

Hand Records & Improving Your Bridge

Purpose:

This guide assists you in using hand records and the enhanced results output generated by the Dealer4 dealing machine and software used in Unit 550.

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Overview

Dealing hands starts with Dealer4 software on the computer which generates random deals for a board set. There are billions of bridge hands and Dealer4 can generate any of them. Over time the hand patterns and HCP counts will come very close to the theoretical perfect random distribution. For example, the expected number of hands with a 4-4-3-2 distribution is 21.55% if shuffling and dealing is truly random. That is the percentage that the Dealer4 software will generate when a large number of deals are examined. On any given day, the percentage is very likely to be different than 21.55%.

The Directors cannot “tweak” the Dealer4 software to generate “more difficult” hands or “wild” distributions. The reason that computer dealt hands “feel” different is that when humans shuffle, they do not take enough time and effort to create a random deal.

Instructors may use other software to create hands for teaching. This is another advantage of the Dealer4: it will accept input from many different sources.

In addition to the hand records, the regular results output of a game has been further enhanced by the use of *ACBLmerge*, provided free by the La Jolla Bridge Club.

A deal file (.pbn) for the game is saved on the computer. This file is used to drive the Dealer4 device to deal a deck of cards into the four board slots. See the Dealer4 machine operate in this [video](#). This file is also saved on our websites so you can reproduce the entire board set without typing a single character! More on this later.

Obtaining Results

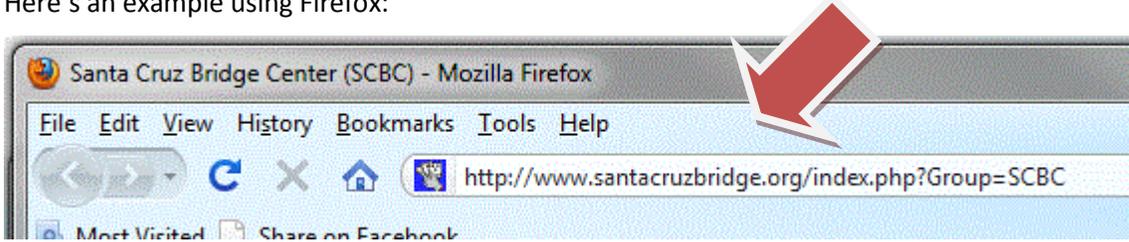
Before choosing one of the methods below, you must select the club website where you played, as there are currently two different sites which provide hand records: a [Unit 550 site](#),

http://www.santacruzbridge.org and a [SCBC site](#), (Nancy's Bridge House does not currently use the Dealer4). If these links do not work, copy and paste the one of the URLs, starts with "http://", into your browser address line:

Unit 550: <http://www.santacruzbridge.org>

SCBC: <http://www.santacruzbridge.org/index.php?Group=SCBC>

Here's an example using Firefox:



Using the Results Link:

The Unit 550 website:

We are the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) of [Santa Cruz County](#), U within Unit 550 and provide a pleasant facility for those in the Santa Cruz area.

Except for Unit games and Sectional tournaments, games are conducted by A obtain their game schedules and on-line results.

Bridge Club	Owner / Director	Location
Bid 'em Up	Nancy Wainer	Capitola
Eureka	Bill McIntosh	Capitola
Monarch	Mark Hasey	Capitola
Nancy's Bridge House	Nancy Driscoll	Aptos
Santa Cruz	Sherry Gilbreath	Capitola
Surf City	Pam Benz	Capitola

The SCBC website:

Welcome to the Santa Cruz Bridge Center. If you'd like to play or learn duplicate bridge, we can help you. We are part of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and are located in Santa Cruz, CA. We promote the game of bridge and provide a pleasant facility for those in the Santa Cruz area.

Daily and evening games are open to players of all levels with some games reserved for members. (You can print out the calendar by following these [instructions](#).) You can find the calendar, schedule and results in the left menu. (You can print out the calendar by following these [instructions](#).) You can find the calendar, schedule and results in the left menu.

Game results are immediately available via the **Results** dropdown menu at the top of the page (results only). The calendar, schedule and results do not include Unit 550 information.

We also offer a variety of lessons on bridge for beginning social players as well as our current [classes](#) and practice games as well as ACBL information. Our games include free coffee, tea and snacks and some games have an entire meal.

Now, click on [Results] ▼ and select the game you played.

Accessing Results via the Calendar

An alternative method is using the calendar. Here again, you must start with either the Unit site for Unit games or the SCBC website for club games. Then, click on [Calendar] in the left navigation panel, locate the day you played on and click on the ♦ by the game title. The illustration below shows the SCBC calendar on November 11, its day has a red background. There are eight games before November 11 with enhanced results.

See Unit 550 Website Calendar for Unit Game Schedule						
November 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12:00PM ♦Open Pairs 6:30PM Open Pairs	2 10:30AM ♦Open Pairs w/Lunch (\$3)alice hopkins memorial 6:30PM ♠NLM Pairs Upgraded Club Championship	3 12:00PM ♠Open Pairs	4 12:00PM ♠NLM Pairs Membership Game 6:30PM ♦Open Pairs	5 10:30AM ♠Open Pairs w/travelers, Lunch(\$) membership game	6
7 1:00PM ♦NLM Pairs Free Lesson at Noon ClubChamp	8 12:00PM ♦Open Pairs 6:30PM ♦Open Pairs	9 10:30AM ♦Open Pairs w/Lunch (\$3)	10 12:00PM ♦Open Pairs Club Championship	11 10:30AM NLM Pairs Bridge Camp 6:30PM Open Pairs ClubChamp	12 10:30AM Open Pairs w/travelers, Lunch(\$)	13
14 1:00PM NLM Pairs Free Lesson at Noon	15 12:00PM Open Pairs Membership Game	16 10:30AM Open Pairs w/Lunch (\$3)club championship	17 12:00PM Open Pairs	18 12:00PM NLM Pairs	19 10:30AM Open Pairs w/travelers, Lunch(\$)	20 10:30AM Open Other barometer game club championship

Understanding & Using the Results

A full description of all the features of the new results report may be found [here](#). There are three new features highlighted below.

Recap

Click on your pair number in summary table.

 PAIRS IN STRAT A=13/B=11/C=4

No	Name	Name	Section			Score	Pct	Section Awards
			Flt	Rnk-A	Rnk-B			
1	Mary Pulliam	Wilson Fieberling	C	5	3	1	60.00	50.00 0.44 (B)
2	Marilyn Diola	Marian Steinmetz	B	.	4/5	.	59.00	49.17 0.25 (B)
3	Peggy Kiefer	Phyllis Cramblet	B	.	.	.	57.00	47.50
4	John Peterson	Lani Ray	C	.	.	2	58.50	48.75 0.22 (C)
5	Neil Joseph Smyth	Kenneth Llacera	B	1	1	.	85.00	70.83 1.30 (A)
6	Stanna Balassi	Irene Thomas	C	.	.	.	50.50	42.08
7	Bonnie Simon	Jack Simon	C	.	.	.	49.50	41.25
8	Susan Slinger	Mary Peterson	B	.	4/5	.	59.00	49.17 0.25 (B)
9	Bill McIntosh	Bette Harken	A	4	.	.	61.50	51.25 0.46 (A)
10	William Messenger	Kelvin Pierce	B	.	.	.	57.00	47.50
12	Steve Harris	Ann Ottenberg	A	2	.	.	63.50	52.92 0.91 (A)
13	Jane Jennings	Donald Seldeen	B	3	2	.	62.50	52.08 0.65 (A)
14	Richard Wasserstrom	Eunice Lee	B	.	.	.	57.00	47.50
Totals							780.00	

This will provide a recap of all your results.

Board	Plus	Minus	Pts	Pct	Opponents
1		50	3.00	60.00	William Messenger - Kelvin Pierce
2	110		2.00	40.00	William Messenger - Kelvin Pierce
3		100	2.00	40.00	Stanna Balassi - Irene Thomas
4		650	0.00	0.00	Richard Wasserstrom - Eunice Lee
5	110		5.00	100.00	Richard Wasserstrom - Eunice Lee
6	1430		5.00	100.00	Richard Wasserstrom - Eunice Lee
7	170		1.50	30.00	Peggy Kiefer - Phyllis Cramblet
8		450	2.50	50.00	Peggy Kiefer - Phyllis Cramblet
9		100	4.00	80.00	Susan Slinger - Mary Peterson

The red ones are where you were significantly below average. You'll want to check these. But don't overlook the green ones to see if the better than average result on the board was something you made happen or just a "gift".

Double Dummy Makes

This section of the report shows all contracts that can be made if all players knew all four hands and bid and played perfectly. Of course, that doesn't happen at the bridge table. Just because the contract will make 4♠ if you take a low probability line of play does not mean that is what you should have done! Duplicate is a game of percentages (that's why it is so important that the deals over the long run represent the true percentages of the hand distributions), bidding & playing skills, judgment & experience, and table feel¹. Those who master all of these will win more often than others over time.

Reviewing the Double Dummy Makes will help you assess if your line of play or defense was effective given all the other information you had at the time.

¹ On any given day luck plays a factor because there are a limited number of boards in play. Over a large number of games, luck plays a lesser role than any of the other factors.

The little blue numbers, such as ♠5N, shows the number of tricks that can be taken; in this example, if Spades are trump, 2 Spade contract would fail by 3 tricks. This is helpful in determining if you should have bid on or doubled their contact.

Par

The par score is the raw score for the contract beyond which neither side can bid further to improve the score for their side. The par score is shown from the perspective of N-S, i.e. it is negative if E-W are making a contract or N-S must sacrifice. All sacrifice contracts are assumed to be doubled. Reviewing Par versus your contact will hone your bidding judgment.

Replaying Hands

You had a bad result on a hand but you can't see after looking at all the hands what you could have done differently. Before Dealer4, you had to write down all the hands and then hopefully find someone to shed some light on what you should have done. Now there is another solution: load the hands on your computer and have a program step you through the best line of play or defense. This section explains how.

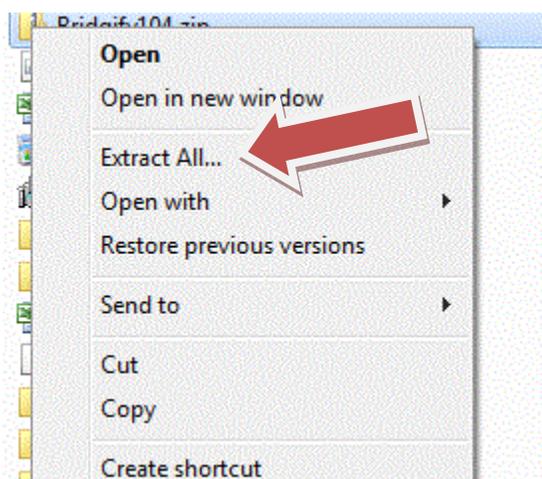
Download Bridgify

Bridgify is a Windows program which will allow you to see a double dummy result from a point in the play or let you try a line of play. It is a wonderful tool for analyzing your playing decisions. Visit the Bridgify [website](http://www.bridgify.net/) (<http://www.bridgify.net/>) and download the program by clicking on DOWNLOAD and Saving the file on your computer. The file is in a compacted format called a .zip file, so you must "unpack it" to use it.

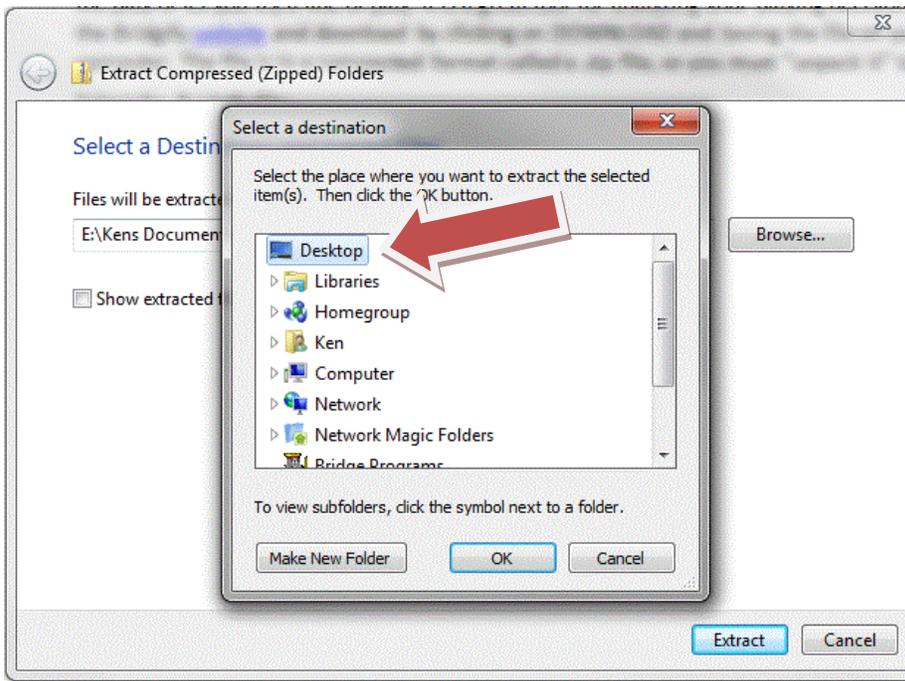
Select the Bridgify file where you stored it,



Right-click on the zipped icon and select Extract All...



In the dialog box that opens, click on Browse and select Desktop, which should be at the top of the list.



Now click [OK], click [Extract] and you will have Bridgify on your desktop with the associated Help file².

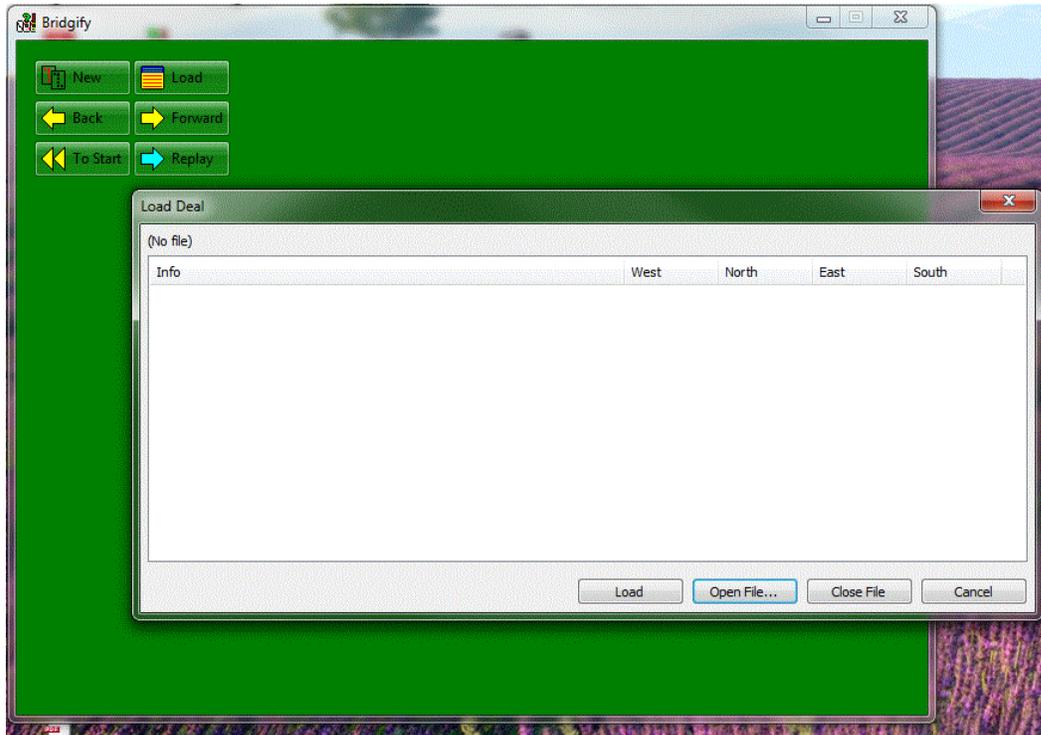
² You may also store Bridgify and the Help File in a folder. In this case, create a shortcut and move the shortcut to the Desktop so Bridgify is easily accessible.

Replay with Bridgify

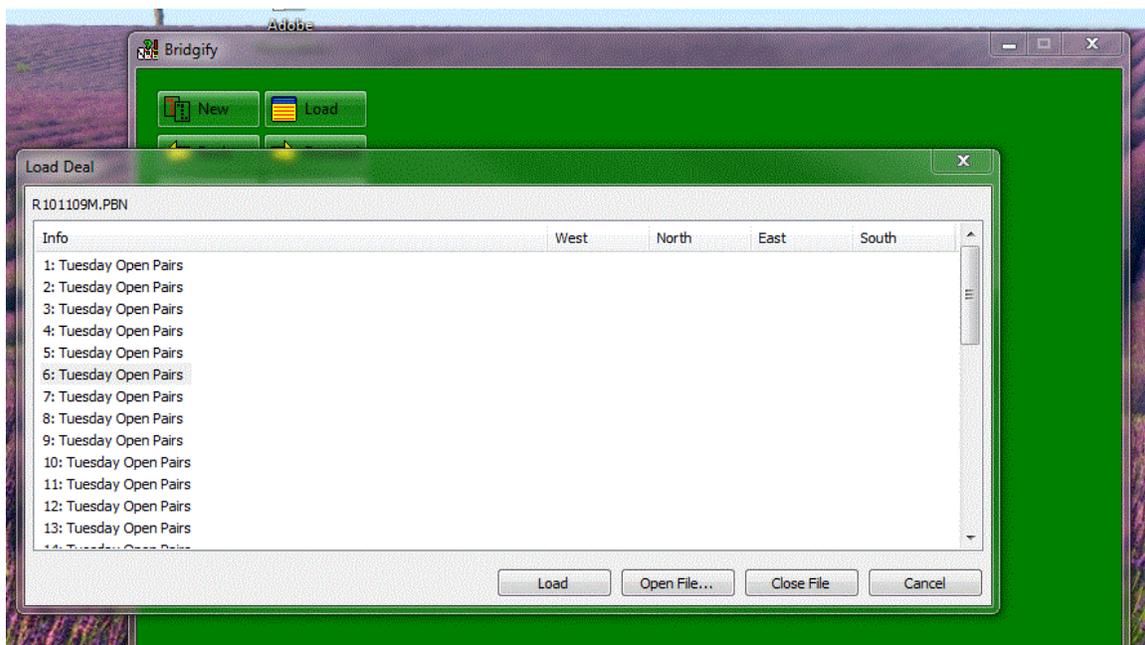
When you next have a hand you want replay, here's the steps to use Bridgify:

View the results page on your browser, see "Obtaining Results" above for the steps. Right-click on PBN (the second line of the results page) and save the file to a folder you can find easily. For example, create a folder in My Documents called "Bridge Results".

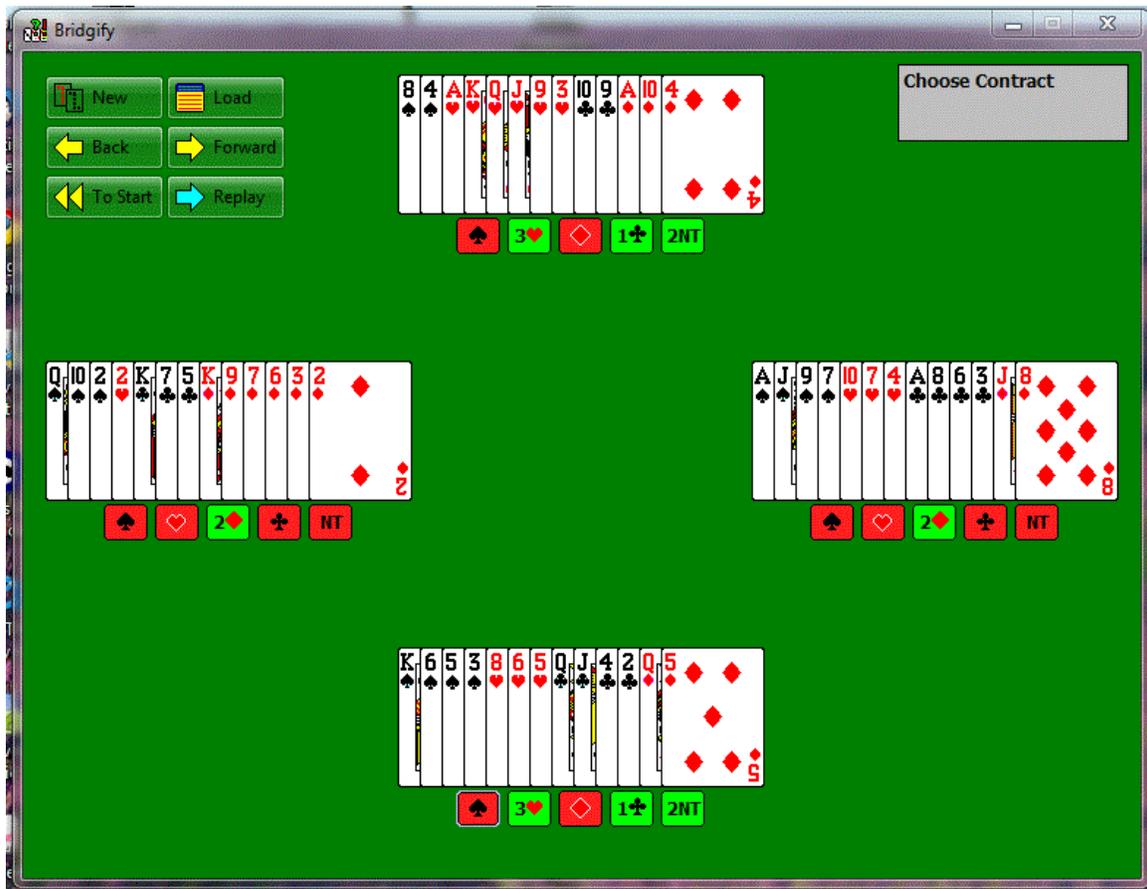
Now, Double-click on Bridgify on your desktop and click on "Load"; here's the screen you'll see:



Click on [Open File...] and navigate to the folder where you saved the PBN file and Double-click on the file.

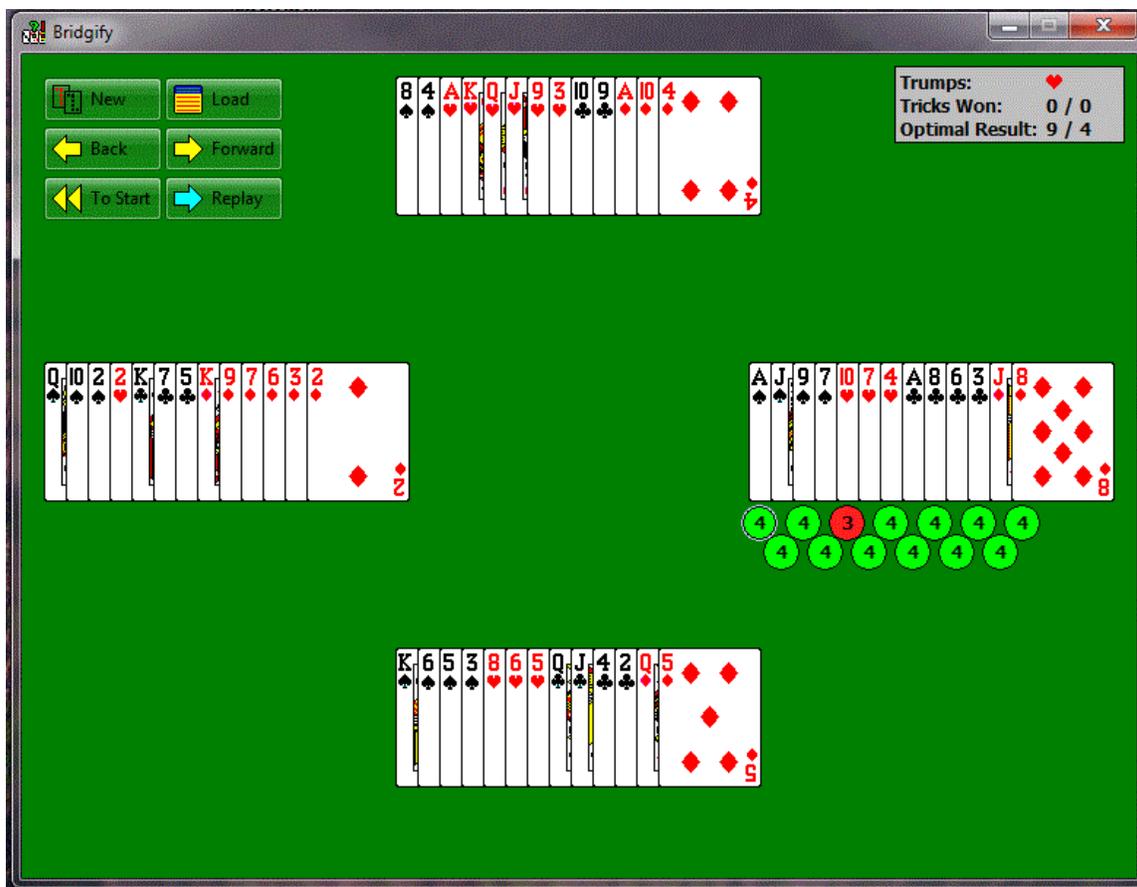


Select the board you want to analyze by double-clicking on the board number. The board is displayed in Bridgify with all the possible contracts:



Select the double-dummy contract by clicking on one of the symbols under a hand. For example, in the deal above assume you were defending 4♥ as East and got a bad result. Right away you can see that 3H should be the best North can do.

Click on the little box with 3♥ and play out the hand selecting the cards as you played them. Bridgify will show you where you went astray. In this case, you see that any lead but the 10 of trump limits declarer to 9 tricks at the beginning (you will take 4, thus the 4s in green circles under all cards except the Heart 10). If you lead the 10, you already know your mistake. If you lead anything else, you need to keep looking



by continuing to play out the hand. The numbers in the circles indicate how many tricks that side can take, assuming double dummy play, at that point in the hand. If you just hit enter, Bridgify will play out the hand double-dummy. To make the best use of Bridgify, be sure to read the short Bridgify Help File.

Dealer4 Questions & Answers

Q: Can the Director making the boards for a game choose a theme or choose random? Exactly what are the options?

A: There are no options when dealing for a game. The Director cannot “tweak” the generator to deal “hard” or “easy” hands. If we allowed this, the distribution patterns would not match the expected percentages for hand distributions.

Q: Yes, but isn’t there software, like Dealmaster Pro, to generate specific hand types and distributions?

A: Instructors can use other software to generate and deal boards to meet their class requirements. This other software is not used to create the board sets used in regular duplicate games.

Q: Did the Club Owners purchase the Dealer4?

A: Unit 550 purchased the Dealer4 for use in the Unit through fundraising and donations; the endowment was not used. The Unit owns the Dealer4 and permits the Club Owners and instructors in Unit 550 to use the Dealer4 without charge so that all games may have the benefit of hand records and the enhanced results page.

Q: Aren’t there are more voids in the hands now than when the boards were dealt by hand?

A: An analysis of the first 10 days of using the Dealer4 software to generate hands gives the following statistics:

Number of hands:	1360
Expected number of voids:	68 (1 in 20 hands)
Actual number of voids:	68
Expected number of hands with at least one singleton:	453 (1 in 3 hands)
Actual number of hands with at least one singleton:	417 (1 in 3.26 hands)

The Unit will continue to monitor the Dealer4 statistics against the expected hand distribution pattern which would occur if the generated hands were perfectly random.

Q: Don’t humans deal randomly too?

A: Wayne Stuart III replies: “It is to be expected that the dealing machine will appear to have slightly (but noticeably) more distributional hands due to the inferior shuffles that human deals produce. You will find that the dealing machine will be just about perfect, modulo some standard deviation; however, if you were to hand shuffle the same number of deals, the deals will be significantly “flatter” than the expectation from a truly random distribution.”

Q: Why is that?

A: In order to achieve the level of randomness provided by Dealer4, the human dealer must make a minimum of 7 riffle shuffles. The typical human dealer does not make this effort. The 7 shuffles is backed up by scientific study & research, which you can find with a google search, here’s a couple of good ones from [BridgeHands](#) and the [ACBL](#).