



Sheffield Bridge Club

World of duplicate bridge - Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association and the English Bridge Union

There are different types of bridge ranging from kitchen-table bridge right up to World Championship events. The most common type is **duplicate pairs**, which is played in clubs all over the world. The reason it is called duplicate is that competing pairs play the same hands in the session and the winning pairs will be those who have achieved better scores compared to the other pairs sitting in the same positions at other tables.

There are three main levels to the framework within which competitive duplicate bridge is organised and played:

- National
- County
- Club

National - English Bridge Union

The English Bridge Union (EBU) is the overarching organisation in this country. The EBU is affiliated to the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation.

The EBU comprises 39 constituent counties who each have a number (according to size) of shareholders who elect the Board of Directors. These representatives of counties meet twice a year to receive reports, dealing with general EBU matters and to help set policy.

The EBU headquarters are in Aylesbury where around 20 professional members of staff are employed. They provide a range of services including organising national competitions, determining issues of law and ethics, selecting and managing international teams, magazine production, awarding master points, managing the National Grading Scheme and providing a range of bridge supplies.

There are annually elected Laws and Ethics and Selection Committees which involve ordinary members as well as Board members.

With respect to national competitions there is a vast range available all of which entail individuals applying directly to take part. These cover weekend and midweek 2/3 day events (Congresses), 1 day events and knockout tournaments where entrants get drawn against each other and have to make their own arrangements for matches to take place.

There are also national Simultaneous Pairs events (and even worldwide) organised with heats, where the same hands are played within many clubs and then scored across the entire field.

Sheffield players have enjoyed considerable success in national competitions over the years with several first places.

When a player joins a Bridge club that is affiliated to the EBU the player automatically becomes an EBU member and gets an EBU number. A percentage of each table money payment goes to the EBU and to the Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association (YCBA). This is commonly known as "Pay-to-Play" (P2P) and is a major source of income to fund EBU and County activity.

The EBU should be regarded as the first port of call for members' and clubs' queries on just about every bridge matter.

The website <http://www.ebu.co.uk/> provides comprehensive guidance.

National - English Bridge Education and Development

English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) is a recently formed charity registered with the Charity Commission. The EBU transferred the majority of its education activities to the new charity notably teacher and Tournament Director training.

The charity has two public benefit objectives: the furtherance of duplicate bridge as an activity which enriches the life of all, and, secondly, a specific aim to foster duplicate bridge among those in full-time education. It believes that bridge brings with it important benefits in terms of fostering social interaction, as well as supporting the use of mathematical reasoning and the application of logic.

County - Yorkshire Contract Bridge Association

The largest of the 39 County Associations is the YCBA. It covers 34 affiliated clubs including our own Sheffield Bridge Club. YCBA has over 4000 members with the 34 clubs stretching from Wensleydale, Thirsk and Scarborough in the north to Beauchief in the south. An unusually large percentage of clubs have their own dedicated premises.

YCBA has a Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary and organises several county events notably the Yorkshire Pairs and the Waddington Shield (county-wide knockout teams). These are direct entry events and act as qualifiers for National finals. Other direct entry events are:

- Nelson Rose Bowl (Ladies Teams of 4) - Harrogate
- The Individual - Wakefield
- Peter Littlewood Pairs – Sheffield
- Flitch - Doncaster (married couples)

The YCBA “outsources” these four events for the named Clubs to organise. There are other YCBA events with involving qualification at the Club followed by a central final. These are:

- Waddington Cup (Local Waddington League champions)
- Mixed Pairs
- Yorkshire Cup (teams of 4)

The county is also well advanced in offering Improver events – an improver is someone of limited tournament experience below master status – both as one-offs and at the annual YCBA Congress. The Congress itself has been going for just over 80 years and is probably the most successful county Congress in the country. It is held each year in Harrogate at the start of June, with three days of bridge providing various events for players with a range of ability and experience.

YCBA organises three Simultaneous Pairs events each year. For these events, the County Tournament Secretary creates hands centrally and distributes them to participating clubs. The hands are played on the same evening at all participating clubs. The scores are then returned to Secretary who compiles an overall ranking list. A booklet is normally provided with an expert commentary on the hands.

The YCBA is generally recognised as the best organised of all the 39 Counties making up the EBU. Given its reputation, it has recently taken over three EBU Congresses and made a great success of them – the Great Northern Swiss Pairs in October, the Spring Congress in February and the Northern Easter Festival.

Another admirable feature is the Yorkshire League which sees around 90 teams from the 34 clubs playing against each other on seven Sundays each season, with ten divisions. Over the years Sheffield A (we have 8 teams) have won Division 1 many times (including in 2017). Division 1 winners progress to a national competition which Sheffield has won twice.

As with national competitions, Sheffield players have won many YCBA championships.

Two other ventures are the Northern Bridge League (NBL) and the President's Cup where Yorkshire compete with other northern associations. NBL was initiated in 2006 and is played on four Saturdays in the July to October period at three levels, A, B and C. The winners of each level go on to a national final the following year. The President's Cup is played over one weekend in the summer and is aimed at "top" county players.

Website: <http://www.ycba.co.uk/>