



Shuffle The Cards To Unshuffle The Brain!

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Beth Flanigan (left) and Tracy Nolan (right) both of Naples, kibitz World Class Player Ishmael “Ish” Del’Monte. “Kibitzers” are spectators at the bridge table. Kibitzing top players is not only fun, but also one of the best ways advancing players improve their skills. Photo: Michelle Reed

While it was once a game reserved for British nobility and the sophisticates of New York and Palm Beach, today bridge, the card game, can be played by anyone willing to master it.

This fascinating game, whether played casually in your neighbor’s kitchen or competitively in tournaments worldwide, has attained a huge following among Floridians.

Bridge is a fun and addicting game with an engaging social component, but the benefits go far beyond an enjoyable afternoon with friends. Not only does playing bridge improve cognitive performance, mental stamina, and focus, but playing the game has also been linked to prevention of the effects of mental disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease.

Studies have shown that playing bridge can increase immunities and lower the risk of other diseases by stimulating the area of the brain responsible for T-cell levels.

There is no doubt about it. Playing bridge is a winner for the brain! Bridge is a trick taking game that begins with bidding sequences, including agreements called “conventions.” Learning how to bid and play the hand, with over six trillion deal possibilities, is akin to learning a new language; as such, many people turn to their local bridge club for professional instruction.

For those who prefer a more expedited approach, the Learn Bridge In A Day® (LBIAD) program gives ambitious students a full day immersion experience that allows them to jump in and play at a basic level upon completion. Future bridge enthusiasts looking for an opportunity to learn and play are welcome to sign up for this popular program, which will be offered on October 9th at the Marriott Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa. By the end of the day, students will have enough knowledge to play in a beginner’s game at the Sanibel Regional Tournament hosted by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) from October 10 – 16, 2022.

There, students will have the opportunity to earn coveted gold masterpoints, the exclusive currency of the ACBL and the mechanism by which bridge players measure achievement in competition.

The growth of the game here in Naples cannot be denied; players can exercise their skills at public bridge clubs, community centers, and private golf and social clubs.



Five-time National Champion Shannon Cappelletti laughs with her opponents at the Sanibel Regional Tournament. Shannon’s father-in-law created the famous Cappelletti Convention, a bidding convention used by many bridge players. Photo: Michelle Reed

New bridge centers and rooms are emerging in many communities. “Our beginning lessons are bursting at the seams,” says Wayne Humphrey, Director of Bridge at a prestigious Naples golf club. Once people discover this enticing game, they want to be a part of its culture.

As one bridge player describes the popularity phenomenon, “One of the beautiful things about the game is that it can be played by anyone virtually anywhere. Yes, there are incredibly talented professionals who play with sponsors around the world, but it can also be played at home with two couples, a deck of cards and a good bottle of wine!”

To sign up for Learn Bridge In A Day or discover more about the game of bridge go to the ACBL District 9 website <https://district9acbl.org> or contact Betty Sandifer atbsandifer@cfl.rr.com.