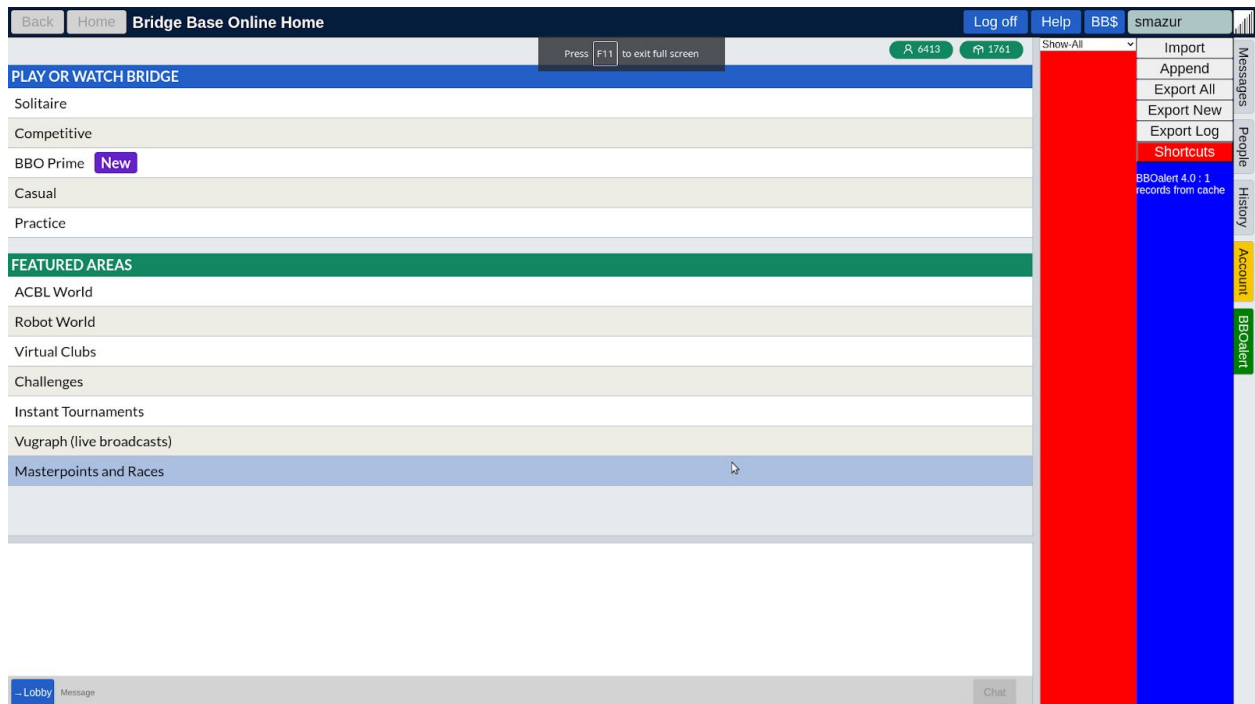# BBOalert - Tutorial

In this tutorial only basic features are explained. For advanced features, refer to the README file on the project page.

Introduction

After you have installed BBOalert, the screen should look like this :

If it doesn't, click at the BBOalert tab to the right side of the page. This tab toggles the display of the BBOalert panel.

The meaning of each control will be explained later in this tutorial.

The teaching table will be used to demonstrate the features of the program.

Make sure that the 'Confirm Bids' option is set (Account + Settings). It is not strictly required but recommended to be able to verify the explanation text before sending it to the opponents.
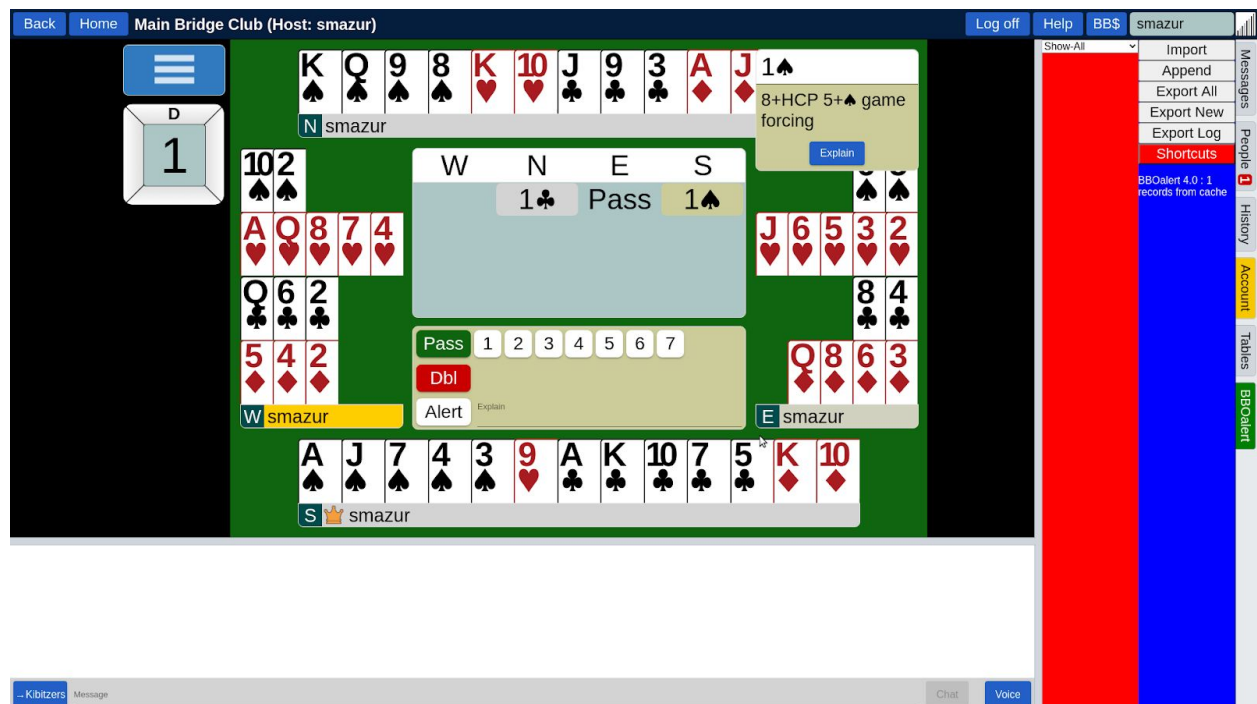
Alert recording

Each alerted bid is automatically recorded. Example from Precision system :

Next time that you open 1C, the recorded explanation will be automatically retrieved :

Let us assume you have alerted the 1S response :

Recorded alerts are stored in the browser cache. This data is reloaded from the cache at the beginning of each BBO session. Cache by nature is a temporary storage, and will be cleared from time to time. In such a case the recorded alerts will be lost. To prevent this, the data should be exported and stored in a text file. To export data, press the "Export All" button. By doing this the data will be copied into the clipboard. Then you can paste it in the text editor and save as a file.

After data export your file will contain :

```
,1C,16+HCP any distribution,20200620_14:46 Deal 1
1C--,1S,8+HCP 5+!S game forcing,20200620_15:06 Deal 1
```

As you can see, the data is stored in CSV (Comma Separated Value) format according to the structure :

```
<context>,<call>,<explanation>,<comment>
```

Where :

<context> = bidding preceding your bid
<call> = your bid

<explanation> = explanation text
<comment> = optional text ignored by the program

Bids are expressed by :

- numbers 1..7 and letters C D H S N
- Db = Double
- Rd = Redouble
- -- = Pass

The bidding context is empty for the opening bid (there was no bid before you opened 1C). The 1S response was preceded by 1C and Pass.

The comment field of the recorded alerts contains a timestamp and the board number.

The exported data can be read back into BBOalert. To do it :

- At the beginning of the file, add one line of text containing the BBOalert keyword. It is a mandatory file header.
- Select all text and copy it to the clipboard. In most editors you will use two keystrokes : Ctrl-A and Ctrl-C
- Press the Import button on the BBOalert panel

Editing

In many cases, when playing a 'natural' system, recording of manually alerted bids may be sufficient. But it is more efficient to prepare the frequently used bidding sequences in advance and import them. You can take the advantage of preparing the explanation text carefully without time pressure. For example all alertable openings and first responses :

```
BBOalert
,1C,16+HCP any distribution
1C--,1D,0-7HCP
1C--,1H,8+HCP 5!H
1C--,1S,8+HCP 5!S
,1D,11-15HCP no 5 card major
,1H,11-15HCP 5!H
,1S,11-15HCP 5!S
```

Important : comma may not be used in the explanation text because it is used as field separator

Outside of the data records any text may be used as comment. It will be ignored by the program.

Overcalls

The defensive bidding sequences are coded using the same principle. Example if you play DONT defense :

1N,Db,any 6 card suit
1NDb--,2C,pass or correct

Options

The data can be enclosed in blocks by using the Option keyword followed by an arbitrary name. The optional block ends with a bare Option keyword or when another option starts. An option may be toggled ON and OFF. This enables users to select the data that should be active or not. A practical example : you play Precision and specific defense against weak or strong 1NT opening. with your regular partner but when you play a natural system with a casual partner you want to disable the automatic alerts. Example :

```
BBOalert
Option,Precision
,1C,16+HCP any distribution
1C--,1D,0-7HCP
1C--,1H,8+HCP 5!H
1C--,1S,8+HCP 5!S
,1D,11-15HCP no 5 card major
,1H,11-15HCP 5!H
,1S,11-15HCP 5!S
Option,vs1NT weak
1N,Db,penalty double
Option,vs1NT strong
1N,Db,DONT
Option
```

On the red panel buttons will appear for each option.

Show-All ⌄	Import
Precision	Append
vs1NT weak	Export All
vs1NT strong	Export New
	Export Log
	Shortcuts

By clicking a button you can toggle the option (green=enabled).

Options starting with the same prefix word are mutually exclusive. In our example you select the correct option depending on the force of the 1NT opening of your opponents. Selecting one option will automatically deselect the other.

While playing with a casual partner you want to deselect all options. Obviously you can deselect them one by one. But you can deselect all options at once by using the dropbox at the top of the red panel.

Show-None ⌄	Import
	Append
	Export All
	Export New
	Export Log
	Shortcuts

Seat and vulnerability dependence

If your bids depend on the seat or vulnerability you should you options. You could toggle such options manually according to the situation. BBOalert does it automatically if you use special tags in the option names :

- @n or @v depending on your side vulnerability
- @N or @V depending on the opponent's vulnerability
- @1 @2 @3 @4
- When @ tags are used spaces should be avoided in the option name (use underscore instead)

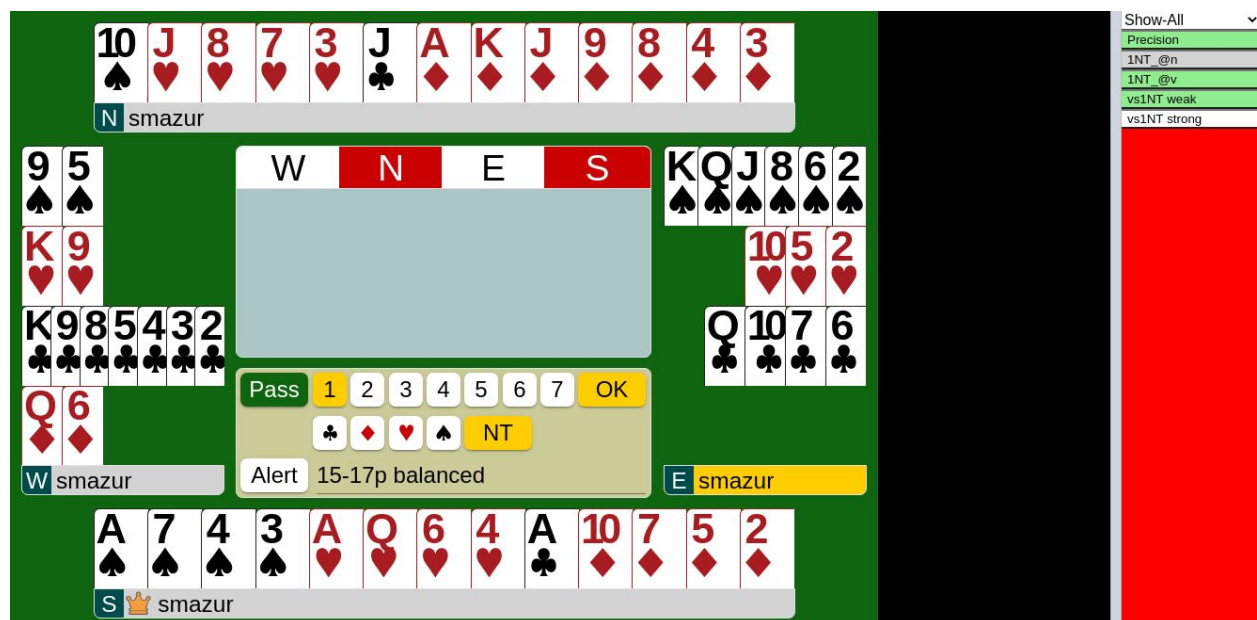Combining these tags in one option is allowed.

Example of variable 1NT opening :

```
Option,1NT_@n
,1N, 12-14p balanced
Option,1NT_@v
,1N, 15-17p balanced
Option
```

When non vulnerable :

Vulnerable :

Code optimization

Code formatting

In each field leading and trailing spaces and tabs are allowed. This increases the readability of the code.

Wildcards

Until now we assumed that the opponents would pass. If they don't we have to replace -- by their overcall. Example of bidding sequences with an overcall :

```
1CDb,       1S,   8+HCP 5!S
1C1D,       1S,   8+HCP 5!S
1C1H,       1S,   8+HCP 5!S
```

In this example the meaning of the 1S response remains the same, independently of the overcal. We used 3 lines of code to cope with all possible overcalls. Instead of enumerate all of them, we can use an underscore as wildcard matching one single character in the code :

```
1C__,      1S,  8+HCP 5!S
```

With the code

```
1C1_          ,1S,  8+HCP 5!S
```

we cover overcalls 1D and 1H but not the double, which should be coded separately.

```
By using wildcards we can easily express general rules :
```

```
1C__,      2S,  weak 6!S
```

But what if the overcall is a natural 1S. 2S response will have totally different meaning. We can use the code :

```
1C__,      2S,  weak 6!S
1C1S,      2S,  what the meaning might be
```

The order is important. BBOalert searches for matches from the beginning to the end of the file. Only the last match found is retained. The code :

```
1C1S,      2S,  what the meaning might be
1C__,      2S,  weak 6!S
```

will not work

Repeated bidding context

Instead of code :

```
1C--,      1D,  0-7HCP
1C--,      1H,  8+HCP 5!H
1C--,      1S,  8+HCP 5!S
```

You can use :

```
1C--,      1D,  0-7HCP
```

```
+,           1H,   8+HCP 5!H
+,           1S,   8+HCP 5!S
```

The + character will copy the bidding context from the previous record. This reduces typing effort.

Long explanation text

The explanation text is limited to 39 characters. On rare occasions you will need more space to explain your bid. In such a case BBOalert allows to use the chat text to send complementary information. The # character is used to split the explanation text into to parts.

Example of code :

```
,1C,text limited to 39 characters#the rest will be sent as chat
```

Be aware of selecting the opponents as a chat destination and not the table because your partner is not supposed to read it.