



# Bridge: A MindSport For All

*Connects People, Challenges Minds*

## Summary Report Session 1A – Mindsports in Academia and Society

The *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA) Conference 2021 was attended by academics, administrators, and bridge players from 62 countries across the world. Session 1A of the conference focused on Mindsports in Academia and Society. The full report compiled by Zoe Russell and the recording can be accessed [here](#).

The session started with a welcome from Prof. Samantha Punch of the University of Stirling and BAMSA project lead. Prof. Punch spoke about the importance of bridging the world of academic and the world of bridge, as well as the policy world and argued that collaboration is needed. Next, an opening address from Gianarrigo Rona, President of the World Bridge Federation was delivered, in which he spoke of bridge as a universal game and an inherently social game. Prof. Punch and Dr David Scott, University of Abertay, then gave short presentations on their research. Prof. Punch focused on how BAMSA have been approaching bridge as a mindsport in society, and Dr Scott shared his research in relation to the physicality of bridge and experiences of emotion.

Following these talks, a panel was assembled of contributors, some of whom had provided advanced recorded presentations. The panel was diverse with contributions from Prof. David Scott of Texas A&M University, Kim Frazer, Author of *Gaining the Mental Edge at Bridge* from Australia, Dr Liat Hen-Herbst of University of Ariel, Israel and Zoe Russell of the BAMSA team. The panelists discussed defining characteristics of mindsports and the ways in which bridge can be understood as a mindsport, including what benefits and downsides there are of doing so.

The discussion of categorising bridge players and the relationship between social and serious bridge is a core aspect of Prof. David Scott's work (1992, 1994) which has been picked up on and expanded on in Punch et al. (2021). A key conclusion here is that 'bridge' is different things to different people, and it is useful to continue to be clear about and make distinctions between different forms of player and play.

The discussion around classifying bridge as a mindsport is a new avenue for research, which has been touched upon in some BAMSA papers, particularly around player identities in Punch et al. (2020). Whilst the concept of a mindsport is accepted in some contexts, it is not in others, and within the discussion there was a variety of considerations and opinions. This also incorporated the term 'e-sports', which is another category alongside 'mindsport' to consider.

The webinar has both academic and bridge implications. Future research is needed to consider defining sports and the place of mindsports like bridge in society including implications for inclusivity; cross cultural comparisons of bridge as a mindsport; online bridge as an e-sport. Bridge implications include: the image of bridge and raising awareness of bridge; access to funding for bridge and bridge research; the place of bridge in society and increasing participation.

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