

Results of 2021 South African Bridge Player Survey

First of all, a big thank you to the 235 bridge players who took two minutes each to complete the questionnaire. Now, that might look like a very small number of players, but it isn't. Let me explain why.

The South African Bridge Federation (SABF) has approximately 4,400 members. About 1,000, or 22%, do not have E-mail addresses recorded on the SABF database. These 1,000 probably do not play bridge online and there is no easy way to contact them when we go back to face to face bridge. That's not good news.

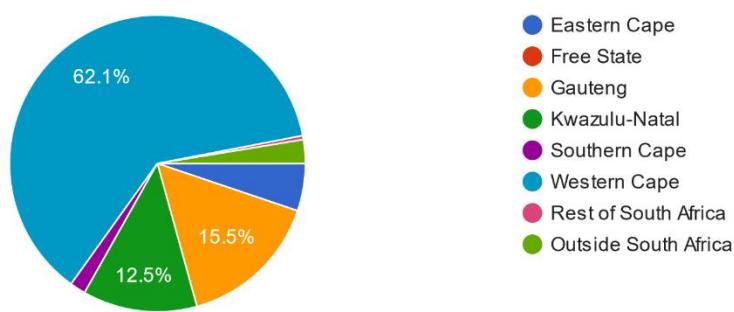
During one (typical) week in April there were 2,572 participants in the 53 BBO pairs sessions organised countrywide. If you consider that most people play in two or more sessions a week, then the number of players, including visitors from outside the SABF, was approximately 1,000, or less than 25% of the SABF membership. So, nearly 25% of our active players responded. Once you factor in that only 263 players, including 40 from outside the SABF, have participated in WCBU pairs tournaments in 2021 and that 144 of the responders were from the Western Cape then the numbers become even more significant, for this region at least.

As you go through the graphs I am sure some responses will jump out at you. I was particularly struck by two. Nearly 90% of the players want to continue playing online once Covid is behind us. This is not to say they will not also be playing face to face at clubs but it does sound ominous for traditional clubs.

Although just a small fraction of the players classified themselves as beginners, more than 20% expressed a need for bridge education.

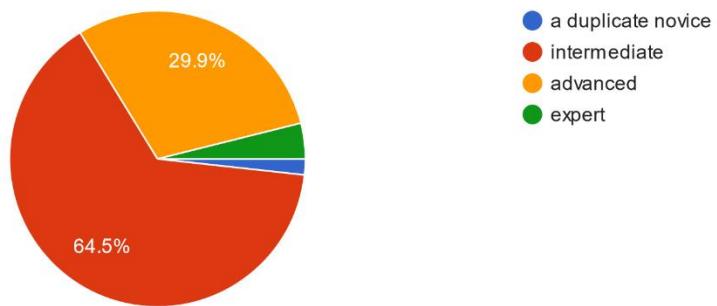
1. In which region do you live?

232 responses



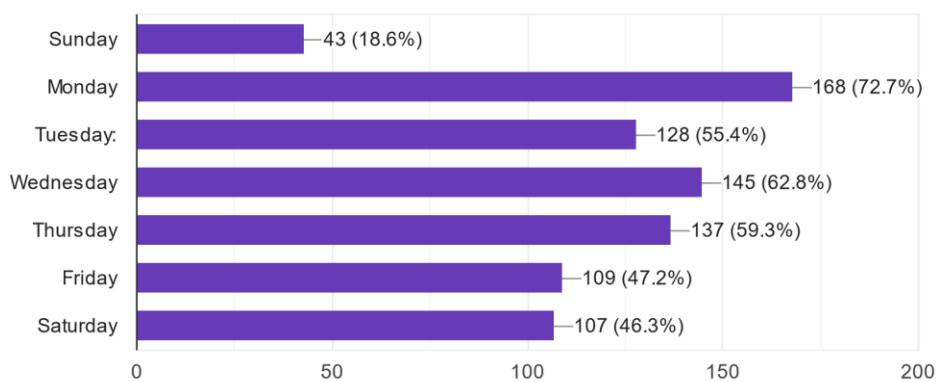
2. How do you rate your bridge competence?

231 responses



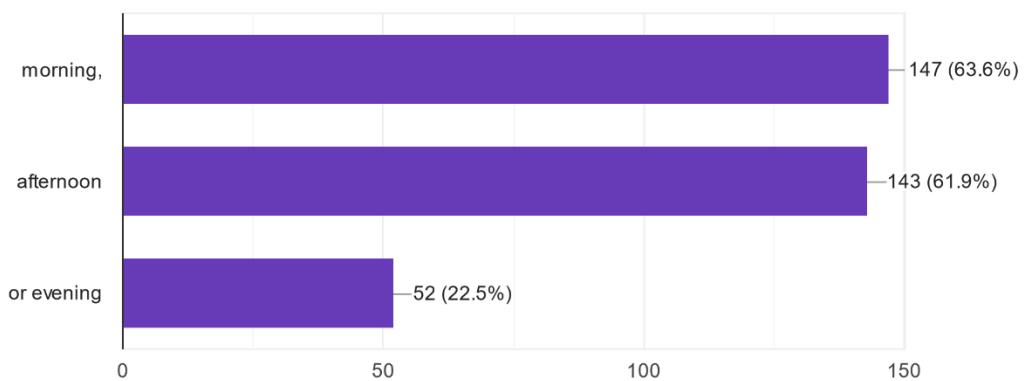
3. Which days of the week suit you best for bridge? (You can select one or more)

231 responses



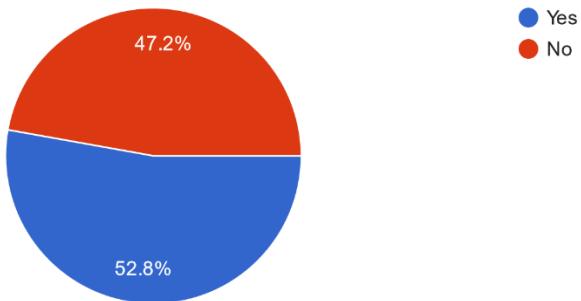
4. Do you prefer to play in the (You can select one or more):

231 responses



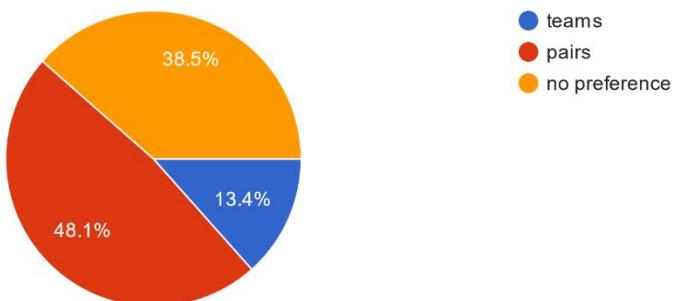
5. Do you play in tournaments organised outside your region?

231 responses



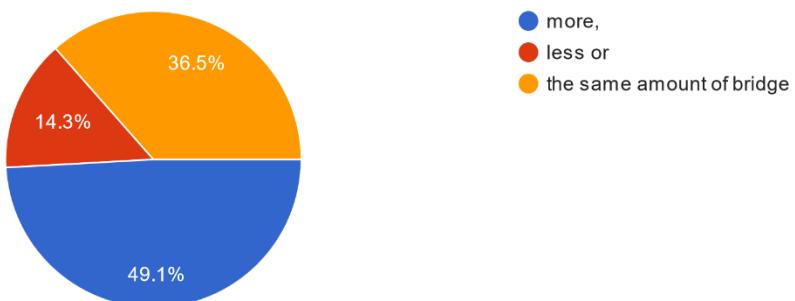
6. Do you prefer:

231 responses



7. Compared to June 2020, are you playing

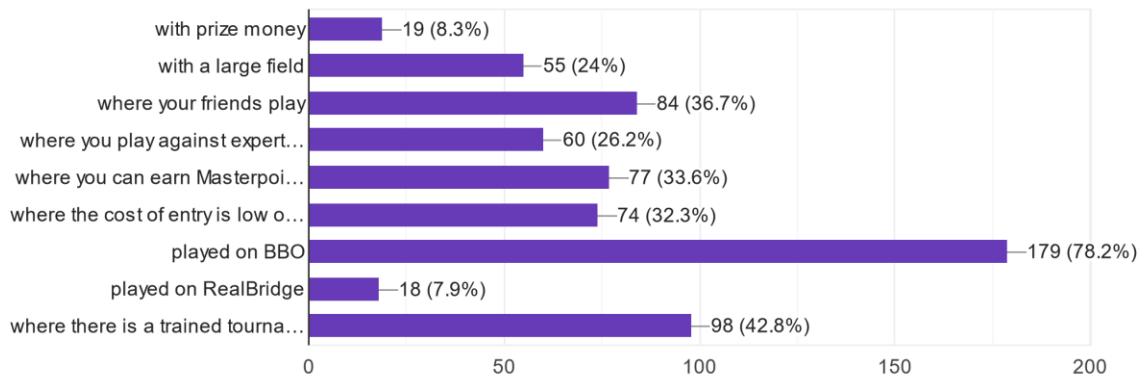
230 responses



8. On average, over the past year how many hours per week did you spend playing social or duplicate bridge online: < 5 hours 12.2%; 5-10 36.2%; 10-15 29.7%; >15 21.8%

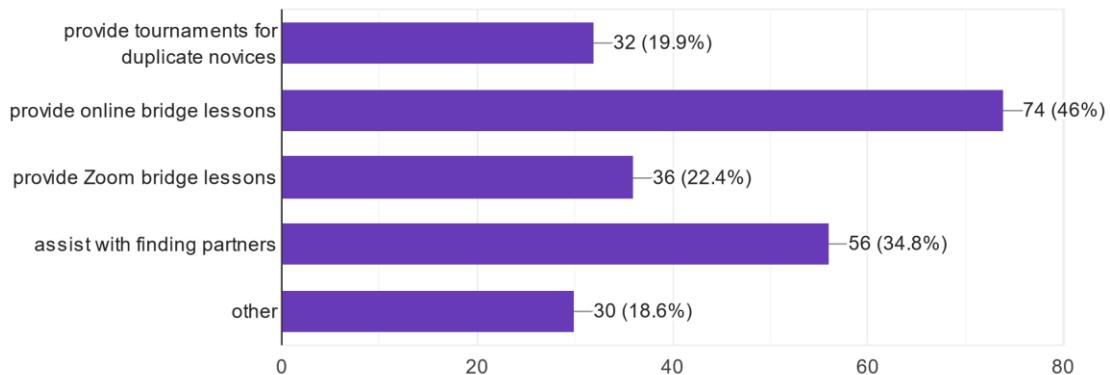
9. Do you prefer to play in tournaments (You can select one or more)

229 responses



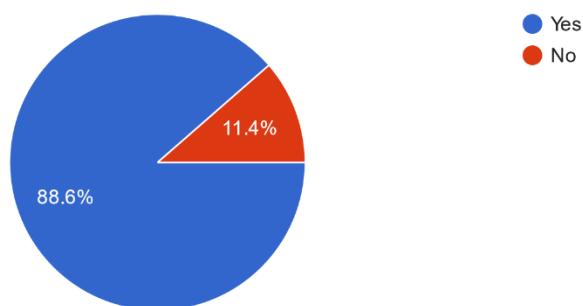
10. What could bridge organisers do better? (You can select one or more)

161 responses



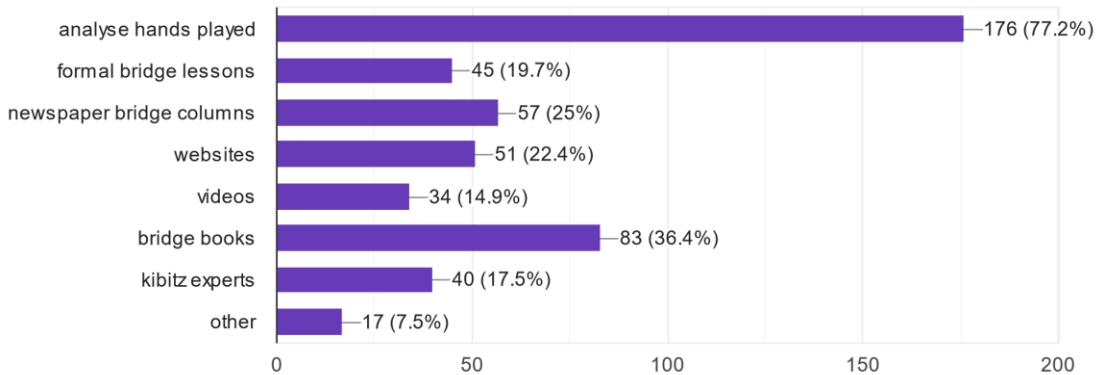
11. Once Covid is behind us and clubs are open do you plan to continue playing bridge online?

228 responses



12. How do you improve the standard of your bridge? (You can select one or more)

228 responses



13. Other comments:

Strategy:

Define "Winning new Members" as the key goal of the Bridge community. (Next to "Satisfying Present Members".) Make clear that there will be no future for our hobby without new players. Define the contribution expected from EVERYBODY to achieve the goal. Define how to follow-up progress towards this goal.

Playing Habits:

The rudeness from opps when they come to your table. No greeting whatsoever and still discussing the hands they played at the previous table!!

I feel strongly about Undos. In a case of a genuine misclick in the bidding it is absolutely fine but far too often it is more a case of a change of mind - and that makes a mockery of the game. (Especially during the play.) "Even for casual bridge?" is often the question when an Undo is rejected. I wish you would stress this point whenever and wherever possible.. It's a bit like serving outside the lines in tennis and asking if you can have another go! Secondly, filling out your Profile should be obligatory. Again, it is plain pointless to play with or against people when you have absolutely no idea of their system.

RealBridge vs BBO:

Play with screens on RealBridge, a much, much better experience

Dislike RealBridge. Would like to play on BBO for time to come.

On another issue I am not a fan of RealBridge, but think it would be improved if the protocol was that microphones are turned off unless one actually needs to talk. I don't want to listen to flushing toilets, shrieking parrots, neighbourhood alarms, screeching cars, panting dogs, coughing, spluttering and eating noises, chats with loved ones, sundry radios and involuntary comments like "you stupid girl". I think it protects us all from ourselves.

Real Bridge is a delight as one can see many friends from the bridge clubs we used to play in before Covid, but the BBO tournaments are also very well run and enjoyable and it is fun to play on BBO Causal with friends. I think online bridge has saved the sanity of many bridge players during this dreadful time and will be forever grateful to those who organise the tournaments as well to BBO. Unfortunately for those of us who are both elderly and suffer from co-morbidities, it may be dangerous to revisit bridge clubs so I suspect the majority will continue to play bridge online. Thank you to all bridge unions for allowing us to continue with the game we all love.

Robots are a pain!

Improving Bridge Skills:

It would be great if an expert (rotating, not always the same ones) could provide an analysis of a hand or two of interest at the end of a tournament.

Online teaching intermediate to improve higher skills. A half-hour/hour topic weekly....not beginners...would be great.

Obviously nothing beats teaching around the table with the cards in your hand - whether for beginners or improvers or more advanced players. But anything that brings players into the game should be encouraged. So a weekly or bi weekly SABF novice duplicate would be a good one (although beware those playing for 40 years who haven't reached national master yet - the ones most likely to put off and bully new players). Perhaps regular intermediate duplicate pairs sessions could be organised complete with commentary afterward from the experts - maybe a zoom session where the hands are discussed. Another thought is regular masterclasses on a Sunday evening (which are always dreary). perhaps some of SA's top players could be put on viewgraph (it probably costs but am sure the SABF can afford) and we get some of our other top players to give commentary as the play goes on. Tim, Glen, Bernard, Hennie, Craig, Bosie, Robert etc. I am sure would be prepared to play that role. The SABF could even offer a stipend. If people know every Sunday at 7.30pm there's going to be an exhibition match it might gain traction. When we play Scotland one of the top teams could be used for that match. Leif Stabell also organises a regular Sunday evening training match between SA teams and the Norwegian ladies or seniors or German seniors. I often watch them. With good commentary it might give ordinary players some insight into the expert mind. Another avenue is Twitch TV (a YouTube variant) - during the European champs I watched quite a few matches on it. It was set up by Bulgarian international player Stefan Skorchev where BBO was imported onto the screen and down the side were a series of commentators talking about the hands, and space for viewers to add comments. When they had the enigmatic Zia on paired with the very phlegmatic Stefan, it made for entertaining viewing as well as being informative. David Gold was also worth watching.

Online versus Face to Face:

We miss the social aspect of club bridge. Playing online pairs and having to give your system in shorthand every change of partners is tiresome. This problem obviously doesn't apply in teams.

I prefer playing with friends rather than tournaments. I am not interested in earning masterpoints anymore and while I enjoy duplicate bridge and team events, it's not where I end up on the scale, but whether I enjoyed the afternoon, and whether I played to the best of my ability.

Nope I'm happy. Getting to play much more bridge now. When it was face to face, I spent more time running sessions and tournaments.

I'm happy to stay online when covid is over, I far prefer it. It starts too early in the morning at the club and it takes far longer to get through the boards

This bridge has saved the sanity of so many people. Thank you.

Am just very grateful for online bridge!!

I like to play for fun socially

I am just so very glad to be able to play bridge on Line. My bridge has definitely improved since I've started

Although resident in Gauteng, play mostly in Eastern Cape

Normally we winter in Cape Town (Swallows) every year. At the moment overseas travel from UK prohibited especially to SA. We would like to know when you expect clubs to re-open in SA. Obviously we will need to see SA infection rate to have dropped down before we can come back without quarantine on return to UK even though we are fully vaccinated.

Session Suggestions:

Would love to play more league matches where there are promotions and relegations. Sunday afternoons sadly don't suit though.

More duplicate sessions on weekday evenings.

Please do not move Tuesday afternoon to the morning. There is already so much bridge in the morning

General Feedback:

WBU is to be congratulated on the excellent job they are doing; communicating, encouraging and improving bridge throughout South Africa (and further),

It is great to get this questionnaire. WCBU and JM are doing a great job in promoting bridge. Thank you

My first comment is to thank everyone involved in Bridge administration. I deeply appreciate everyone's diligent efforts. I am not exactly sure how bridge news are distributed to members. It is my perception (I may be wrong) that bridge communication was sent to Bridge clubs, who then had to distribute the email as I did not get newsletters on a regular basis. My preference is that mail get sent directly to members.

Thank you for all that you do for us!

Thank you for all you do for us bridge fans!!

I think all the organisers are amazing people

Lovely to be in contact. Also looking for a partner to play some evenings say 6-9pm.

You have a great website, thank you

Thank you to the Tournament Directors

This is a useful survey which should be spread to other provinces.

Well done on all you do!

Thank you for all the effort you have put into online bridge

Thank you for providing bridge for us, much appreciated