

South Notts Bridge Group – Beginner Training initiative started in Q4 2017

(For the EBU Workshop led by Tim Anderson on 16th November 2022)

Who are we?

- **4 EBU Affiliated clubs in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire**
- **West Bridgford, East Bridgford, Phoenix (Ruddington) & Keyworth**
- **Memberships of 50-120. Insufficient scale of resources in each club**
- **Similar issues and challenges**

Why did we start?

- **Falling member numbers**
- **Virtually No new members**
- **Lack of local training in Rushcliffe- more centralised in Nottingham**
- **Not much evidence of promotion of the game by EBU or NCBA**
- **Disappearance of local evening classes etc.**
- **We thought we could target audiences. Retirees and mature workers.**
- **No clear syllabus. Existing courses were too long! 2+ years**

How we did it

- **4-6 key motivated champions across all 4 clubs**
- **We recognised the need for promotion through publicity and events**
- **Advertised in local free press to promote seminars in local Libraries etc**
- **Created flyers and posters, plus EBU promotional posters were helpful.**
- **Money- we had none but obtained backing from the County and Club chairmen £500**
- **Agreed a plan and recruited helpers- Communicated**
- **Used EBED training to upskill trainers to spread the load**
- **Added Mervyn Jones who developed tech training material with MS PowerPoint**
- **Got lucky. Found the new EBED Fast Track Syllabus- 24 hrs of tuition!!!!?**
- **Created the course to run over 12 weeks from late Jan 2018 daytimes with 2nd course mid-summer to run over 2 weekends to target employed and busy people!! A challenge.**
- **Targeted costs and pricing to break even at £95 per person inclusive of EBED Fast Track book**
- **Found good facilities at reasonable prices but limited trainees to 16 per course**
- **Recruited 4 members per session to coach and support each table during exercises and play**

What we learnt

- **Lots but reviewed by surveys and questionnaires**
- **There was demand. The model worked**
- **Still difficult to progress students to clubs- too big a gap**
- **Attitudes of some members were intimidating**
- **Introduced some parallel No Fear sessions.**
- **Realised 12 lessons was a minimum- extended practical experience in 2018-2020 at cost**

- It was profitable so returned grant funding to NCBA
- **COVID 19 severely interrupted progress course 5 was run on ZOOM and BBO!! Half continued**
- **We produced signposting to students on how to continue their Bridge journeys**
- Our effort to take learning to schools was a good experience but again curtailed due to COVID
- **Over 60% trainees rated good or excellent and iterated**
- We shared our experience and knowledge with groups from Leicestershire and Staffordshire
- We developed a significant financial surplus!
- **The current chairman, former chairman and financial controller of Keyworth are former students**

What Next?

- **We agreed to resume efforts in mid-2022 for the Autumn**
- **It was agreed that classroom sessions were best v. Online.**
- RealBridge might be a good contender going forward but effort and skills needed
- **It was agreed to extend 12 lessons to 3 hours for more practical bid and play time**
- **We found a good venue and increased the class size to 20 trainees- reducing fees by 30%**
- **Our assistants returned. MBJ did a great job and we did not need to advertise or run seminars/promo workshops**
- The EBU issued corrections to the Fast Track syllabus but no new content
- **We need to develop sheltered sessions for beginners confidence**
- **We believe we have a model that works for many and hope to run 1 or 2 courses per year from 2023**
- **Plus an improver or Intermediate Level course?**
- **Increase the conversion of trainees to club members and restore the social sides of the Game and club.**

Final DA 16th November 2022