

## Making Newcomers feel Welcome

‘First impressions are the most important’ may be a cliché, but it remains true. The impression a first time visitor to your club takes away with them will colour their view of the club for ever. It is therefore important for the club to go out of its way to make newcomers especially welcome. If possible, there should be a member of the Committee responsible for looking after newcomers. It is good practice for this person or the TD on the evening to:

- identify newcomers before beginning of play and explain basics such as where the washrooms are, the arrangements for refreshments, and any other circumstances they should be aware of. If possible, make them a cup of tea on arrival.
- ask them to call if they have any kind of problem.
- welcome and introduce them publicly.
- ask members to introduce themselves when the visitors come to their table and to make them feel welcome.
- check back with the newcomers at the end of the evening to make certain they had a pleasant game and to invite them to return.
- give first-time visitors a voucher for a free game on their next visit.

If you find that a newcomer is absolutely new to club bridge and duplicate, you may wish to explain that to your regulars and declare that the novice ‘can do no wrong’, i.e. hesitations, fiddling with bidding boxes and bidding corrections should all be gently tolerated without the TD being called and without lengthy explanations of why they should not be doing that.

If a visitor to the club comes once and then not again, try contacting them to ask them why they have not returned.

### Welcome pack

It is a good idea to provide new members of your club with a Welcome Pack. Ideally, this should contain the following:

- A welcome letter
- Club calendar of events
- List of Club Members
- A voucher for a free game
- Club Etiquette information sheet

- Information about your club's teaching classes, seminars and mentoring scheme
- Information about the EBU and the County Association
- Information about forthcoming County and EBU events
- Short introduction (with photographs) to the Committee Members, TDs, Scorers and Teachers at the club.

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