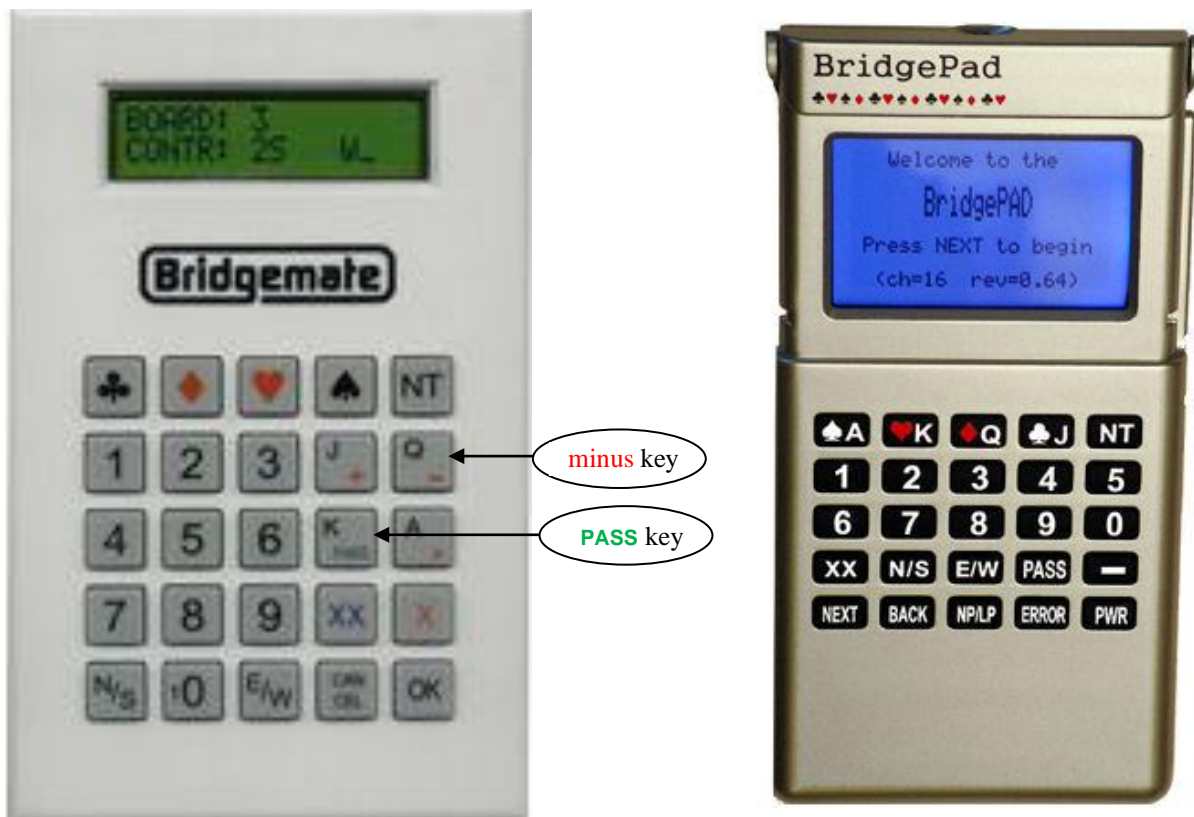




On-Table Electronic Scoring & Transmitting Devices by Bob Gruber

Duplicate bridge is working hard to keep up with computer advances. Prior innovations included computer scoring and computer-generated hands. (Admittedly, some people question whether computer-dealt hands are really a step forward). Recent innovations include hand-dealing robots and on-table key pad devices to record contracts and results and then transmit them (wirelessly) to a central scoring computer. Only the directing staff is concerned with the hand-dealing robots, but more and more, tournament-attending players will encounter and need to use the on-table key pad devices.

While effort has been made to make these devices intuitive to use, some introductory instruction (not intended to be comprehensive) will be beneficial for many players to reduce culture shock. Currently, there are 2 major competitors—Bridgemate and BridgePad—both of which are pictured below.



In addition to the keypad, each device has a small display toward the top to reflect your entries. Bridgemate has released an updated machine—Bridgemate II—so now there are 3 models in use. Bridgemate II, pictured on the next page, has a bigger display window than the original with more lines and function keys just below the display window. (The function of each key varies with the context and, if active, the function is indicated in the display just above the specific key.)



← “Accept” function key

← minus key

← PASS key

The device may be set to input your ACBL player number. If so, since it does not have keys for the full alphabet, make the following substitutions:

J = 1, K = 2, L = 3, M = 4, N = 5,
O = 6, P = 7, Q = 8, R = 9

These substitutions are often listed on the back of the device.

While the range of information to be entered is identical, the keypads are organized differently. There are, however, many commonalities. First off, both the Bridgemate and BridgePad systems must be initialized by the directing staff at the central computer. If you click OK on the Bridgemate or PWR on the BridgePad—note that both of these keys are in the lower right—you may see a message indicating the device is not yet ready. If so, be patient. Usually, one of the directors will announce when the devices are ready for use.

Jumping ahead in the process (by ignoring entry of the table, pair numbers, and the board(s) to be played), let’s say you’re ready to enter the contract. First you enter a number for the level (1-7) and then press a key for the strain—a symbol for one of the 4 suits or the NT key for No Trump. (All of the strain/denomination keys are in the top row, but the suits are in reverse order on the two devices.) With the contract entered, on the Bridgemate, you press OK, while on the BridgePad, you press NEXT. Throughout this article, we’ll see that OK is the predominant key on the Bridgemate and NEXT is the predominant key on the BridgePad.

Now you need to enter declarer’s direction. Locate the ^N/_S and ^E/_W keys. On the appropriate key, press once for North (or East) and then a 2nd time for South (or West). Additional presses will continue toggling back and forth between the two choices for the given key. When satisfied, press OK on the Bridgemate or NEXT on the BridgePad.

^N/_S & ^E/_W
keys are
toggles

But what if you pressed OK or NEXT prematurely? What if you made a mistake? Let’s say you entered West, but it’s actually East declaring the hand. On the Bridgemate press CANCEL; on



the BridgePad press BACK. Now you can enter declarer's proper direction and press OK or NEXT as appropriate.

Oh wait! I forgot the contract was doubled. Can I enter that now after declarer's direction? Or was I supposed to enter it after the strain (NT or a suit)? Oops! That needed to be entered after the strain/denomination. Press CANCEL or BACK multiple times until the display shows the contract but not declarer's direction. Now you press the red-colored X on the Bridgemate or the XX on the BridgePad. Here the two devices differ. Bridgemate has separate keys for doubled (X) and redoubled (XX) contracts. BridgePad uses the single XX key for both, pressing once for doubled and a 2nd time for redoubled.

BridgePad uses XX as a toggle for doubled and redoubled

Once the proper doubled status is entered, press OK or NEXT, reenter the direction, and press OK or NEXT again. Now you need to set the device aside until the making status of the contract is determined.

When the contract has been played, you'll probably need to "wake up" the device. On the Bridgemate press OK, on the BridgePad press PWR. For making contracts, simply press the number of tricks made (1-7) and then OK or NEXT. For contracts going down, first enter the minus key (which shares the same key as the Q on the Bridgemate), and enter the number of undertricks. Again, enter OK or NEXT as appropriate. Each device knows the vulnerability and displays the proper score.

At this point, pass the device to one of the opponents to verify the score is correct. He/she will press OK/NEXT (or the "Accept" function key on Bridgemate II) if the result is correct. If not correct, you'll need to CANCEL or BACK your way to the spot with the error, make the correction, and then reenter any needed information on the way back to the point for the opponent to verify the score and transmit it by clicking OK/NEXT (or "Accept").

When the device is passed back to you, it should be ready for you to press OK/NEXT to advance to the next board in the round. If this is the last board of the round, your pressing OK/NEXT will advance to the next round.

So far, we've described the general operation of these devices. We need to identify a couple of keys we haven't touched upon and describe the start up process, but a tabular summary of what's been covered so far seems in order, so here it is:



Function	Action/Entry/Entries	Completion key (BM ¹ / BP ²)
“Wake up” device	---	OK / PWR
Enter contract	# denomination [X or XX] -or- PASS if board is passed out	OK / NEXT
Enter “by” direction	N or S -or- E or W	OK / NEXT
Enter # made	making: # tricks made down: - key # undertricks	OK / NEXT
E/W verification	Pass device to East or West, who will confirm (by pressing)	OK / NEXT / (“Accept” function key on Bridgemate II)
Advance to next board	---	OK / NEXT
Correct an error	return to point of error make correction re-enter info as needed	CANCEL / BACK as needed OK / NEXT OK / NEXT as needed

Remember, on the Bridgemate, the minus sign (-) and Q share the same key.

If a board is passed out (I think the Brits say “passed in”), press the **PASS** key (which, on the Bridgemate, is at the bottom of the K key in green lettering).

The BridgePad has a key labelled NP/LP, which probably stands for Non Play/Late Play.

The BridgePad ERROR key works even after transmitting the information to the central scoring computer (but must be pressed before the next board or next round).

Finally, we’re back to the start up of the device for the session. If the central computer has been configured (possibly including the movement for each section) and set to transmit, pressing OK/PWR will bring up a screen requesting you to identify the table number, pair numbers, and the board(s) to be played the 1st round. Alternatively, this information may have been pre-entered. If not correct or not entered, use the keys as described previously to fill in whatever information is requested, using OK/NEXT as a completion key. When this setup information is correct press OK/NEXT and put the device aside until needed to enter the first contract information.

As stated early on, this treatise is not intended to be comprehensive, merely introductory. Plus, the devices can be configured to enter other information, such as ACBL player numbers and the opening lead on each hand. Setup will vary, so you need to actually work the device at the table to become comfortable with its operation. But, if successful, this introduction will speed up the learning process.

¹ BM = Bridgemate

² BP = Bridgepad



Summary of Bridgemate (BM) On-Table Electronic Scoring

Device Start Up



← “Accept” function key

← minus key

← PASS key

Initialized at Central Computer		press OK
Respond to prompts: †		
Table #:	enter #	press OK
Pair #(s):	enter #(s)	press OK
1 st Round Boards #(s):	enter #(s)	press OK
All setup is correct		press OK
Set aside until 1 st board completed		

Optional Entry of ACBL

The device may be set to input your ACBL player number. If so, since it does not have keys for the full alphabet, make the following substitutions:

J = 1, K = 2, L = 3, M = 4, N = 5,
O = 6, P = 7, Q = 8, R = 9

These substitutions are often listed on the back of the device.

Entry Functions During the Game

Function	Action/Entry/Entries	Completion key
“Wake up” device	---	OK
Enter contract	# denomination [X or XX] -or- PASS if board is passed out	OK
Enter “by” direction	N or S -or- E or W	OK
Enter # made	making: # tricks made down: - key # undertricks	OK
E/W verification	Pass device to East or West, who will confirm (by pressing)	OK (or “Accept” on BM II)
Advance to next board	---	OK
Correct an error	return to point of error make correction re-enter info as needed	CANCEL as needed OK OK as needed

† The Table #, Pair #s and Board #s may already be set at the central computer.