

Bridgemates

Bridgemates are used for scoring at Hart House Bridge Club. These are data-entry devices generally used at the tabletops by North to input contracts and results. They replace the paper scoring.

Most players at the club are used to using them and can help you if needed. Only one player at the table needs to operate them, so you don't need to know how to use them to play at the club.

Basic Info

Why Bridgemates?

Bridgemates are the most popular electronic device for score entry, not only in North America, but around the world. They are used in clubs and tournaments everywhere. Along with dealing machines, they help simplify and automate everything, and allow for easier review of results with fewer errors.

The Buttons:

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the buttons: on top we have the 4 suits and NT (no trump). Next we have the number keys from 0 to 9. At the bottom on either side of the 0 key we have the N/S button (north/south) and the E/W button (East/West). To the right of those we have the Cancel and OK buttons. Above Cancel and OK we have redouble (XX) and double (X) buttons. Above those we have 4 buttons with dual uses depending on the context. They are J Q K A (Jack Queen King Ace), which double as +, -, Pass, and =.

Just below the screen are 4 unlabeled buttons. We will explain those shortly.



OK and Cancel Buttons

OK is your most important button. It generally means accept, advance. Cancel means go back, delete.

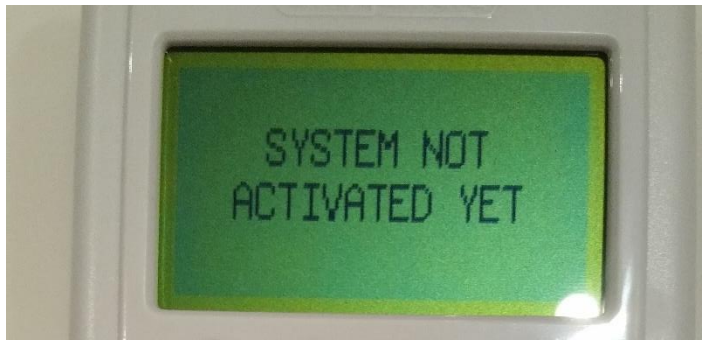
Starting a Session

Each table will have a Bridgemate on it. Usually the screen will be 'off', or blank. You press the OK button to 'wake it up'. There is no on-off switch on the devices. The screen turns off after a little while, and OK wakes it back up where you left off.

When you first go to a table, press the OK button to wake the device up. It will probably then look like so:



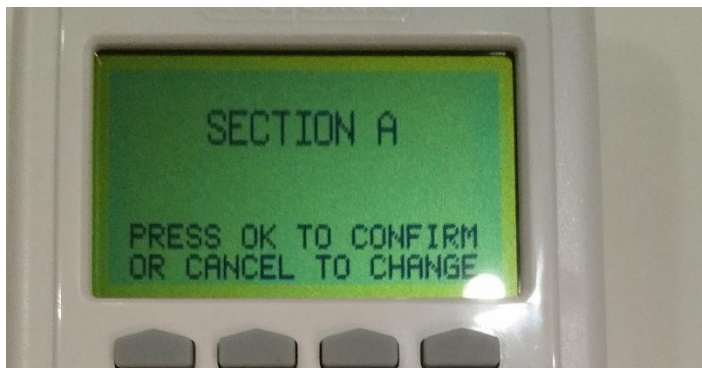
It is telling you “Press OK to start”. So let’s press OK (generally pressing OK is a good idea when you’re ready to move on to the next thing).



Whoops! It says “System Not Activated Yet”. Did we do something wrong? Did we break it? Not at all. This just means the director hasn’t activated the Bridgemates yet. He may be waiting to see how many people are going to be playing. You can try again in a minute (the Director will usually announce when the Bridgemates are activated). You can’t do anything bad to the Bridgemates that will break them or ruin the session (well, spilling drinks on them might). At worst you may make a mistake entering the contract, and that is easily fixed.

Enter Table Number

Now that the Director has activated the Bridgemates, when you press OK again will see:

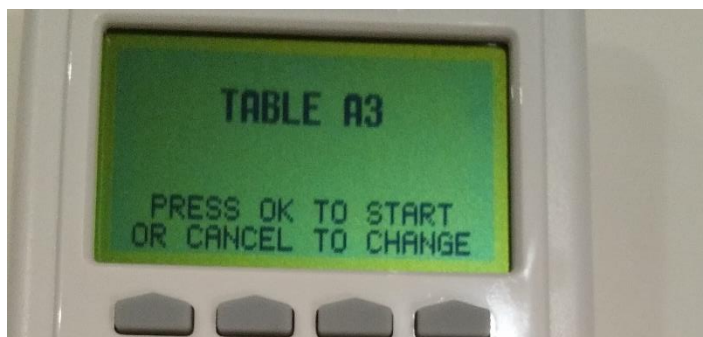


Just press OK. Sections are for large clubs or tournaments.

Now you will see:



The Bridgemate would like to know what table you're sitting at. So look at the table card and type in the number of the table and press OK.



So the Bridgemate has you in Section A, table 3. If this is correct, press OK.

Note that you don't have to memorize all this... most of the time you just have to respond to what input the Bridgemate is asking for.

Entering Player Names/Numbers

The Bridgemate knows what table it's at, now it needs to know who's playing at the table.



Once this is entered at the start, the Bridgemate knows where the players will be moving, so names won't have to be entered again. In fact, we'll see the Bridgemate will tell US who it thinks is sitting at the table each round (which is a good way to confirm that everyone's where they're supposed to be).

Computers don't do well with names. There are hundreds of thousands of Bridge players in North America, and you can imagine there are more than one Bill Smith or Jane O'Leary. Furthermore, is it Mike Lubetsky or Michael? And the Bridgemate doesn't have room for letters and apostrophes and so forth. Computers do much better with numbers.

All members of the American Contract Bridge League have a unique 7 digit player number. If you know yours, this is what you type into Bridgemate to identify yourself. If you don't have an ACBL number, the director will assign you an arbitrary number to identify yourself, which he has noted in his database. A list of these will be available at the tables (and is included on the last page of this document).

Note on the screen the Bridgemate is asking you to enter the players, and there is a blinking cursor beside N:

This means the Bridgemate would like you to enter North's player number. If you're operating the Bridgemate, that's probably you! Type in your player number and press OK.

Now the cursor moves down a line, beside S:

It's time to enter South's player number.

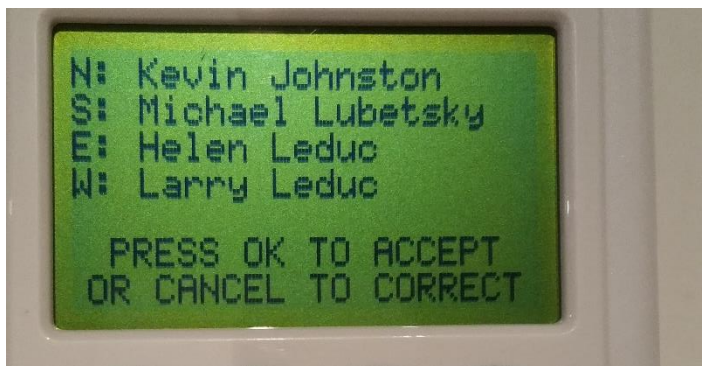
In the same fashion, East and West enter their player numbers.

If you make a mistake, press the Cancel button. It will backspace.

If you need to go up a line to correct a number, you can use one of the 'unlabeled' buttons below the screen. These buttons change their function depending on what appears on the screen above them. When entering numbers, an up or down arrow will appear above some of the unlabeled buttons. Press the corresponding button to move up or down a line.



When you enter the last number, you will see something like this:



How did the Bridgemate know what your name was from the number you entered? It communicates with the Director's computer, which has a database of the players and links the names with numbers. If there are names missing, press Cancel to correct (perhaps numbers were entered wrong).

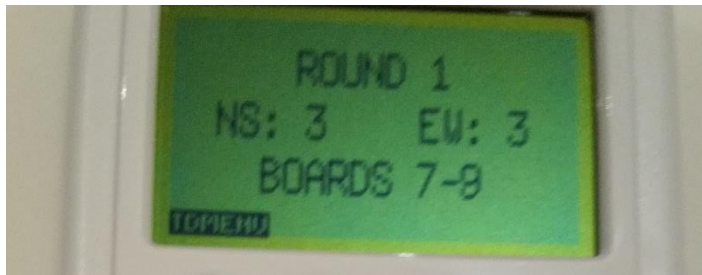
If you haven't been to the club before and haven't been assigned a number, just press enter instead of your number, but let the Director know your name so he can input it into the database.

Your number will be the same from week to week.

Entering the Contract

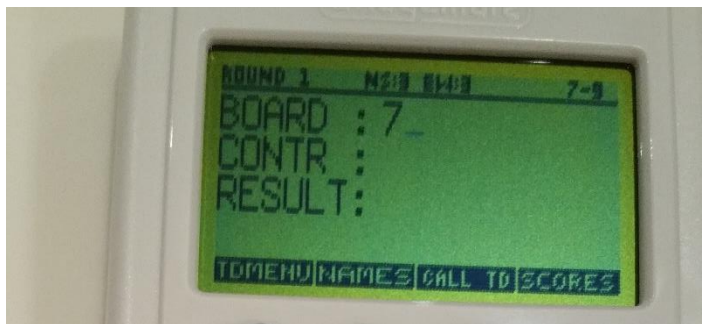
Let's review where we are. We woke the Bridgemate up by pressing OK, we entered the table number, we entered the player numbers. This is the only time during the night we'll have to do this. Now we're ready to play Bridge.

After you press OK if the player names are correct, you'll see something like this:



The Bridgemate is telling you the round number, which North-South (3) and East-West (3) are playing, and the boards to be played this round. Make sure those are the boards at your table and press OK.

Now you see:



Here the Bridgemate is asking you for board 7, what was the contract, and what was the result? You'll have to play the hand first! If you are playing boards out of order, you can press 'Cancel' to backspace and enter a different number for the board. Press OK to move to the next line.

Once the auction is over, or when the hand is finished, North can enter the contract.

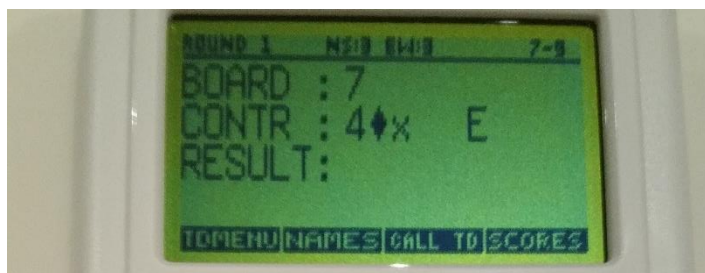
Use the number keys, the suit keys, the N/S or E/W buttons, the double/redouble buttons (X/XX) if needed to enter the contract.

For example, if the contract was 4 diamonds doubled by East, you would press '4', ♦, X, E. (you can press the E/W button a second time to get West. Press the N/S button a second time to get South.) Press OK.

Opening Leads:

The Bridgemate can ask which opening lead was played for each contract, if the Director has activated this option. If you don't remember, just enter anything. You would press '2' and the 'club' symbol (in either order) for the 2 of clubs.

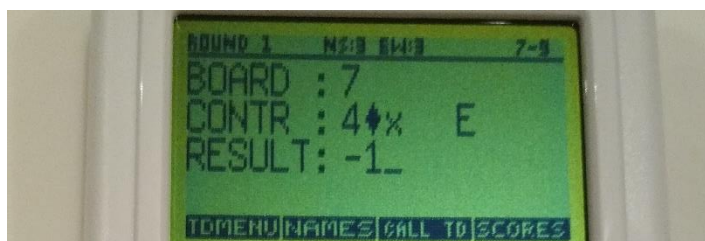
Press OK and when the result of the contract is available, enter that using the number keys (and the minus key if the contract went down).



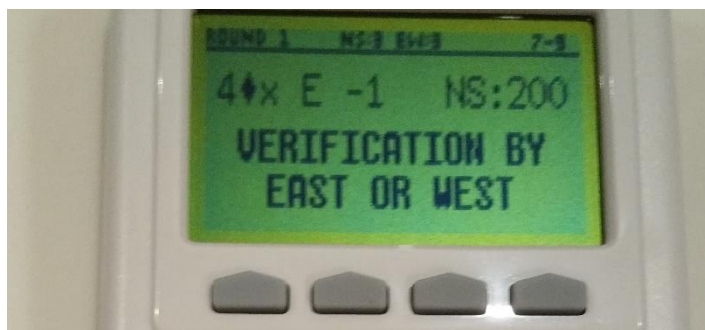
For 4 diamonds making four, press 4 (or the = key).

For 4 diamonds making 6, press 6.

For 4 diamonds down 1, press the minus key and then 1.



Press OK and you'll see:



You can see the Bridgemate calculated the score (200 for NS) by itself. Wait, how did it know EW was vulnerable? Because it knew it was board 7, and board 7 will have a predictable vulnerability pattern.

In a few seconds, you'll see:



The Bridgemate is asking East/West to accept the result. You should present the Bridgemate to either East or West and ask them to accept. They will have to press the unlabeled button under 'accept', not the OK button.

NOTE: If you're East or West, you should carefully look at the contract entered. Is it correct? By the correct declarer with the correct results? If it was doubled, is that entered properly? Was the result made 4 or down 4? If everything looks OK, press accept. If it is not correct, press Cancel and North will re-enter the result correctly and then you can accept it.

If later it becomes apparent that a mistake has been made (e.g. it was North who declared the contract, or it wasn't doubled, or it actually made)... the East or West who accepted the result is to blame! So be careful and don't accept blindly. North does most of the work; your only job is to accept, so make sure you do it accurately!

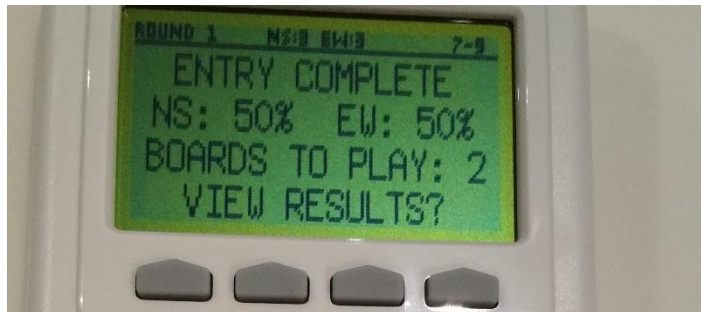
For a hand that was passed out, press the 'PASS' key when you enter the contract. When the board was not played, you must call the Director (as he may have to assess 'arbital scores', in other words a mild penalty for slow play).

Seeing the Scores

Congratulations, you've mastered the basics of using the Bridgemate! Each board and round after this is basically the same thing.

The Bridgemate may now show you how you scored on this board compared to others who've played it, IF the Director has enabled this function. Bridge is a timed game, and if your table is behind the rest, it is not a good idea to chat about what other pairs did on the hand... you need to speed up so as not to make the other tables wait. As one Director put it, reviewing results is a privilege reserved for tables

who finish early. Of course, do not discuss the results in a way that other tables can hear who haven't yet played the boards.



Here the Bridgematic is telling you on this hand, both pairs are in the middle of the pack (not very useful when it's the first round and no one else has played the board!) Press OK to view the results, or cancel to skip to the next hand.

If you choose to see the scores, something like this will pop up (this example is in later rounds when more pairs have played the board) :

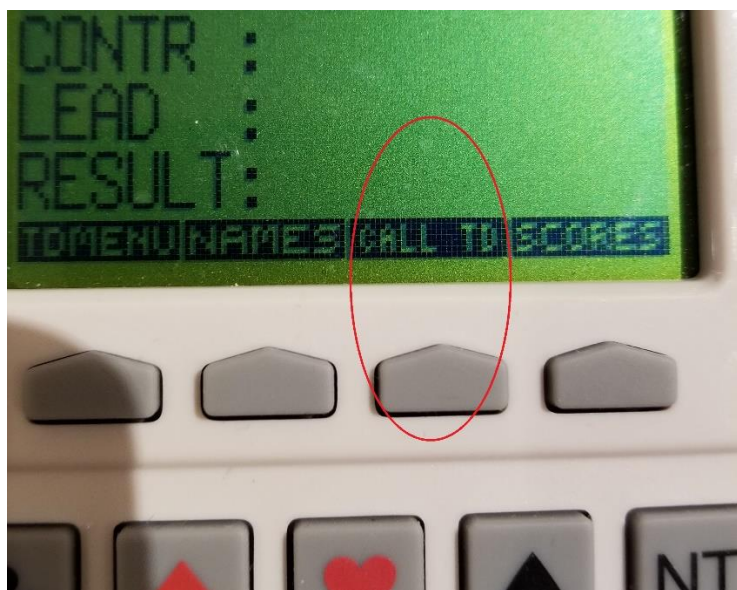
1x	3H	N	+2	200
1x	2S	S	+2	170
1x	2H	S	+2	170
2x	→3H	N	+1	170
2x	3NT	N	-1	50
4x	3NT	N	-2	100

This screen shows what contracts other pairs played in, who the declarer was, and what the result was. You can use the 'arrow keys' (i.e. the unlabeled buttons below the arrows on the screen) to scroll to the next page if applicable.

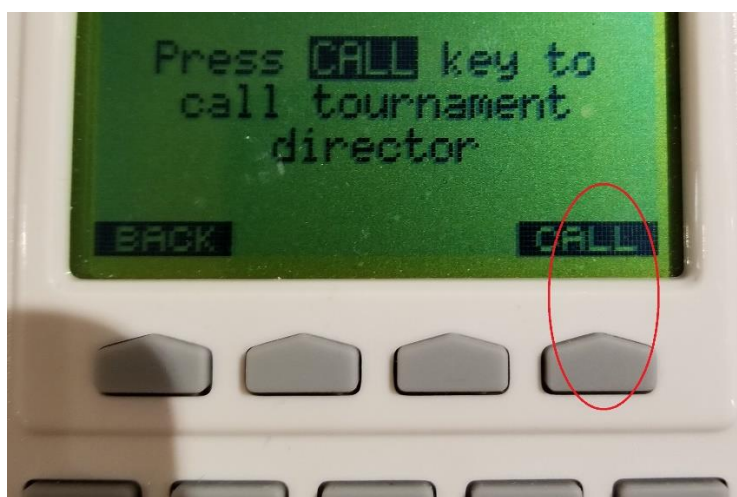
Once you've pressed OK, the screen to enter the next contract will appear.

Calling the Director

While bellowing and hoping the Director can discern who called from across the room still works, there is a better way. On the Bridgematic screen, you will see a button that says "CallTd" (TD stands for Tournament Director.)



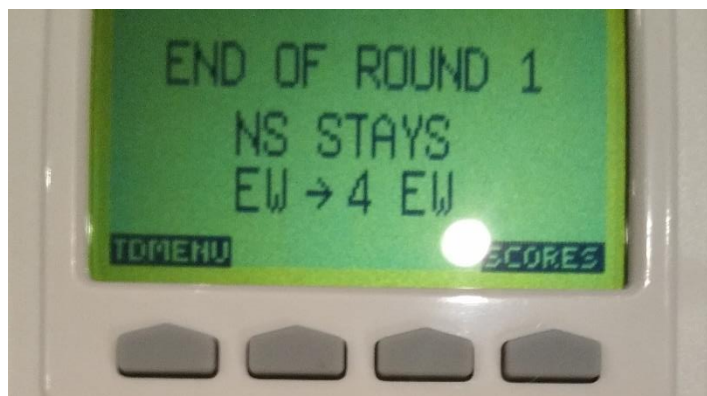
When you press it, another screen will come up to ask you to confirm:



The Director's pager will go off, and will tell him which table is calling. Since the Director doesn't have to scan the room to figure out who called, it's actually faster. And since it's all silent, there is less disturbance for others who are playing.

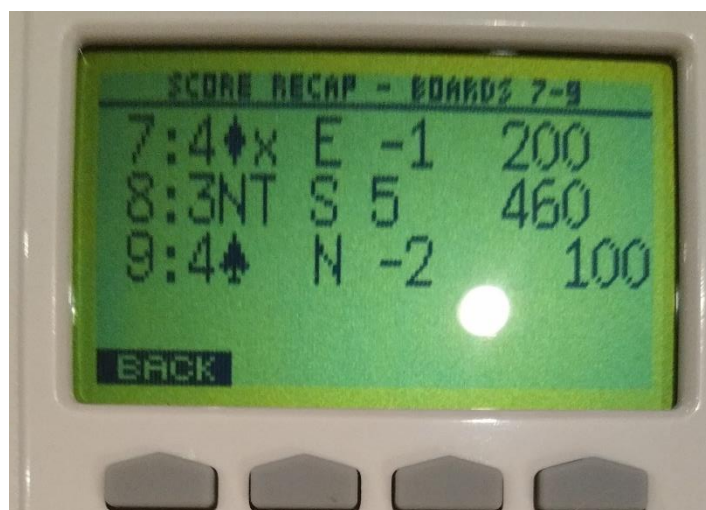
Next Round

At the end of the round, the Bridgmate will let everyone know where they go next:

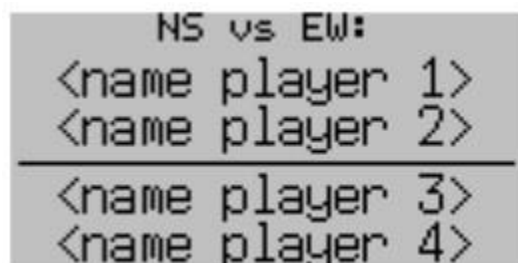


Here North/South remain where they are, and E/W go to table 4, where they are still EW. This can come in handy in Howell movements (where each pair will play North/South and East/West at different tables), and when there is a skip.

If you press the button below 'scores', the Bridgemate will give a recap of the contracts entered on that round:

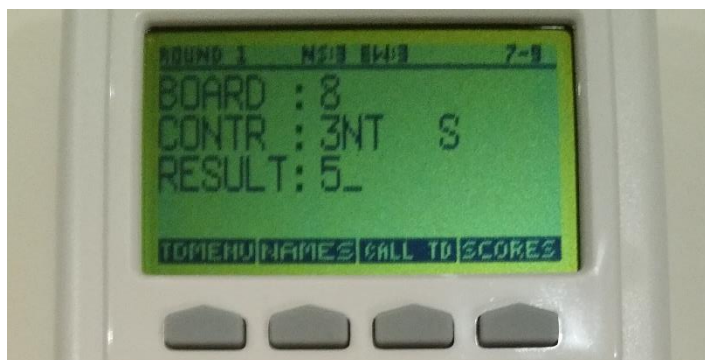


Press the button below 'BACK' and the screen goes back to the previous one. Press OK and a new round begins. Bridgemate will show you the names of the players in this new round:



(actual names would appear). You can say hi to your opponents by name and verify you have the right opponents! Press OK.

Now you'll enter the next contract and results once it's played:



That's 3 No-trump by South, making 5.

When all rounds are played, the Bridgemate will say "END OF SESSION" and you're done. There will be a 'rank' button which will show you an estimate of your percentage score on the session (but if other tables are still playing, and if there were scoring errors later corrected, this percentage may not be accurate).

Additional Information:

Here are some other explanations of how to use the Bridgemates: (note that due to different clubs enabling different options on Bridgemates, there may be slight differences in the instructions)

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/lees/Using%20Bridgemates.pdf>

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/roystonherts/Bridgemate%20User%20Guide%20v2.pdf>

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/pinner/BridgemateInstructions.pdf>

<http://www.vcbridge.org/Writings/Bridgemate%20II.pdf>

For the Advanced User:

The Unlabeled Buttons

The 4 unlabeled buttons just below the Bridgemate screen offer other options, depending on the context. Some examples:

1. Call TD: the Director's pager buzzes him to come to your table
2. Names: correct names previously entered
3. Rank: at the end of the session, see your percentage ranking

4. Game Summary: at the end of the session, see all your contracts
5. Scores: on the contract entry screen, if you press scores, it will show you other contracts entered on that round... then if you press 'correc', you can correct any of those scores, even if E/W already accepted them. Type the number of the incorrect board, press OK and it is erased and you can re-enter the correct result.
6. Hand record: see the hand record for a hand you've played. Analysis button shows you what contracts could be made by either side double-dummy.

Life Master Tip:

Life Masters may have a letter in their ACBL number. This can be converted to a number. The Bridgemates have the conversions on the back of the device.

The Bridgemate App

If you have a smartphone or tablet (iphone or Android), you can install a free-ish app that integrates with the Bridgemates in real time.

To install the app, go to your app store and search for 'bridgemate'. Install the app and start it. Enter your name and email and choose a password. Enter your ACBL number or arbitrary number that the director assigned you if you don't have an ACBL number (please see last page of this document for assigned player numbers). Now go to Club Memberships and find the Hart House and Rosedale Glen Duplicate Bridge Clubs in the Ontario clubs section and press join. (the current version of the app can only handle one club name per set of Bridgemates, so 2 clubs are sharing this club name on the app). Under settings, choose 'show results as' American Style. You're ready to go. (ask me if you'd like me to do it for you on your phone—takes 2 minutes).

Once the director activates the Bridgemates, the session will show up in your app under Current Event. Click on it, and you can see a guide card (what tables and what boards and what opponents you'll be playing each round), score card, and current ranking. Click on a contract in the score card and you'll see detailed results for that hand (including what other pairs did), the hand record with double-dummy analysis, and you can analyze the play of the hand (basically you can play through the hand card by card, with the computer always telling you what the end result will be with each card chosen, assuming perfect play by everyone thereafter). All your results, rankings etc. are continuously updated in real time throughout the session. You will not be able to see boards you haven't yet played.

You can also see previous sessions under 'past results'.

The app is free for 6 months, and thereafter costs \$5/year, or \$7 for 2 years. The money goes entirely to Bridgemate, not to the director or the club. There is no cost to the club. You have to specifically tell it to purchase 1 or 2 years after the 6 months is up, it won't automatically charge you.

If you play at other clubs which have activated the app in conjunction with their Bridgemates, you can join those clubs and do the same things with hands you play there (no extra cost).

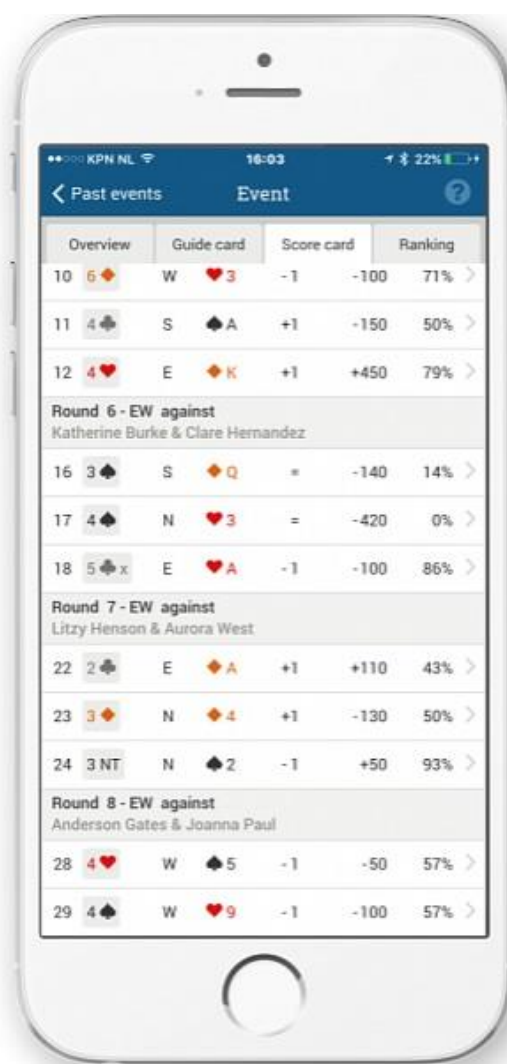
Your phone or tablet must have internet access (via your data plan or WiFi connection) in order to use the app. Hart House has free wireless; ask the Director for the password.

Overview of features here:

<http://www.bridgemate.com/app/features-and-benefits/>

More detailed instructions are available here:

<http://www.bridgemate.com/resources/documents/bridgemate-app/Playermanual.pdf>



See it all live as it's happening. Your scores and rankings conveniently and individually displayed in an intuitive app on your iPhone or Android smartphone. Follow your results and your opponents' scores during the game, and analyse your play.

