will be coming and that they go there, preferably with their friends.

Leaflets

Prepare a leaflet with information on what is going to happen. In the school reception most classes have a box. Ask if you can place the leaflet in those boxes. Also, ask for a list with names and addresses of the students. Then you can see who is interested, and you are in a position to deliver more information.

Exhibition play

Bring a few bridge players to the school and show them how real bridge is played. You can probably order material from your federation, such as posters, leaflets, newspapers and magazines. Make sure to have a piece of paper with further info for those who are interested in proceeding. As mentioned earlier it is important to take names and addresses of those who stop to see what this is all about and who want to learn more.

This is an excellent addition to the simultaneous Minibridge at some other table. The downside is that it takes more volunteers.

Advertise

Check out if you can get an advertisement into the school newspapers or other material related to information. Small ads in newspapers (dailies) are usually not worth the cost. It is much better to tell journalists what you are up to and encourage them to turn up to write an article when you are in the midst of your activity. And do not miss the opportunity to use social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Contact person with insight

In bridge circles we have an unusually large number of players who are teachers by profession. Take advantage. Tell them how you would like to recruit new players to the game. Get a contact person. It is often feasible to attend say a lesson in mathematics and talk about probabilities and percentages. For example, if you are going to take a finesse, what is your chance of succeeding. The same applies to a double finesse. We have plenty of examples where maths shows its face and is not only a boring theory.



Your bridge playing math teacher knows about this. He or she can no doubt point to tips and ideas as to how to exploit the resources of that school. If your contact person does not deal with spare time activities, you should get in touch with the one who does. That person often knows a lot about the students!

4. Bits & Pieces

In the following you will find some advice regarding what to think about before you get going.

Funds

What are the conditions? Most of the following expenses are more or less unavoidable when preparing a course:

- * Advertisements
- * Other information (print costs)
- * Facilities (rooms)
- * Boards
- * Other material
- * Snacks and refreshments
- * Meetings
- * Copying

If you are to arrange a course for juniors the club must be prepared for expenses. Normally you would make a budget that preferably will end in a zero, or even better with some profit. However, as far as juniors are concerned you will have a difficult time to tempt them with fees or other costs related to the course.

The bait

The sorry fact is that we, these days, have so few youngsters, but there is a way to take advantage of that fact!

- * Use your suitable juniors who have been playing internationally as free ads!
- * Show the players who have been representing your country in the three series for juniors and let them talk about how you can get to many places worldwide and carry out your sport.
- * If you are talented and ready to work hard there are no limits to what you can achieve among the very best. The competition is not fierce at this point in time.



* Even if you do not make it to the top level, you can take part in national camps and competitions, where up to 100 juniors gather to play bridge and have fun.

Am I up to it myself?

That is no given thing! Organising a course for juniors and then "holding their hands" all the way is a massive job. The tip is that you should be two or three per team; that will also make it more enjoyable.

The club

Make sure that you involve and brief your club members about what is going on, and make them understand, politely but seriously, that they treat the juniors nicely when they turn up and sit down at the tables.

If you are not a board member, make sure that recruiting juniors is a repeated topic at the board meetings. Through your reports and information the board members may get much more engaged in recruiting the juniors.

5. The Training- Useful Tips

It goes without saying that no-one is forced to use the enclosed material, although it is strongly recommended.

Experience tells us that juniors are not crazy about courses for beginners over 12-14 lessons. That is why we have created material for five lessons.

A recommended time for a lesson is 3 hours, including a break for snacks and refreshments, and a theoretical lecture for no more than 20 minutes.

It should not come as a surprise if your students reach a phase where they "understand nothing at all". It is quite common, but it is also important to listen and encourage them as strongly as you can. They will overcome this obstacle, and with your help the chances that the juniors will stay at your club will be remarkably increased.

Repetition is important, do indeed go through the practice examples a number of times with regular intervals.

Think about how you express yourself. Taking a "finesse" and "establish" a suit are obvious terms for you, but a wan-

nabe junior player will be wondering what kind of a weird individual you are when you talk like that and use those terms randomly :)

You will be facing questions that are blatantly obvious to you. Even then, take your time to explain everything thoroughly and appropriately.

Make sure that you are well prepared before the lesson. This applies to everything from the content of the lesson to the person responsible for the break with sandwiches and soft drinks.

By the end of the teaching document you will find all layouts for all lessons. If you have more than one table it would be best that everyone plays the same board at the same time. By doing so you will be able to squeeze in a little extra when appropriate.

Planning the first lesson

When planning the first lesson you should have an idea about how you would like the students to sit, but that is often determined by room and furniture.

Which aids do you have in mind? Check out that board markers, chalk, overhead films, overhead pens, a spare

lamp to the overheard projector, etc. are on hand.

How will you solve the problem with names? Perhaps you need to provide badges. A badge could be a thick card-board folded and placed in front of the students where everyone writes his or her name, preferably readable :)

The practice boards must be pre-dealt and ready. By all means, involve the students with regard to board duplication. We are pretty sure that if need be you can get a couple of club members to help out.

Under way

When the participants arrive they will usually be insecure or even lost. You must therefore be there well in advance and greet them as they come. Try to get them involved immediately, for instance by showing them around the room and asking them to move some of the furniture.

Introduction

Introduce yourself and your staff in casual fashion. The juniors should also introduce themselves, which, regardless of age, can be somewhat uncomfortable. Let them sit down two and two together, let them interview each other and eventually talk about who their table mates are.



Personal advice

- * Act naturally!
- * Do not pretend that you know something you do not. Tell them that you will find out for next time, and do NOT forget to do it!
- * Like your students!
- * Acknowledge and encourage as much as you can!
- * Avoid using the word "simple". Bridge is seldom easy for a student. "Simple" can even be interpreted as a little rude.
- * Avoid telling the students that you do not always use the same methods as mentioned in the textbook. It leads to confusion.

Ask a lot!

- * You make sure that everyone understands.
- * They are the ones who should solve the problems, not you.
- * It is extremely stimulating and rewarding to get things right (that could be why we play bridge at all).
- * The teaching becomes more active and consequently more enjoyable.

Spread your questions!

There must not be a single student, who during an evening does not get a question or an assignment. Everyone must have had personal contact with you before the evening is over.

Challenge the students!

Do not accept sloppiness. Bridge is concentration and a job.

Do not underestimate the students.

Do not be harsh on them and do not use irony!

Instead, stimulate them. Praise them without being ridiculous. There is no-one who does not appreciate compliments.

When explaining

Always start with the example! Take the theory afterwards. If you start with theory, no-one will understand a word. If you start with the example, it will be easier for you to explain (for example honour on honour and third hand high).

Do not interrupt the play!

Let them complete the madness and approach the problem afterwards. Only go through the various points with the actual board if a bid is totally out of line.

Do not analyse the whole deal in detail after the hand!

It will be too troublesome for the students to go through every thinkable bid or "pip" after a deal.



Bridge Ethics & Laws

It is strongly recommended that you, in addition to the the enclosed training material, set aside an evening (perhaps the last one) to enlighten the students about bridge ethics and our most common laws. Then perhaps finish it all with a 10-board tournament!?

6. Registration

Make sure that you get names of all staff at the federation, the persons working with the project. Also make sure that you get all information regarding the students who start playing so that the federation can communicate with them directly.

Help? Get in touch!

We recommend that you establish some kind of help unit at national level; people who are available to provide detailed information to the people who do the job locally.

Registration of junior leader

Name: _____

Member ID: _____

Contact info: _____

Club name: _____

My juniors

Junior 1:
Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Junior 3:
Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Junior 2:
Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Junior 4:
Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Good Luck!