

AUSTRIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION

PLAYING TOURNAMENT BRIDGE IN TIMES OF COVID-19 - IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions base on a lively exchange of information and ideas within the board of the Austrian Bridge Federation, on proposals of Austrian club officials and on discussions with health experts.

These are not recommendations by the Austrian Bridge Federation but are suggestions on how to guarantee a pleasant as well as a Covid-19 responsible tournament.

1. Challenges for Clubs

- A. If a club decides to open its doors again it is advisable to take hygienic precautions like e.g. the disinfection of objects (door handles, tables, chairs, bidding boxes, bridgemates, computer keyboards, printers and so on) as well as the provision of disinfectants and soaps.
- B. Even if hygienic agents are only needed for an event including more than hundred people it is recommended to appoint a Corona safety officer who has to fulfill the following duties:
 - check the entrance area
 - ensure compliance with rules and regulations
 - request any offender to leave the club in a critical case
 - take responsibility for a controlled departure from the playing area
- C. It is important to display a poster in different places in the club to include the following topics:
 - that people showing symptoms of a Covid-19 infection are not allowed to take part in the tournament
 - a summary of the club internal Covid-19 regulations
 - a request that individuals act responsibly
- D. Clubs with food facilities should establish their own rules in advance.

2. Registration

To comply with space or distance rules, it may be advisable to register for the tournament online or by phone. It will be different from club to club to decide on the registration deadlines.

3. Entrance

We suggest the following rules:

- maintain the distance of one metre
- enter individually
- use disinfectant on hands
- wear the mask/mouth and nose protection or visor
- allow plenty of time before the tournament starts – players should arrive in time

The table & seating arrangement should be displayed within the entrance area or can be given verbally to those entering so that the players can take their seats immediately.

4. The Tournament

a) playing tables

If the tables are not big enough to guarantee the required distance, two tables can be put together.

b) bidding boxes

Ideally each participant will carry his bidding box to the next table. Its up to everybody to bring their own bidding box.

c) bridgemates

Bridgemates are used only by the North player who confirms the result himself with the consent of the opponents.

d) cards

Following the rules published by the Ministry of Health dealing with libraries, it is recommended to secure used cards like returned books in a cupboard for at least 72 hours before using them again, with the high probability that they are no longer infected with virus. Ideally treat bidding boxes in the same way.

e) movement of players

Depending on the space occupied by the club, club officials can determine the best way to maintain the distance rules (e. g. A one-way system).

f) movement

If the focus is on team tournaments and team contests, you reduce the number of boards and player movements.

g) mask/mouth and nose protection and visor

The head of the Department for Environmental Hygiene and Environmental Medicine at the Medical University of Vienna underlines the importance of compliance with distance rules as well as the use of masks or visors during longer indoor stays. He prefers visors to masks as breathing is easier in the long run.

h) airing the rooms regularly

The expert recommends opening windows as often as possible and eventually take an airing break. Air conditioning systems that circulate the air within the room are considered inappropriate because of the danger of retaining the virus.

5. End of Tournament

When the players leave the playing area, they should adhere to the distance rules.

6. Prize-Giving

The usual prize giving ceremonies with crowds of people gathering around result lists or tournament director`s tables could prove counterproductive in times like these. Club officials need to be creative to prevent this.