



## Mentoring Program Guide for Mentors

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# North Shore Bridge Club Mentoring Program: Mentor Welcome and Guidelines

Thank you for volunteering to be a mentor in the North Shore Bridge Club's Mentoring Program. Your role as a mentor is instrumental in fostering a welcoming and supportive environment, enabling newer players to gain confidence and skills as they progress through the game of bridge. This document outlines the values and expectations that guide our program to ensure a positive and productive experience for both mentors and mentees.

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## Our Values

The North Shore Bridge Club is built on the core values of being **Friendly, Inclusive, and Inspirational**. As a mentor, you represent these values by:

- **Being Friendly:** Creating a welcoming and non-intimidating atmosphere for mentees.
  - **Being Inclusive:** Supporting players of all skill levels and helping them feel a sense of belonging.
  - **Being Inspirational:** Encouraging mentees to develop a love for the game and strive for improvement.
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## Your Role as a Mentor

The primary goal of a mentor is to help your mentee feel comfortable and confident in the game. Here are some key aspects to keep in mind:

### Focus on Comfort and Confidence

- Your aim is to help the mentee feel at ease in the session so they can eventually play with others without feeling intimidated.
- Bridge is a challenging game, and your encouragement can make all the difference.

### Emphasise Feedback and Supportive Behaviour

- **Timely Feedback:** Feedback should only be given after the session ends or during a sit-out. This ensures that the mentee's focus during the game remains on playing rather than feeling self-conscious.
- **Supportive Interactions:**
  - Always maintain neutral and encouraging body language.
  - Avoid showing frustration or impatience, as this can undermine the mentee's confidence.
  - Use positive reinforcement to highlight what they've done well while offering constructive feedback in a kind and helpful manner.

## Meet Your Mentee Where They Are

- **Respect Their Knowledge:** Focus on what the mentee already knows. It is imperative that you do not make them play conventions that you personally use or find convenient. Stick to helping them with their current system and style.
- **Adapt to Their Level:** Remember that your mentee is likely newer to bridge and may not know or remember as much as you do. Be patient and play to their strengths.

## Encourage a Growth Mindset

- Emphasise that bridge is a hard game, which is part of its beauty and value for mental engagement.
- Remind your mentee of when they first learned to drive—what initially seemed overwhelming eventually became second nature. The same will happen at the card table with time and practice.

## Encourage Regular Play

- Motivate your mentee to play bridge as often as they can. Suggest they utilise resources like Bridge Base Online (BBO) to practise and play more games at the North Shore Bridge Club.
- Help them identify appropriate sessions to attend and emphasise that the more they play, the quicker bridge will become second nature.
- Reinforce that the effort they put in during the early stages will pay off, allowing them to enjoy the game sooner and with greater confidence.

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## Supportive Mentorship

Being a mentor is about building a positive relationship with your mentee. Here are some tips to foster that connection:

- **Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledge their successes, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and motivation.
- **Be Patient:** Understand that bridge has a steep learning curve, and mistakes are part of the process.
- **Listen and Guide:** Create a safe space where your mentee feels comfortable asking questions and seeking advice.

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## Final Thoughts

Mentoring is a rewarding experience that allows you to give back to the bridge community while helping others grow in their journey. By sharing your expertise with empathy and understanding, you contribute to the vibrant and inclusive culture of the North Shore Bridge Club.

Thank you once again for volunteering your time and skills. If you have any questions or need support, please don't hesitate to reach out to Sue Crompton (Member Services) or Mike Prescott (Club Manager). Together, we can make bridge an inspiring and enjoyable experience for everyone.