



Australia – The Post Covid Experience

BAMSA Conference June 2021 – Session 2A

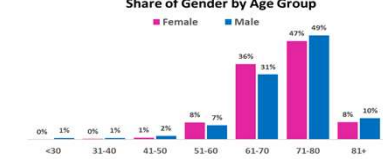


ABF Bridge Player Survey 2020-21

Advance Recording April 2021
Peter J. Cox BEC, MBA




Share of Gender by Age Group



Age Group	Female (%)	Male (%)
<30	0%	1%
31-40	0%	1%
41-50	1%	2%
51-60	8%	7%
61-70	36%	31%
71-80	47%	49%
81+	8%	10%

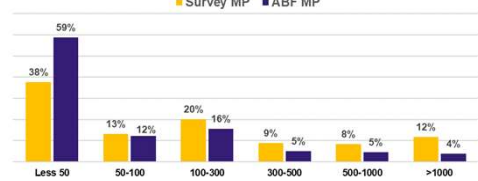
- The average age of the respondents was 70.2 yrs for Females and 70.5 yrs for Males. The average age of all bridge players is about 74 years and growing by half a year each year (MPC Registered Players)
- Life expectancy for Females is 84 and Males 80 years, as a result the attrition rate is high at about 10% threatening the future of bridge (ABS)
- Females were 64% and Males 36% of respondents. This is less than the average bridge ratio of 70% Women and 30% Men. Nearly Nil respondents under 40
- Bridge starts at age 50 for empty nesters and retirees looking for a hobby or leisure interest. Average age of beginners is late 60s

©Peter J. Cox 2021



Share of Masterpoints


Survey MP ■ ABF MP



EBU Equiv	Survey MP (%)	ABF MP (%)
Less 50	38%	59%
50-100	13%	12%
100-300	20%	16%
300-500	9%	5%
500-1000	8%	5%
>1000	12%	4%

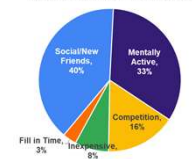
- The rookies and novices <100MP constituted only 50% of respondents compared to the ABF average of 70% of players
- This meant that the higher level masterpoint players were over represented and responses to some questions are reweighted to give a truer picture

©Peter J. Cox 2021

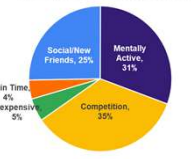


Why Do You Play Bridge?

Respondents with Less than 50 Masterpoints




Respondents with Greater than 1000 Masterpoints



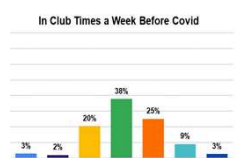
- The social aspect including making new friends is the most important factor in playing bridge for over one third of players. If reweighted for lower ranks then social factors at 40% are even more important
- This is extremely important to the success of clubs and congresses both F2F and online
- Online needs to be able to provide a social environment as well and the provision of video and audio, such as in RealBridge, helps provide the F2F experience of talking to the opponents and partner
- Concern with mental health is very important to about a third of players
- Competition is far more important for players with over 1,000 MPs (EBU 100,000)

©Peter J. Cox 2021

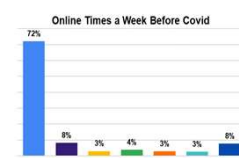


How many times a week did you play bridge before Covid?

In Club Times a Week Before Covid




Online Times a Week Before Covid

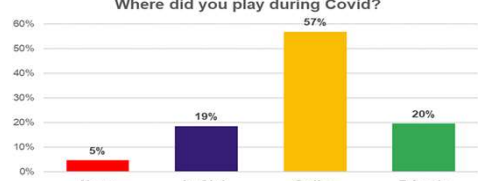


- Before Covid over 80% of members averaged playing in Clubs 1-3 times a week
- 12% played 4+ times a week
- 72% of this group of bridge players did not play Online at all
- 18% of people played Online up to 3 times a week with 10% playing 4+ times

©Peter J. Cox 2021




Where did you play during Covid?

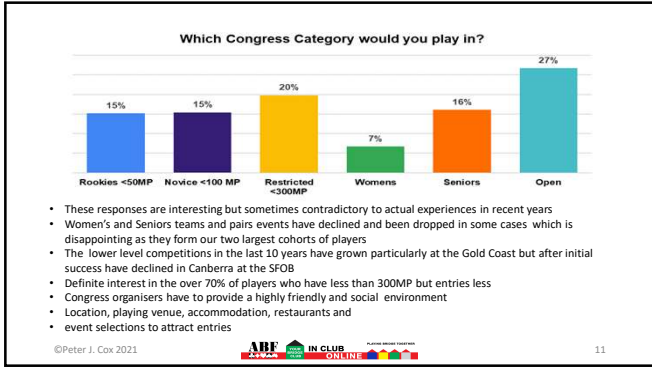
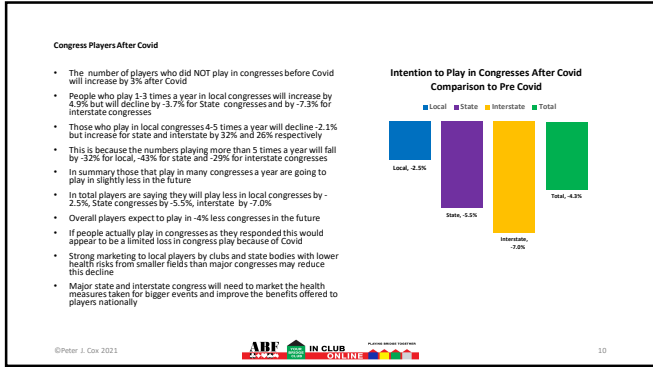
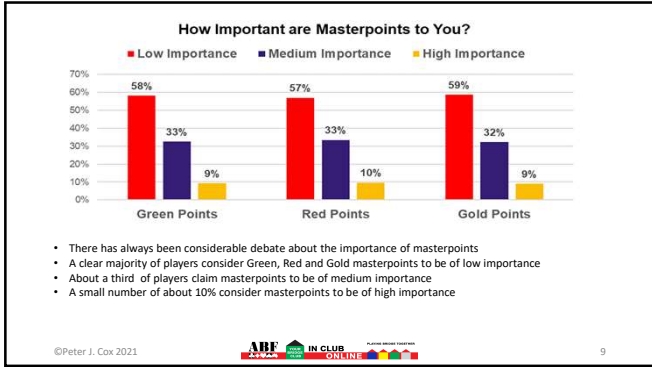
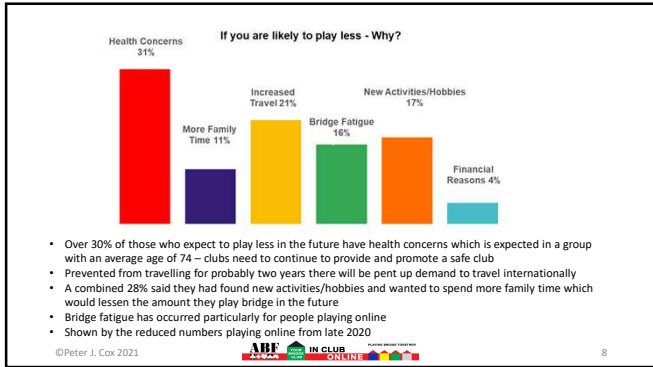
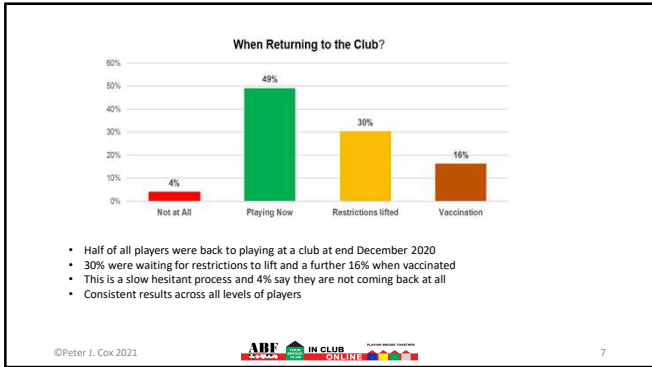


Location	Percentage (%)
None	5%
In Club	19%
Online	57%
Friends	20%

- During Covid some people still played in clubs mostly in SA, WA and parts of Qld
- Playing online increased from 28% to 57% of those that played during Covid
- 57% of respondents played Online which was more than In Club and with Friends combined
- Nearly 60% of respondents played online compared to a national average of about 30-40% of players
- The number playing with friends (Socially or on BBO) is a significant group which we need to win back to club bridge

©Peter J. Cox 2021





- Membership of the EBU had peaked in England in 2014 and then was in a slow decline
- The EBU has been very active in recent years trying to grow membership with small increases in 2019 and 2020 pre Covid
- In Australia membership also peaked in 2014 and was in decline until 2019 when marketing effort increased
- The closure of all clubs and congresses in March 2020 coincided with the membership year end in March 31 and most clubs cleaned out their deceased and inactive members to avoid paying memberships for 2021
- The timing of Covid also coincided with the main period for teaching of beginners and the ABF lost a whole years intake of new players
- The loss of over 3,500 members or 11% during the Covid period is substantial
- Many clubs only renewed active playing members as at March 31 though this will improve in 2021 as members return and need membership to earn masterpoints and play in congresses
- In the Qtr Oct-Dec 2020 the amount of bridge played in clubs was 28% less than the comparable period pre Covid but in the Qtr Jan-March 2021 this loss had been reduced to 11.7%
- Face to face congresses in Australia have begun again in April 2021 and early comparisons show a small decline on the pre Covid period

During the Covid period

Year	ABF	EBU
2011	33,941	49,951
2012	34,700	52,387
2013	36,114	54,303
2014	39,654	54,816
2015	38,775	54,632
2016	36,720	54,579
2017	35,145	54,203
2018	34,422	53,670
2019	36,431	54,106
2020	34,405	53,285
March 21	29,778	35,285

©Peter J. Cox 2021

- This chart emphasises the loss of players in Australia following Covid in a country with less than 1,000 deaths and, so far, no significant second wave
- In the Qtr Oct-Dec 2020 the amount of bridge played in clubs was 28% less than the comparable period pre Covid but in the Qtr Jan-March 2021 this loss had been reduced to 11.7%
- Face to face congresses in Australia have begun again in April 2021 and early comparisons show a small decline on the pre Covid period
- The ACBL members are a trend taken from intermittent release of membership numbers and compared to published ACBL tables played including online
- The USA had been losing nearly one per cent of members each year since 2002 and the numbers of clubs have been in decline
- The number of tables played by the ACBL in 2020 declined by 32%
- Bridge was struggling around the world to maintain members before Covid with an aging cohort, growing attrition, competitive leisure market, declining volunteers, low retention rates and poor behaviour
- The pandemic may be the tipping point for greater losses in the future and a threat to our great game

Growth in Members 2012-2020

Year	ABF	EBU	ACBL
2012	2.6%	4.0%	1.4%
2013	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
2014	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
2015	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
2016	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
2017	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
2018	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
2019	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
2020	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
March 21	-11.7%	-11.7%	-8.7%

©Peter J. Cox 2021

The Future Marketing of Bridge

- If you want to mitigate your Club's losses from Covid, or better still Grow Your Club, then look at my Advanced Recording for the BAMSAs Session 4B "The Marketing Challenges facing Bridge after Covid" and join the session live on Thursday 1 July at 16.30 BST
- In this session I will offer some ideas for the future marketing of bridge
- The information in these slides are only brief excerpts from the "ABF Bridge Player Survey 2020-21" that are more relevant to the BAMSAs Conference and the international audience
- The original Survey report with 2,500 responses runs for nearly 50 slides with Insights and Recommendations plus a separate analysis of comments from about 200 of the respondents
- If you would like to discuss the findings in more length or have a Zoom session to Grow Your Club then please contact
 - Peter Cox BEc MBA, Head of Marketing, Australian Bridge Federation
 - Email petercox@ozemail.com.au or call +61 413 676 326

©Peter J. Cox 2021