



NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION INC.

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No. 207 February 2021

Approved for Print Post S65001/00163

ABN 70 053 651 666

ABF PLAYER SURVEY 2020-21

*Thank
you*

I wish to thank the over 2,500 players who responded to the ABF Bridge Player Survey 2020-21.

It is an extraordinary response rate of 25% and is a greater

sample size than national polls like Newspoll or Roy Morgan with sample sizes of 1,500-2,000. The response demonstrates the huge interest and concern that bridge members have for the future of our great game.

We now have the enormous task of analysing the responses by the 2,500 players to 30 questions that can be further sliced with Pivot Tables, creating charts and graphs for each and drawing conclusions. The final question was open ended, asking for any comments, which received about 200 responses which need to be sifted, edited and arranged thematically. A couple of members with data management and statistical expertise have volunteered to assist, but if you have such skills and would like to help please contact me at petercox@ozemail.com.au.

I hope to have a preliminary report for the ABF Management Committee meeting on 24-25 February, but here is an example:

Question: Why Do You Play Bridge?

(Respondents with <50 and >1000 Masterpoints)

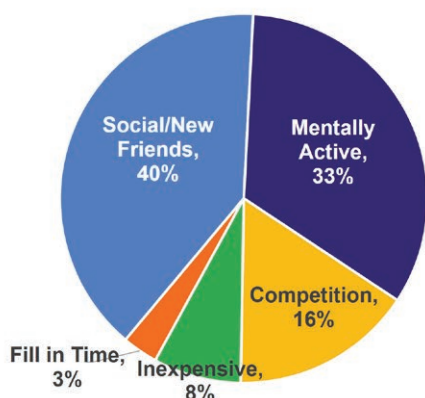
- The Social experience, including to make New Friends, are very important, particularly for the relative beginners with a 40% share of responses but constitute 60% of our members.
- Making New Friends is less important for experienced players with more than 1,000 masterpoints, as they have already made a number of bridge friends over the years.
- Being mentally active is a very important motivation for bridge players of all ranks.
- The competitive element is doubly important for experienced players than beginners.
- The benefit of bridge being inexpensive is relatively low but not inconsequential for an older age group often on fixed incomes.
- A small percentage find bridge a good way to fill in time.

Recommendations

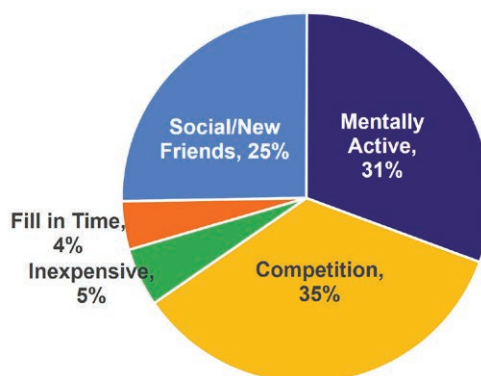
- The provision of a friendly social experience is absolutely essential for both clubs and congresses.
- Promotion of the mental benefits of bridge should be prioritised by clubs to attract beginners.
- Competition is important but particularly for congress organisers to promote quality interesting competitions for all levels.
- Online bridge also needs to provide the best possible social experience with the use of video and audio, such as in Real Bridge, to provide the f2f event experience of communicating with partners and opponents.

Peter Cox

Why Do You Play Bridge?
Respondents with fewer than 50 Masterpoints



Why Do You Play Bridge?
Respondents with greater than 1000 Masterpoints





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ADVERTISING: 15 MARCH
ARTICLES: 12 MARCH

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**IMPROVE
YOUR
DEFENCE**

with
Ron Klinger

Solution on page 17

S/All

♠ 8 7 6
♥ A K Q 9 4
♦ K 8 4
♣ J 3



♠ J
♥ —
♦ A J 9 7 6 3
♣ Q 9 8 7 5 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♥	2NT	1♠
pass	4♠	all pass	3♠

West leads the ♦10: four from dummy. How should East plan the defence?

BRIDGE & SCIENCE

Marek Malysa, Gdansk

This article and introduction was reprinted from the IBPA Bulletin:

“Dr. Malysa is a retired Mathematics professor from Gdansk University, Chair of the WBF Bridge and Science Committee, organiser of the 2016 World Bridge Games in Wroclaw, an author, a bridge teaching programme developer, the organiser of several scientific conferences and a Polish Bridge Union vice-president.”

Some time ago, the WBF established a Bridge & Science Committee in order to obtain serious scientific results and to use them in the promotion of our game. It wasn't unique, since scientific research had already been established: Samantha Punch of the University of Sterling had created the Sociology of Bridge, with its own Ph.D. programme; Véronique Ventos, with NukkAI, is exploring Artificial Intelligence to be used in bridge; and the first and second International Scientific Conferences dedicated to our game took place in Poland (while the next one was in Croatia).

Following twenty-year-old data from the University of California, Berkeley, about the health advantages of playing bridge, academics from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun (Poland) started research on how playing bridge can delay the onset of dementia and, particularly, Alzheimer's Disease. Despite some problems caused by COVID-19, we completed our pilot research in two Welfare Houses and, on this basis, we shall start the main research soon.

The main question is, can playing bridge prevent or even reverse dementia? We all know that playing bridge keeps us in fine mental shape (the premise is that Cognitive Reserve – defined as the mind's resistance to brain damage – increases when we play bridge) but strong scientific proof is needed. M.C. Diamond's report tells us that playing bridge lowers the chance of Alzheimer's by as much as 75%. In my opinion, that's an underestimate.

To test all that, we tried to teach bridge to patients of the Alzheimer's Centre in Warsaw, all of them diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease (in their case,

Mild Cognitive Impairment). They were brought by their families to the Centre and taken back home each working day. The patients had three hours of bridge lessons a week. Initially, they couldn't count to ten and keep their cards properly arranged but, after six months, it wasn't a problem for them any more. They played bridge – simplified – with no bidding, but taking tricks, counting to 13 and 40. This was a huge, very pleasant, surprise for all of the bridge experts and the Alzheimer's Centre staff. MCI patients were actually able to learn a brand new skill!

Our research group also had other kinds of therapy like dancing, dog therapy, while a control group also had the other therapies but had no bridge lessons at all. After one year, the loss of cognitive ability in the bridge group was more than two times lower than that in the control group. That is impressive but, unluckily, statistically not significant enough. So deeper and wider research, in terms of evaluating methods, is needed.

That's why the non-profit foundation Bridge to the People

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/BridgetoThePeople/reviews/>

will continue financing research and searching for sources of financing. More about them, and how to donate, can be found on their web page:

www.bridgetothepeople.eu

Their first research report from the pilot stage can be found at

<http://www.worldbridge.org/2020/06/18/bridge-and-dementia-prevention/>

The foundation, together with Gdansk Medical University, will soon start research on Playing Bridge and the Immune System. We are seeking funds for this as well.

How this kind of promotional message works was observed in Poland within my program BRIDGE60+. Using a dementia prevention slogan, I recruited 310 clubs (created in the program) containing thousands of elderly people, giving them a chance to avoid social isolation and build the cognitive reserve necessary to avoid or at least delay the onset of dementia.

All of this shows that whenever serious scientific research results are ready, we (WBF, EBL and other bridge organizations) will have in our hands strong promotional arguments that playing bridge carries additional values worth sponsoring.