

Background - Our club is well organised and serious about Bridge but welcomes players with a range of abilities and puts significant effort into the social aspects of club life. We meet weekly and usually have 6-9 tables in play.

Factors relevant to BridgeScore set-up & use - Some of our players are EBU members but the club itself is not affiliated. Our website is a WordPress design and we do not use BridgeWebs or Ecats.

Equipment – We purchased 10 Lenovo Tab3 Essential 7 Inch 8GB Tablets from Argos UK at £49.99 each. At the time the purple option was at this price on a £20 off deal, now the blue option is at the reduced price (18 Apr 2018). We had two laptops donated and are using the newer Lenovo Z580 with Windows 8.1 installed (I did a reinstall of the 'factory' Windows 8.0 then upgraded - I didn't want to buy a Windows 10 licence). We had three routers donated (BT, Sky and TalkTalk) and are using the Huawei HG633 from TalkTalk (I couldn't stop the BT 2701HGV-C complaining about not having a broadband connection. I haven't tried the Sky router).

Router set up – The HG633 router also complains about not having a broadband connection but this can be disabled via admin (default 192.162.1.1), selecting 'Maintain', then 'Help' and unticking 'Enable self-help'.

Tablet set up – I've started out being cautious about battery life. To this end I have reduced screen brightness to 50% (from the factory default of around 75%) - the Lenovo tablets have a good & bright IPS screen and no one has complained about this. I have also installed an app named 'Caffeine' (from the Google Play Store) that can be configured to further dim the screen after 15 seconds of inactivity and this seems to work well. It's too early to say if either of these measures is making a worthwhile difference to battery life.

Our first session – All the hardware and software worked perfectly. I think everyone was happy with the system and got used to using it very quickly. I had to sort out a few issues but these mostly involved hitting DEL to back up and make a correction, e.g. having forgotten to set a contract as doubled. Unfortunately we had to abandon wireless scoring and revert to paper after the first round but this was only due to an input error I made. We had 8½ tables and set up to play a Mitchell movement, so I asked the Director which would be the missing pair. He answered 'Table 9 E/W' and I set that up. However at our club we tend to think in terms of who is sitting out (as we try to alternate between N/S and E/W sit outs) so what he meant was that E/W would be sitting out, and I didn't notice when the half table sat that way. Thus after the first round they moved to Table 1 E/W where the tablet showed 'SIT OUT' (correctly as the system was expecting them to stay at Table 9 N/S). The Director declared that the system wasn't working correctly and by the time I'd figured out what was happening he'd reverted to paper scoring. I could refer to the BridgeScore results file to fill in the first round on the paper travellers so no harm was done but it wasn't a great start. I'd primed everyone to expect some teething troubles and I explained what had happened later. First impressions had been good so we'll just try again next week!

In retrospect – Maybe we should have taken a more gradual approach, e.g. as suggested in Reg Hull's post "Oxted Bridge Club. How we got fully up & running in 4 sessions". I did follow a lot of his advice. E.g. we did a lot of preparation (demos and a visit to a nearby club using the system) and made sure we had nearly universal support by organising a vote. I didn't play and I asked players to only sit North if they felt confident and up for the challenge. I'd hoped for a smaller turn out and the simplicity of an odd number of full tables, but in the end I'm happy that we just went for it. I'm still hoping we'll be "fully up and running in 2 sessions", but then I'm perhaps too great an optimist!

Thanks – Mirna & John for making it all possible, and the amazing support. Marcus at our club (and on this forum) for finding BridgePal and persuading us to look at it (it took years!). Neville

(Red_Kite on this forum) for advice, support & enthusiasm, and Knighton Bridge Club for letting us come and see the system in action. Our club members, for their support.