BridgePal App User Guide

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1. BridgePal App User Guide

When a scoring program session has been started tap on the "Retry" button shown underneath "Session not yet started". The scoring unit should now display the BridgePal start screen. Tap on the "Start" button to start the session on this scoring unit.

The first input screen requires the table number to be entered. If the scoring program is currently running two or more sections in parallel, a section number entry field is also displayed above the table number. When the value(s) have been entered tap on OK to continue.

Names entry

The next screen requires player IDs for North, South, East, and West to be entered (these will have been configured in the player names database maintained with the scoring program). For certain countries it is also possible to input a national bridge union number (e.g. EBU number) to identify a player, as an alternative to player id. The OK button can be tapped after each entry to move to the next input field. Alternatively, tap on each input field to select that field as the current input field or tap on OK to move from field to field sequentially. At any point an incorrect entry can be cleared by using the DEL key.


When all fields have been entered on the name entry screen, the OK button will display a screen showing the player names for this table, and inviting the user to confirm they are correct. If they are not, the "Back" key can be used to go back to the previous screen and amend the player ids.

When the player names have been confirmed to be correct, use the OK button to display the Round screen.

Round screen
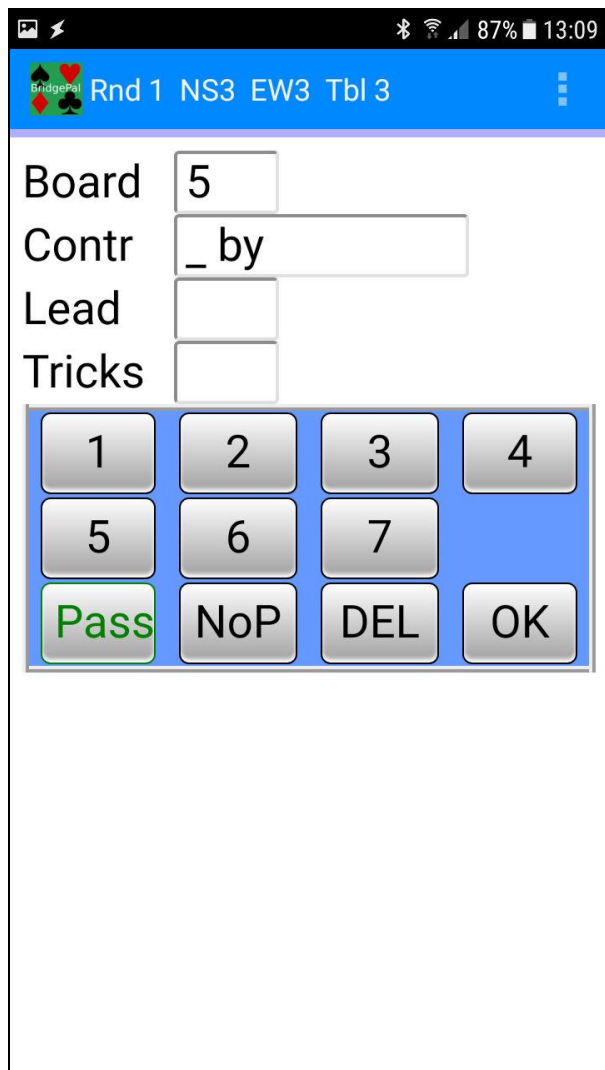
This displays the number of the current round, the player names, and the board numbers to be played in each round. Notice that the Round screen also displays a "Names" button. This makes it possible to change incorrectly entered player ids at the start of any round, or to input them if they were left blank at the start of the session. Inputting or correcting a player id changes it for the whole session, not just the current round.
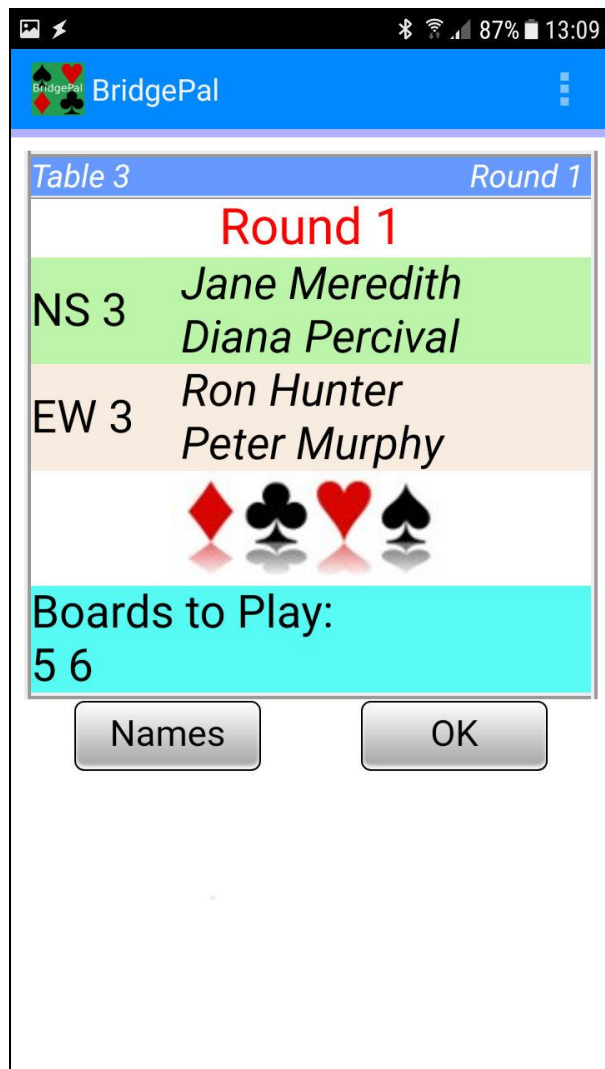
Tapping on OK moves to the contract entry screen for the first board of the round. When the movement requires boards to be shared with another table then a set of board numbers is displayed, allowing selection of the board number for contract entry.

Contract entry

Note that tapping on the board number allows you to select a different board from the same round. This can be either a board you have already played (you might want to correct it) or a board you haven't played yet. This is useful if the boards are played out of order.
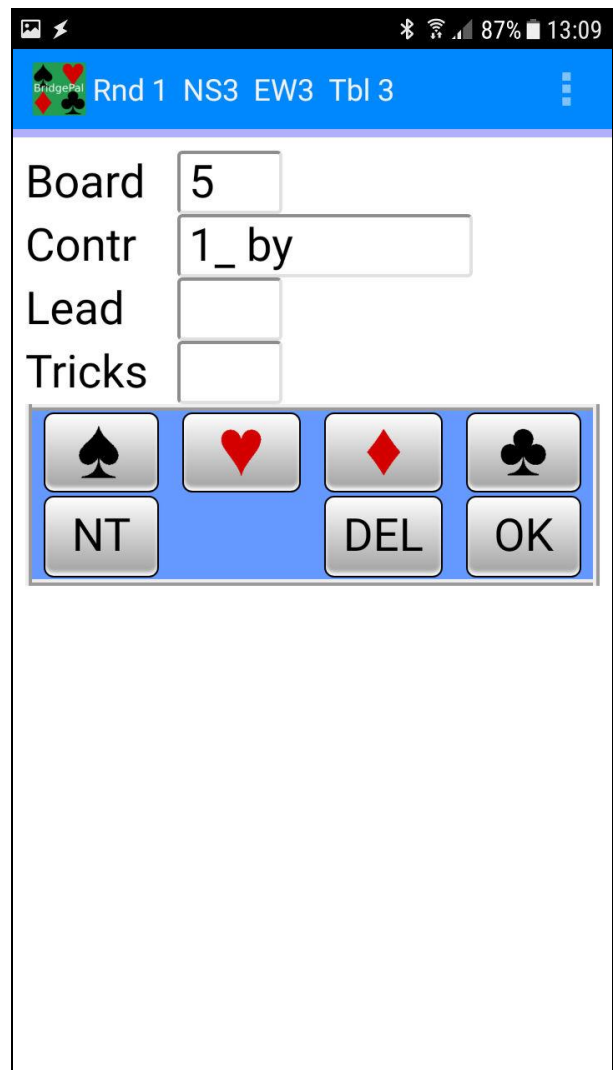
As the user fills in the details of the contract the displayed keypad instantly changes so that only the buttons valid at this stage of contract entry are displayed.

First the level of the contract is entered, then the suit, or "NT", and whether the contract has been doubled or redoubled and then the declarer.

Now the lead is entered. Note that you can skip the lead card entry by tapping OK. On BridgePal Server Settings screen there is a field 'Entry of Lead Card is Compulsory'. If this is ticked, than you cannot skip over the lead card entry field.

And finally the number of tricks, after the contract has been played:

Board 5
Contr 1NT by S
Lead KD
Tricks 8

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	0	DEL	OK

Accept screen

When the contract/result has been entered, the "OK" button brings up a screen summarising the contract, result and score for that board and inviting the opponents to accept the data by tapping the "Accept" button.
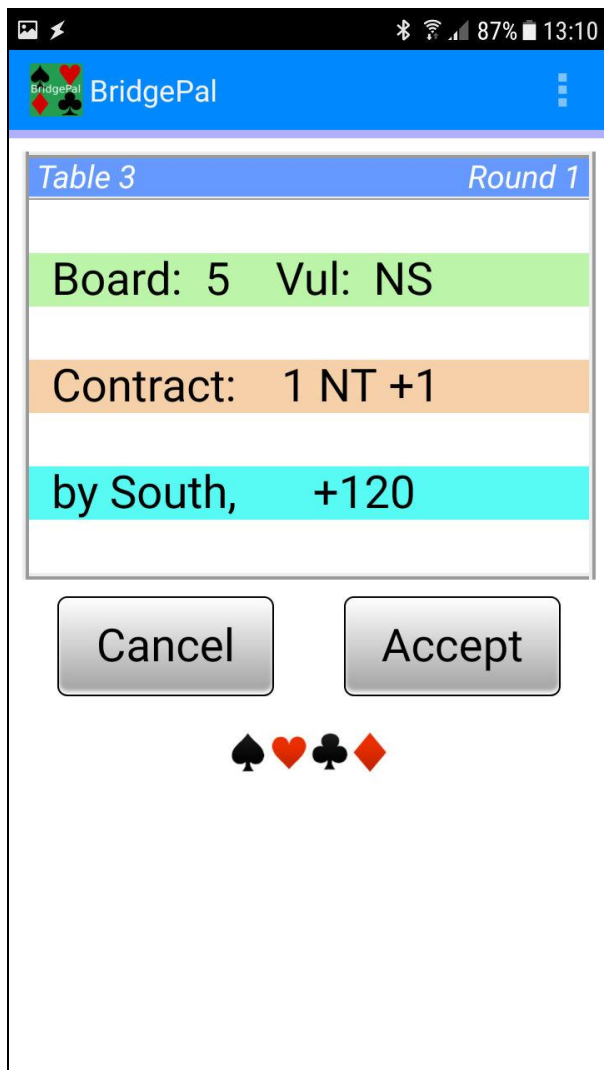
If all is well, "Accept" displays the traveller for the current board showing results for all tables that have played that board so far, together with the score and percentage. Alternatively, "Cancel" provides an opportunity to go back and modify the contract.

Traveller screen

If "Entry Validation" has been enabled in the scoring program or BridgePal server an alert message may appear on the above traveller screen if a possible error is detected.

The traveller is sorted either by NS pair number or by scores depending on the "Sort by NS Score" setting on the BridgePal server Settings screen.

The "Hand" button will only appear if one or more options have been set in the scoring program or BridgePal server to view the hand record and makeable contracts, to play the hand with card by card double dummy guidance, or to manually enter the hand record into the BridgePal. All of these features are described in the section 3. Hand Record Functionality.

Tapping the "Edit" key enables the user to select any board number in the current round in order to change a contract and result that has been incorrectly entered.

Tapping on the board number at the top left of the traveller screen allows you to select a different board number from the current round to view the associated traveller and hand diagram. You can only do this providing the board has already been played.

Tapping OK on the traveller displays the contract entry screen for the next unplayed board in the current round, or the details for the next round if all boards from the current round have been played.

When the session is finished, the OK button is replaced with a "Results" button which leads to the Results screen.

Results/Ranking screen

Table 8 Charity Red

Finished

North / South

Pos	Names	Score
1	Richard & Chris	62.59
2	Pat & Marco	58.15

↕

10	Hilary & Michael	40.56
11	Margaret & Trish	33.52

East / West

Pos	Names	Score
1	Chris & Rod	56.48
2	Matthew & Steve	55.93

↕

10	John & Eric	46.85
11	Heather & Lorna	30.56

[Scorecard]   [Refresh]

This enables players at the table to see the current ranking for the session.
The "Refresh" button allows the ranking to be manually refreshed, because all tables may not yet have finished playing. If all tables haven't finished playing, the word "Finished" is replaced with "nn scores missing".

Scorecard screen

The "Scorecard" button on the Results screen displays a scorecard for the current North/South pair. This can be switched to show the scorecard for the East/West pair.

Section 2 NS8 Scorecard

Bd	Pr	Bid	By	Ld	Tks	Score	%
1	4	3S	S	3C	7	-100	38%
2	4	3D	S	JC	6	-300	0%
3	4	1H	W	2S	9	-140	61%
4	3	4S	N	5C	13	710	39%

28	6	1NT	W	7C	8	-120	0%
29	6	3NT	E	3C	8	100	39%
30	6	4H	N	AD	9	-50	33%
31	5	3NT	E	6S	11	-460	22%
32	5	5CX	S	AD	8	-500	0%
33	5	3NT	N	10D	7	-100	61%

[EW10]   [Ranking]

The traveller for each board with the hand diagram can be viewed via a board number link on the scorecard. "Hand" button will display the hand diagram.

Sec 2 Tbl 8 Board 2

Board 2

Pairs		Bid	By	Ld	Tks	NS	EW	NS%
1	1	3C	N	3H	8		100	44%
3	5	3H	W	5S	9		140	28%
4	7	passed			0	passed		56%
5	9	3S	E	4C	7	100		94%
6	11	2C	N	AD	8	90		78%
7	2	3S	E	QH	9		140	28%
8	4	3D	S	JC	6		300	0%
9	6	3S	E	4C	8	50		67%
10	8	3H	W	2D	7	100		94%
11	10	3C	N	2S	7		200	11%

[Hand]   [Scorecard]

Sec 2 Tbl 8 Board 2

Dlr: E
Vul: NS

Board 2

♠ 53
♥ A9
♦ K932
♣ A9763

♠ AJ96   ♠ KT42
♥ K7654   ♥ T32
♦ J84   ♦ A7
♣ J   ♣ KT82

♠ Q87
♥ QJ8
♦ QT65
♣ Q54

11
10 10
9

Optimum:
EW 2S+1, EW 2H+1; -140

[Play]   [OK]

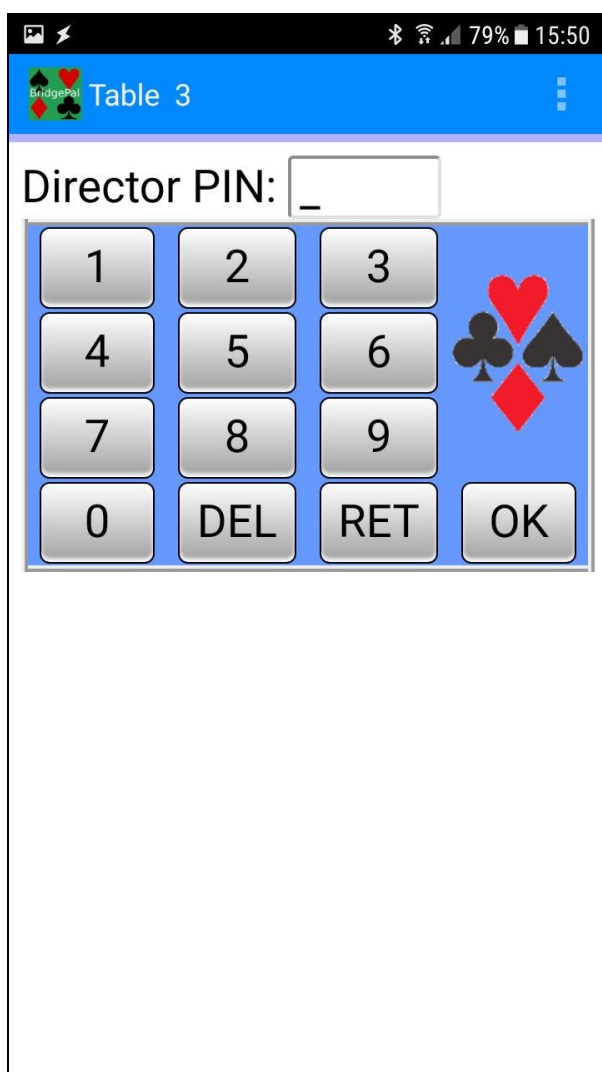|	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	2	-	-	-
S	2	2	-	-	-
E	-	-	3	3	-
W	-	-	3	3	-

2. Special Functions

There are a number of infrequently required functions that are implemented through the BridgePal app's menu.
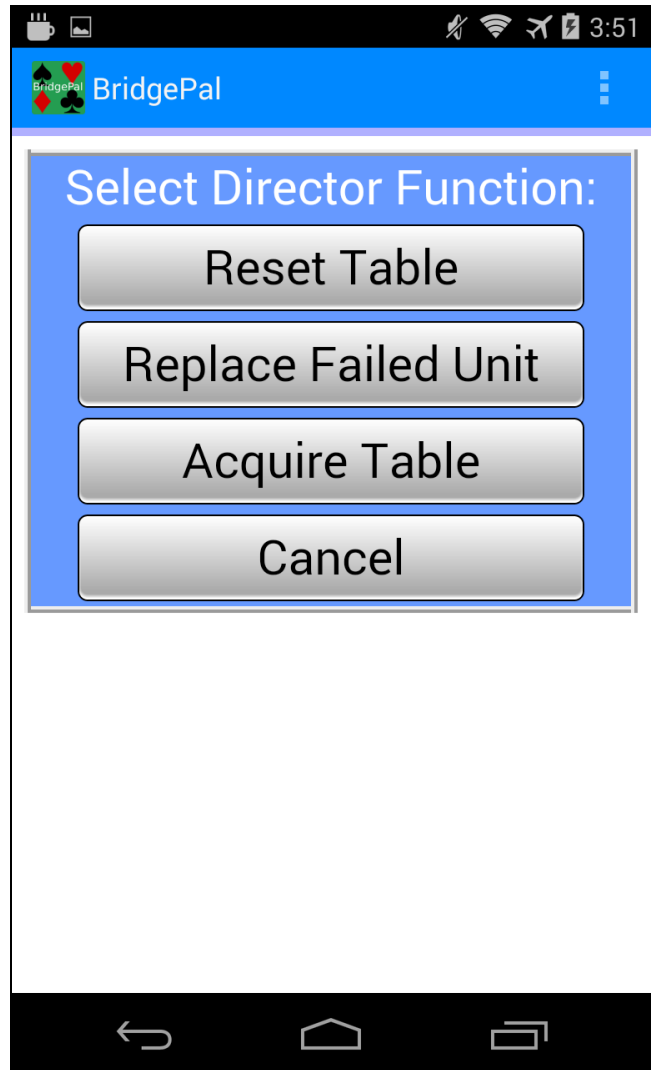
Director PIN

Director functions should only be used by the session director and therefore require the director to input a PIN on the BridgePal before the function is actioned. The default PIN is "0000" (four zeroes), but can be changed via the menu on the BridgePal Server application on the PC (the red diamond icon on the windows taskbar) while the scoring program is running.

The director's PIN entry screen is shown below (the RET button allows the function to be exited without being actioned if it has been selected in error, or the valid PIN has been forgotten).

Director Functions A

This menu item is available on BridgePal app 1.5.5 or later, providing the PC is running BridgePal Server release 1.5.0 or later. When this option is selected from the menu BridgePal will display a list of director functions available. An example of this display is shown above but the displayed options will vary depending on the stage reached in the session. Only options valid at the current point in the session are offered.

Refresh

Manually initiates a retry of the last request made by the BridgePal device to the scoring PC. It should normally not be necessary.

Reset Table

This function can be selected at any time during the session. It would normally be used if the wrong table number has been input on this BridgePal. It will reset the BridgePal to the start screen.

This is normally accessed via the "Director Functions" menu item but it will instead be visible as a separate BridgePal menu item if the BridgePal app is older than v1.5.5 or the BridgePal Server release on the PC is older than v1.5.0. Unless the BridgePal Server release is v1.5.0 or greater a PIN will not be requested.

Replace Failed Unit

This function is only available if a table number has not yet been entered on this BridgePal. It is used to take over the session of another BridgePal that has failed part-way through the session (hardware failure or battery run down). After the table number has been input and accepted the new BridgePal will resume the session that was in progress on the other BridgePal from the point of failure.

This function is normally accessed via the "Director Functions" menu item but it will instead be visible as a separate BridgePal menu item if the BridgePal app is older than v1.5.5 or the BridgePal Server release on the PC is older than v1.5.0. Unless the BridgePal Server release is v1.5.0 or greater a PIN will not be requested.

Acquire Table

This function is only available if a table number has not yet been input on the BridgePal, or has been input but rejected due to having been input already at a different table. It allows the director to force the table number to be accepted, if the number was wrongly input at the other table, thus detaching the other table from the session. When the BridgePal at the other table next communicates with the PC it will return to the start screen.

# Director Functions B

Another example of Director functions is shown below. This would be displayed after table is assigned and score entry had started.
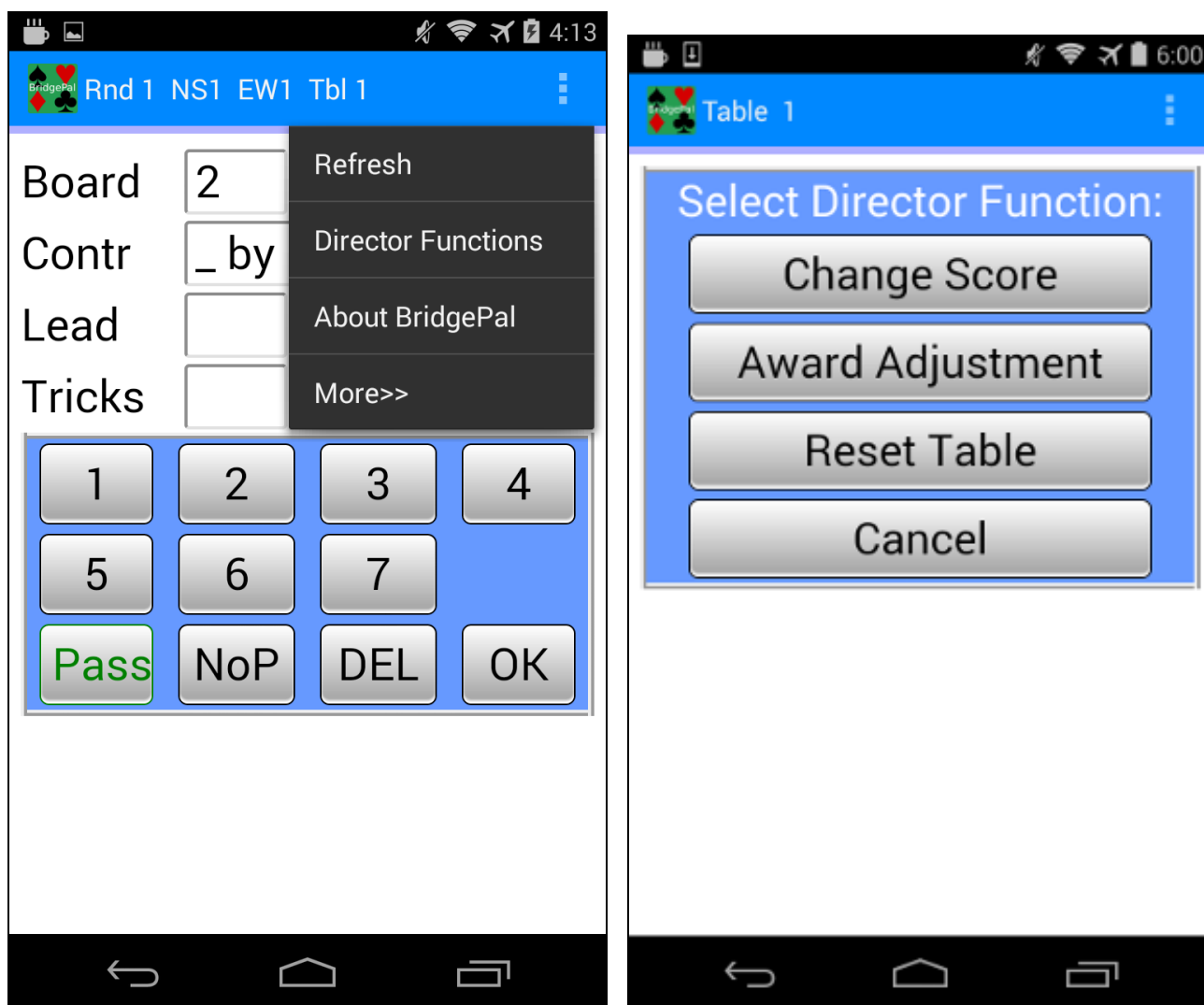
Change Score

This function is available at any time from Round 1 onwards. Players can themselves correct scores for a board played during the current round but director intervention is required in order to correct a score for a board played during a previous round. This function allows the director to select the board number for which the contract/score is to be entered. After inputting the PIN the BridgePal will display the contract entry screen. The director can return the unit to the North player in order to enter the data. After the contract has been entered, the score has been accepted, and OK has been tapped on the traveller the BridgePal will return to the point in the session prior to "Change Score" being selected. While the score correction sequence is in progress, various functions that are normally available are disabled. For example, North cannot tap the board number on the contract entry screen to select a different board and cannot tap the board number on the traveller screen to review the traveller for a different board.

Award Adjustment
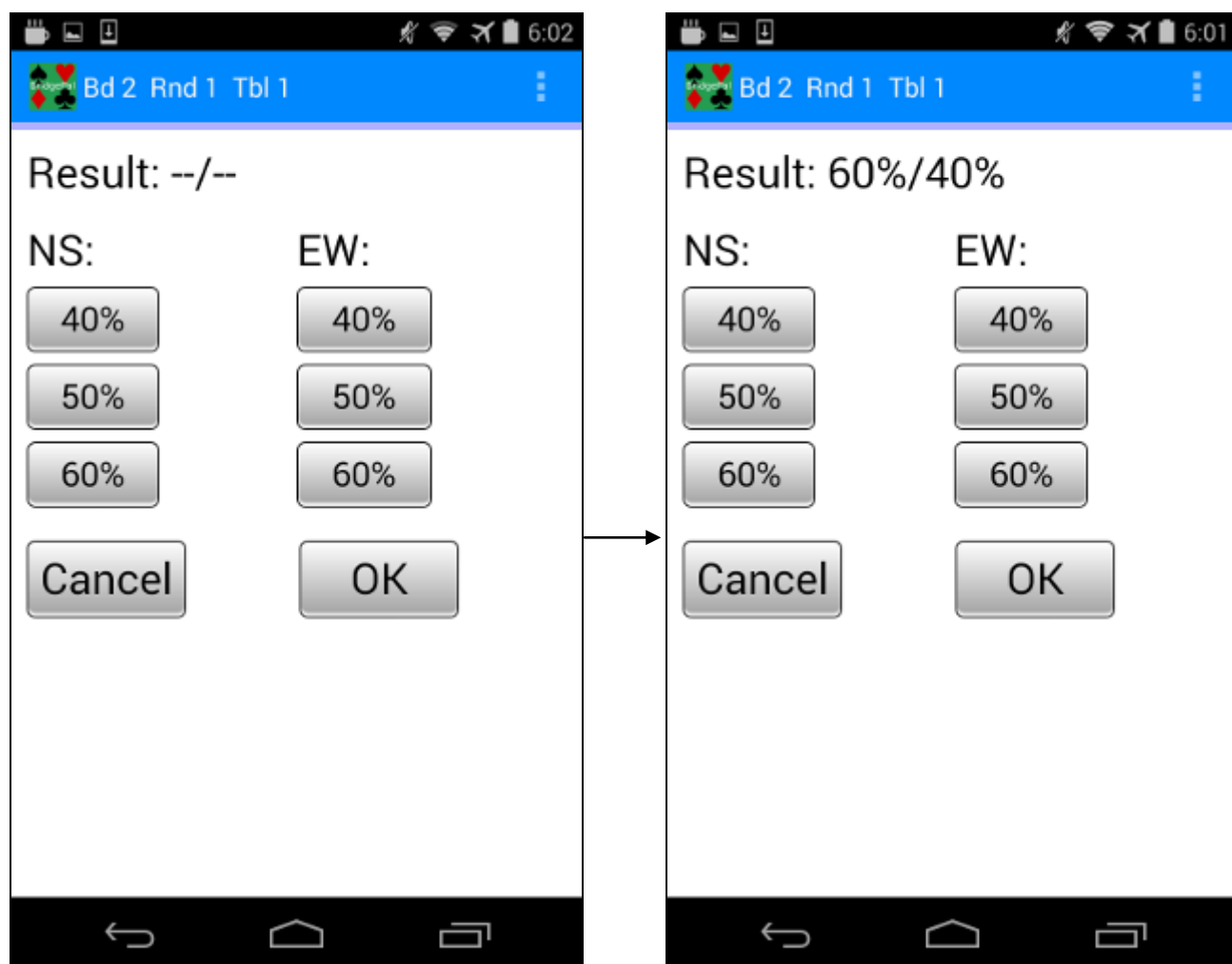
An adjustment can be entered at any time for a board which has previously been played, or for the current board if the BridgePal is currently positioned on the contract entry screen for this board. Possible adjustment values are 40%, 50%, or 60% for each direction. When the values have been entered and "OK" is pressed the Director's PIN is requested and after this a confirmation screen is displayed. However, the traveller display is not shown (in case the director is playing in the session). When OK is tapped on the confirmation screen the BridgePal will return to its previous position. However, if the adjusted score was entered for the current board the BridgePal will advance automatically to the next board or the start of the next round (if the current board was the last board of the round).

It should be noted that not all scoring programs process adjusted scores in the same way. Some process 60% as "Average+" and 40% as "Average-", whereas others just allocate 60% or 40% irrespective of the average for the NS or EW pair in this session. What this means is that, if score adjustments have been entered on BridgePal, the ranking screen at the end of the session on BridgePal may differ from the ranking as displayed by the scoring program, depending on which scoring program is being used. The latter is of course the authoritative source.

More>> and Options>>
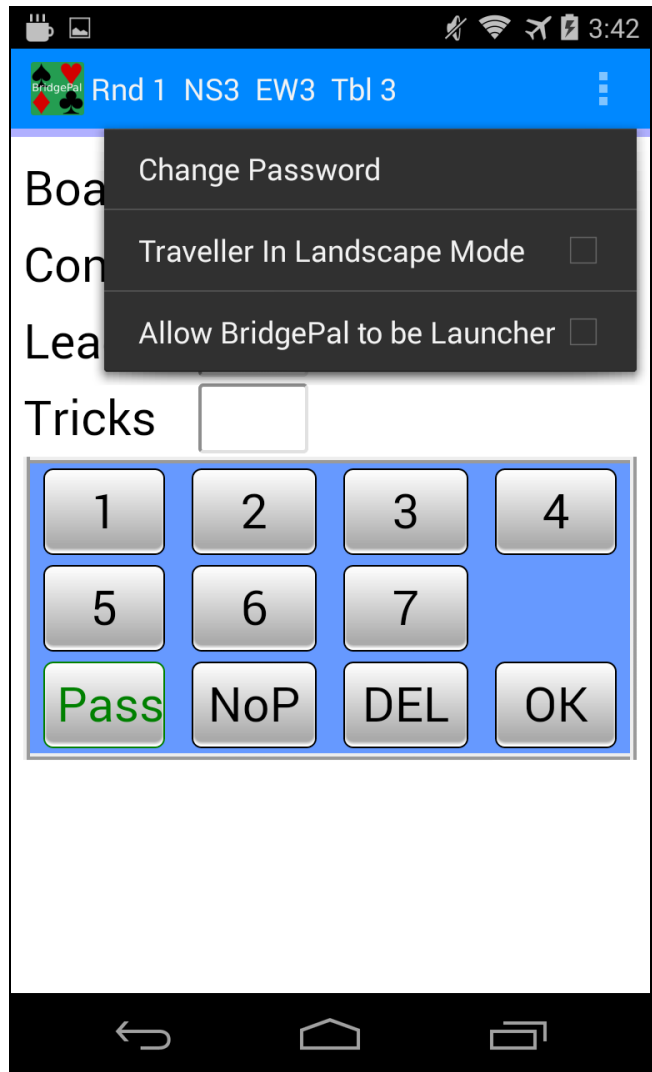
Find BridgePal Server

This causes the BridgePal to listen for 20 seconds for a broadcast message containing the ip address of the scoring PC. Broadcast messages are sent by running the bridgepalBroadcast.exe application on the scoring PC. If a message is received the app will configure itself to communicate with the scoring PC using that ip address.

Upload Logs

Uploads logs from the BridgePal app to the scoring PC. This function is for development/diagnostic purposes.

Options>>Change Password

The BridgePal app currently has two configuration options for which the settings are password protected (see below). The default password setting is "xxx" but can be changed via this function. The function displays a dialog box which requires entry of the current password, and the new password (twice). The password setting is retained across reboots or BridgePal app upgrades. If the password is forgotten it can be reset to the default value by uninstalling and re-installing the BridgePal app.

Options>>Traveller In Landscape Mode

This menu item contains a checkbox. If the checkbox is ticked the device will automatically switch to landscape mode when displaying a traveller. If it is unticked the traveller will display in landscape or portrait mode depending on the physical orientation of the device. All other screens are displayed in portrait mode irrespective of the checkbox setting. When the BridgePal app is installed the traveller is displayed in landscape mode by default. However, on larger screens (i.e. tablets rather than phones) it is normally preferable to display the traveller in portrait mode since it is perfectly readable in that mode and avoids having to rotate the device.

If the password has been changed from the default value of "xxx" the user will be prompted to enter the password when attempting to tick or untick the checkbox. Enter the password and tap on OK to toggle the checkbox setting. If the password has not been changed from the default value the user will not be prompted for the password when changing the setting (this is for backward compatibility with the previous release of the BridgePal app, which did not password protect this setting).

Options>>Allow BridgePal To Be Launcher

This menu item contains a checkbox, the setting of which is password protected. By default it is not ticked. The purpose of this setting is to allow the BridgePal app to operate in "kiosk mode". Normally, an android device has a launcher application (the display you see after startup when the screen is on and unlocked). This contains a number of icons allowing the user to launch apps which are installed on the device. It is also the screen that is displayed when the "Home" button is pressed.

Ticking this checkbox in BridgePal enables the BridgePal app to be designated as an alternative launcher. In this case the BridgePal app will be launched at startup, the Home button will not transfer control from the BridgePal app, and exiting the app via the "Back" key will cause the app to be restarted immediately. In effect the user will only interact with the BridgePal app and cannot inadvertently exit from the app or launch other apps. this is particularly useful in an environment where users are not familiar with the conventions of operating android phones or tablets.

To change the device to this mode, first tick the checkbox in the menu item, entering the password as requested. Then press the Home button. At this point (or on some devices even before pressing the Home button) you will be asked to select a "launcher" from a list of icons which should include BridgePal. Tap the BridgePal icon. Some devices may also show the options "Just Once" or "Always". If this is the case select "Always". To make the selection fully effective reboot the BridgePal device.

To revert the device to normal operation untick the menu option in the BridgePal app (the password must be entered) and press the Home button. Once again, you will be asked to select a launcher. Tap on the icon for the device's default launcher and the device will now function as before. If the password has been forgotten, go to the android Settings menu (normally by swiping down from the top of the screen and tapping on a gear icon), select "Apps", select "BridgePal" from the display list, tap on "Set As Default" and then on "Clear Defaults". Now press the Home button and you will be asked to select a launcher. Select the default launcher for the device.

3. Hand Record Functionality

BridgePal implements a number of optional features which can be individually enabled from within the scoring program. These features rely on the availability of a PBN file containing the hand records for the boards being played in the session. This PBN file path is specified in the scoring program (if the session consists of hands created by a dealing program and dealt by machine or created from curtain cards). Alternatively, the PBN file may be created by entering the hand records via the BridgePal after they have been played at a table for the first time (in the case of hands shuffled at the table). The optional features are:

- Validation of the entered contract, alerting the user to possible errors in contract entry
- Display of the Hand Record and makeable contracts (if available), after the hand has been played at the table
- Manual entry of the hand record, via the BridgePal, with automatic creation of a PBN file, if the hands are dealt at the table
- "Play" the hand on the BridgePal in double dummy mode, with card by card guidance, after the hand has been played at the table

Validation of the contract, if enabled, takes place when the traveller screen is displayed.

The other functions are accessed via the HAND button on the traveller screen. This button is only displayed if it is required in order to access the specific hand record functionality that has been enabled from the scoring program.

Contract Entry Validation

If contract entry validation is enabled for this session in the scoring program, any anomalies detected will be reported as an alert message overlaid on the traveller screen. These checks cannot detect all errors, and also may sometimes produce an alert when the entered contract was in fact correct. However, the message is a prompt to the user to double check that the contract was entered correctly. The user should tap on the OK button on the overlaid alert message box in order to dismiss the message. They can then tap on the "Error" button if necessary in order to go back and correct the contract entry for this board.

There are two types of validation checks made:

A check is made to see whether the lead card entered is consistent with the Declarer. If not it will be reported as below. This is a definite error unless the wrong PBN file for this session was selected in the scoring program, or a previously entered hand record for this board is incorrect (if using manual hand entry).

Another check is made to see whether the specified suit seems reasonable for the specified declarer. If the makeable contracts information for this board indicates that the defenders could make 9 or more tricks in this suit then it is considered probable that either the declarer or the suit is incorrect. Of course, this cannot be stated for certain. the following message is displayed.

Viewing Hand Record

Tapping the "Hand" button on the traveller screen will show a display like the one below. The "Play" and "Edit" buttons will only be visible if those functions have been enabled for this event from the scoring program. If no makeable contracts are available then "*" characters will be displayed in the makeable contracts table.


When makeable contracts table or optimum contract is not available, there is an "Analyse" button displayed to calculate makeable contracts and "Calc optimum contract" to calculate optimum contract.

Hand Entry

Hand Entry is intended for recording hand records that are manually shuffled at the table. If hand entry has been enabled from within the scoring program and no hand has yet been entered for the board that has just been played then tapping on the "Hand" button on the traveller display will display the hand entry screen:
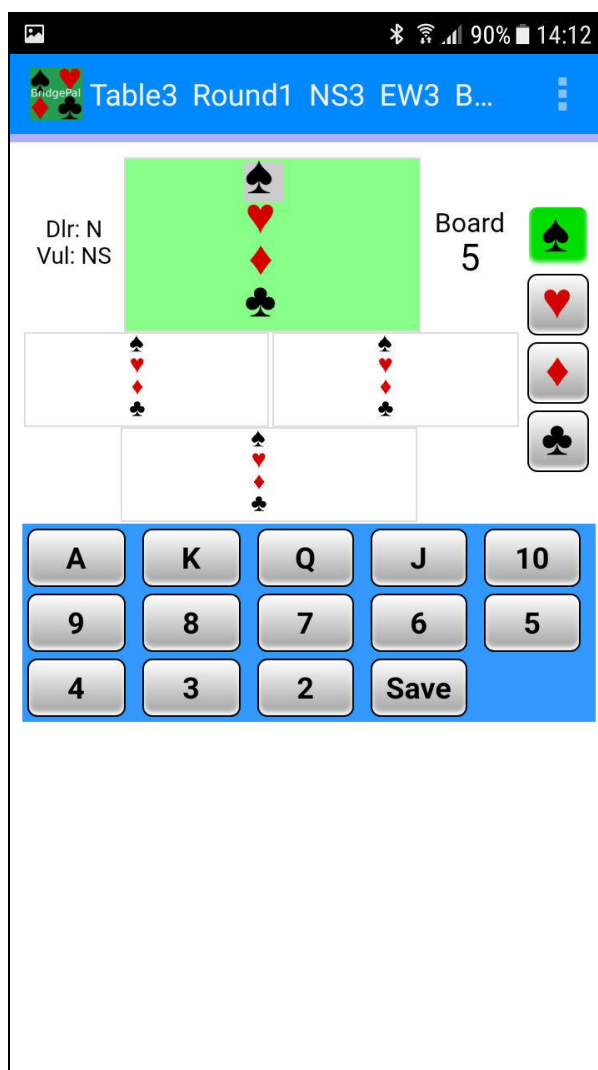
Tapping on any of the four quadrants (North, South, East, West) allows the suit holdings to be entered or edited for that quadrant. Tapping on one the suit symbols in the column on the right hand side of the screen selects that suit as the current suit. Tapping on the keypad below the hand diagram allows individual cards to be allocated to the holding for the current direction/suit, or de-allocated if they are currently allocated to that holding.

The following screenshots show the hand entry screen at various stages of completion. The buttons on the keypad are shown in various colours. A grey button indicates that this card in the current suit is not currently allocated to any of the four directions. If the button is shown as green then this card for the currently selected suit is already allocated to the current direction. If the button has a white background then it is allocated to a different hand for the current suit. Tapping on a white button will display a message asking if you wish to move this card to the direction currently being edited.

Left screen:

♠ AJ72
♥
♦
♣

Dlr: N
Vul: NS

Board 5

♠ (green)
♥
♦
♣

A	K	Q	J	10
9	8	7	6	5
4	3	2	Save	

Right screen:

♠ AJ72
♥ Q
♦
♣

Dlr: N
Vul: NS

Board 5

♠
♥ (green)
♦
♣

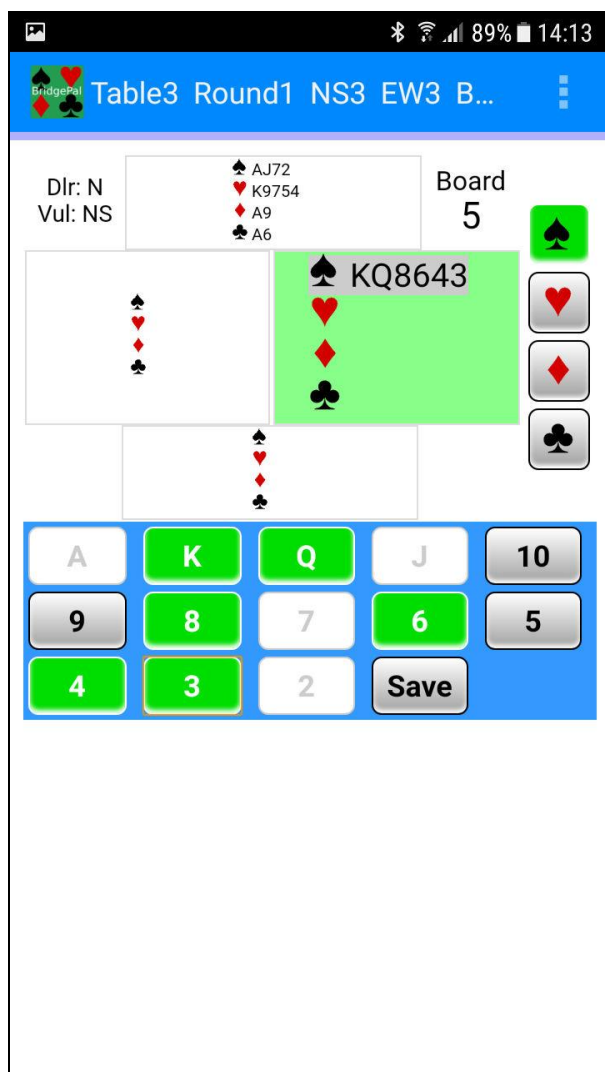| A	K	Q	J	10
9	8	7	6	5
4	3	2	Save	

Table3 Round1 NS3 EW3 B...

Table3 Round1 NS3 EW3 B...
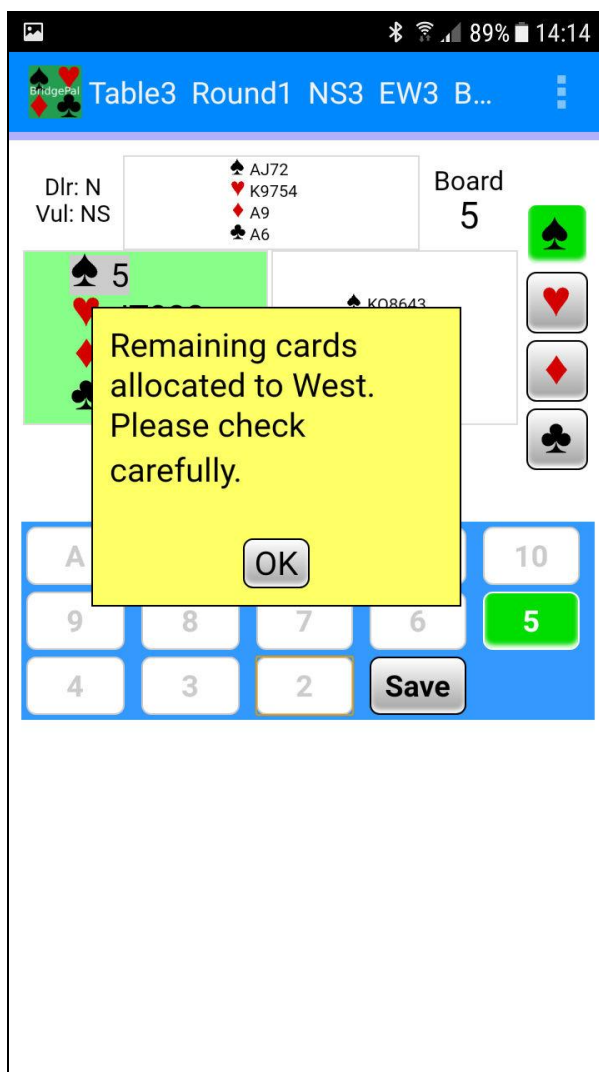
When 13 cards have been entered into three of the quadrants, and the fourth is empty, the remaining cards will automatically be allocated to the fourth quadrant. A message is displayed asking the user to check the hand carefully.

When the user has checked the hand the "Save" button should be tapped to record the entered hand to the PBN file. This action also performs calculation of makeable contracts if the BridgePal is an android device running android version 3.0 or later and the Bridge Solver app (v1.22 or later) is installed on the device. A brief message will appear on the screen while this is taking place.

When the Save has completed, the hand together with the makeable contracts (if available), will be displayed on the "View Hand Record" screen. It will also be available for viewing at other tables after they have played the hand. Note that tapping the "Save" button will only record the hand if all 52 cards have been entered, otherwise a warning will be displayed.

Tapping the OK button will now return to the traveller screen. Alternatively, if an error is spotted, the "Edit" button can be tapped to return to hand entry mode.

Playing a Hand

This feature, if enabled from the scoring program for the current event, is accessed via a "Play" button on the "View Hand Record" screen. The button will only be displayed if the BridgePal is an android device running android v3.0 or later, and the Bridge Solver app (v1.22 or later) is installed on the device. Clicking on the "Play" button will launch the Bridge Solver app, producing a display like the one below:
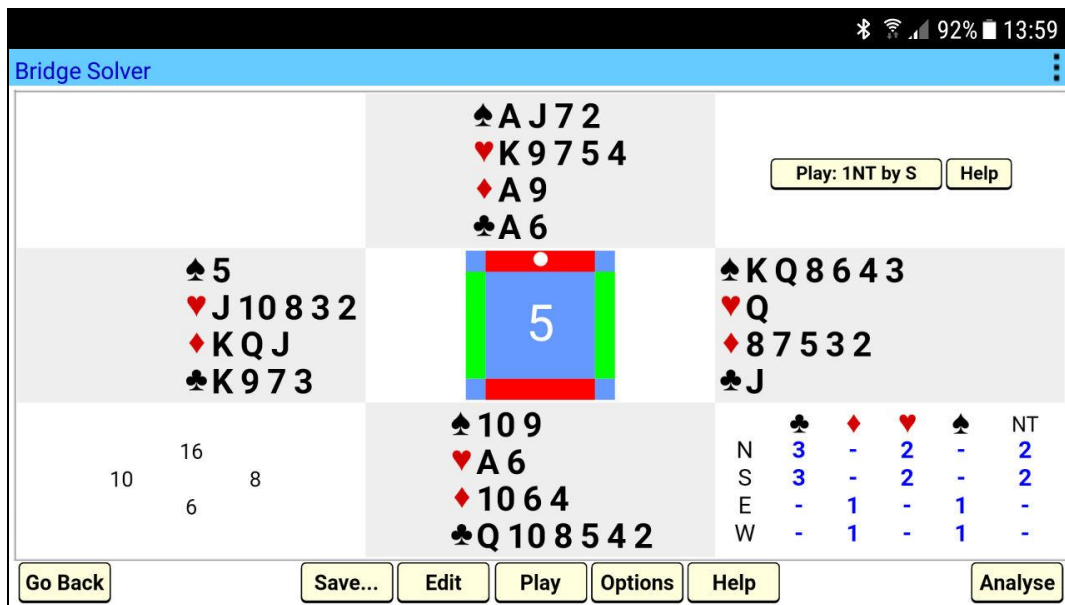
The button near the top right shows the contract entered on the traveller at this table. Clicking on the button will start playing that particular contract:
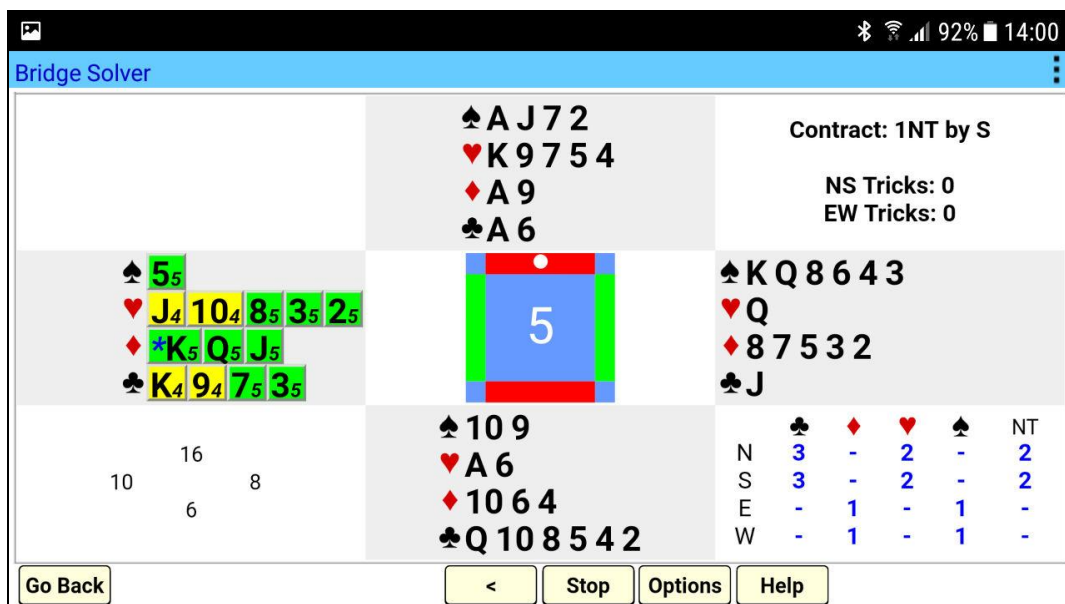
Of course, in a club bridge session there would not normally be time to play through the hand in Bridge Solver. However, it is often useful just to look at the effect of various opening leads. In the above screenshot the actual lead made at the table is indicated by a blue asterisk on the card button. Each lead card has a subscript which shows the maximum number of tricks that can be made by the defenders if that card is played and the declarer and defenders make optimal choices subsequently. The cards with a green background are the optimal choices at each step. In this particular example it can be seen that an optimal lead card was played at the table.

The context sensitive "Help" button in the Bridge Solver app provides more information about how to use the app and the options available. When the user has finished using Bridge Solver, tapping on the "Go Back" button (bottom left of the Bridge Solver display) will return to the View Hand Record screen.