

Welcoming New Players



Pittsburgh Bridge
Association

To all active members of ACBL Units 142 & 229, Greetings!

We all have a stake in keeping the game we love alive, and well, and flourishing. In order to do so, we need to attract new players. Several of us are pouring time, and effort, and resources to teach the game, and promote it to new players. Advertising → Lessons → Supervised Play occur before ever getting a beginning player to a sanctioned game.

Getting new players to attend club games and tournaments is difficult, made even more so by the conduct and attitude of some – SOME – of our experienced players. We need to fix that. Pronto. I have heard these comments time and time again in the 20 years I have been involved in Bridge governance here in Pittsburgh...

"They are SOOO Mean"

"I went once, never again!"

"They Aren't Friendly!"

Our club and tournament attendance suggests that what we are doing could be done better, so we now implore each and every one of our players to adopt a fresh attitude about greeting and welcoming these folks who are beginning their Bridge journey.

Here are some points to consider...

- ♦ We need to help players not feel scared, overwhelmed, and not welcome.
- ♦ Often the "Open players" don't want newbies there - and it shows in their behavior.

Here is a comment I got on the matter: *"Sometimes I get the impression that the more experienced players are talking down to me since I am not as experienced as they are. They should realize that the future of bridge is to assimilate new players into the fold."*

To compound the problem, new players are nervous playing against experienced players. Greet folks when you meet at the table. A simple "Hi" is friendly and welcoming. Introducing yourself makes folks feel welcome.

Now that the friendly introductions have been made, and the play has begun...

- ♦ Complimenting someone on a bid, play, or defense always makes folks feel better about themselves.
- ♦ Don't argue with your partner. It makes everyone uncomfortable, especially newbies.
- ♦ Don't give unsolicited advice. But if you are asked a question, do your best to answer it.
- ♦ Don't criticize their play.
- ♦ Be more lenient about calling the director. And don't scream 'DIRECTOR'. Try to remain calm.

It is truly our hope that we don't need to enforce a strict 'Zero Tolerance' policy about conduct. No doubt you all agree with that.

The PBA Board is giving out 'free play' certificates to all those currently taking lessons in the Pittsburgh Area – and we have quite a few people taking them. So we expect – or at least hope – that they will be showing up at a game in the near future.

What a great game we have here. Let's share the joy of the game with as many people as possible. And create a welcoming environment at our tables.

Regards,

Bill Holt

William Holt
PBA VP & Education Chair