

Inside the Common Game

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Many of us play in Common Game events, mostly at the club, but may not know much about it. You can find it on the web at <http://thecommongame.com>, may get emailed links to your results from the club or a sectional or regional tournament, or find links from your club's webpage. We sat down with Jay and Kimberly Whipple of the Common Game to learn more. You may know Jay in his other hat as current ACBL president.

What is the Common Game?

The Common Game is the latest version of a pairs event known as continuous pairs. In continuous pairs, the same hands are played simultaneously at different locations. While other versions exist such as the ACBL Instant Matchpoint game, the Common Game is by far the largest, averaging about 60,000 players per week, with up to 8,000 different people playing the same hands on the busiest days. While the Common Game mainly involves US based clubs, it also involve several international clubs .

What You May Not Know about the Common Game

The Common Game is not officially run by the ACBL. Instead, the Common Game is an effort, free to players and clubs, run by Kimberly and Jay Whipple of District 9. The mission of the Common Game is simple: to get people playing more and better bridge. Clubs can sign up for free to receive Common Game hands electronically, and can sometimes get set up in as little as 24 hours. Electronic dealing machines are suggested, but not required, for the common game; manual duplication of boards is possible as well.

Features of the Common Game

After playing a Common Game event, players receive an email with several features. Most importantly, players can view their results matchpointed against all other pairs in the country who played those hands. Less well known is that all Common Game events come with expert analysis. Every game will include at least 5 hands with written expert analysis.

The Whipples also note that on Mondays, Lynn Berg annotates a full 24 hands at a level suitable for beginners. One of my favorite Common Game features is Kibitz the Pros, a series of videos where four professional players play Common Game hands while explaining their thought process out loud. For the statistically inclined, more advanced statistics about your play are available, such as how your declarer play compared on average to double dummy play.

We hope this article gives you a chance to learn more about a game many of us already play. There are plenty of features of the Common Game you may not know about, and we encourage you to check them out!