

## Bridge website on-line like Poker sites

This website's playing model is adopted from online poker. Registered users first deposit money in their accounts. When a user wishes to play in a tournament, she needs to pay an entry fee (buy-in), plus an additional fee (called rake) which goes to website. The entry fees of all tournament participants together form the tournament's prize pool. When the tournament is over, the prize pool is divided between the best performing participants of the tournament. At any time, users can withdraw the money in their accounts (cash out).

Tournaments will come in different forms and sizes, and with a range of entry fees. These factors together determine the size of the prize pool. A typical tournament will have \$10 as entry fees, max number of participants 100, playing 12 boards with First prize \$400.

Introducing money prizes not only makes online bridge much more exciting, it also causes players to feel more committed to a tournament, resulting in fewer people leaving their seats in anger. However, few people enjoy playing in a tournament when they have no chance left to win. This holds true both for online and offline bridge. This website is introducing knock-out and step tournaments. Adopted from online poker, these type of tournaments prevent players from ever having the feeling they're playing without a chance of winning, and also add a lot of general excitement.

### The different tournaments

In a knock-out tournament, players who perform badly are eliminated early, so they're not burdened with having to play out the rest of the tournament. In a knock-out system, a tournament of e.g. 24 boards will be split into six stages of four boards. After every stage the bottom X per cent will be eliminated from the tournament. Whenever a player makes the cut to the next stage, his immediate thought will be: I'm one stage closer to the money! If a player barely makes the cut he will try and play even more seriously to make it to the next stage. The website will only publish players' scores and position at the end of the stage, to prevent players from feeling they have nothing to lose if they are in the bottom during a stage.

A step tournament consists of a series of small tournaments, where a player buys into the first step for a small fee with prospects of winning huge prizes. If a player performs well in a step, he is promoted to the next step. If not, he has to start again, and so on, until the player reaches the last step where he can win a very considerable prize, like an all-inclusive package to play in the World Championships.

In addition to knock-out and step tournaments, the website will also host cash games. Here, competing players are paid out after each board. Ideal for players that have a short amount of time.

### Individual bridge

To prevent players from cheating, this site will be based solely on individual bridge (more on security later on). Individual bridge is quite different from partnership bridge. Both have advantages and disadvantages. The great thing about individual bridge is that players can achieve success all by themselves. They are not dependent on having an equally good partner that understands them and has the time to practice and work out an elaborate bidding system. Also, to test a player's strength, individual bridge is probably the best way to go, as everyone in the tournament gets the same level of partners and opponents on average. The great advantage of online individual bridge on this site is that players can always come and play, day and night, and don't have to search or wait for a partner. There's no politics.

Here, users never play more than one board with the same partner in a tournament. This means that every player in a tournament plays with an equally strong partner on average, so there's less that can be blamed on one's partner. Also, the amount of buy-in money that is required to play in a tournament will largely determine the average player strength. If a player is often frustrated by the skill of his partners, he can opt to play a tournament at a higher buy-in. Another point of frustration is related to bidding

misunderstandings. As this site users only play one board with each partner, there's no room to make advanced bidding agreements. One of the goals of this site is to streamline the bidding process. Rather than forcing players to make last-minute agreements or presenting them with intricate convention cards, this site wants to take away all worries and doubts during bidding. This is done in the following way:

First, within a tournament users all play the same bidding system, be it Standard American or Acol or something else. Before signing in to a tournament, players are clearly shown which bidding system will be played in the tournament. Players can always get more information about the tournament bidding system by clicking on a link. Second, before a player clicks on a bid, a short explanation will be shown next to the bid. The way this works is as follows: say a player wants to answer to 4NT of his partner to show his number of aces. The program will present the user with an explanation for 5 clubs, 5 diamonds, 5 hearts etc. Therefore, players won't have to know about all the bidding agreements between them and their partner. The program will just let them know when it's relevant. Additionally, to see the explanation of any bid that was done during the auction players can just click on the bid

## Security

Anywhere there's real money at stake, people will look for ways to cheat. On this site this will be no different. This site is committed to prevent any kind of cheating on its site.

On bridge sites today it is very easy to cheat because players are allowed to see who their partners are. The only way to deal with this security issue is by playing individually and anonymously. As an extra measure, in high stakes tournaments players will not be allowed to chat with the other players while a game is in progress. Even if players somehow find out who they're partnering with, they can only benefit from this for one board, after which they're split up again.

However, even when players are not each other's partners they may still try to exchange information about their hand to other players in the tournament. To prevent this type of collusion, players cannot see what direction they sit at the table and what board they're playing. The vulnerability at the table will also give no clue as all simultaneously played games in a tournament share the same vulnerability and dealer combination. The limited time players have for one board also limits the feasibility for players to exchange useful information. Only after a board has been played by everyone in the field will a user be able to see all four complete hands.

In some tournaments these measures might still not prove sufficient. Although seating schedules on this site will never allow two or more tables to be playing the same board simultaneously, players could still leak information about previously played boards to each other. In larger tournaments this is less of a threat as players will be divided over multiple sections, each with a unique set of boards, hindering player collusion significantly as collaborating players will be seated in different sections for most of the tournament. In smaller tournaments or in the final rounds of a large knockout tournament it would be preferable if boards are only played exactly once. Scores would be compared not to other players in the tournament, but to all players that ever played the board before in previous tournaments. Aside from thwarting colluders, this measure has an additional advantage: it provides players with a fairer score, as their results are compared to hundreds of other players, instead of only the handful that are in the tournament.

To top it off, this site will constantly be tracking connections between users on the site to prevent any long term cheating. If two users happen to frequently play in the same tournament, they will, at one point be prevented from joining the same tournament. On poker sites a similar strategy is applied successfully. In case users have any personal information like address, email address or bank accounts in common, they are never permitted to play in the same tournament.

(From Editor BridgeIndia.com >> we will give details including link to the website soon.)