

Automatch Partnerships and System Card Responsibility

One of the most important principles of StepBridge is that every partnership must display and follow a system card.

To make this easier, every player has access to a library of sample system cards. Players may:

- Use one of the supplied cards as it is
- Copy and edit a card to suit their own agreements
- Save customised versions in their own library
- Give cards clear labels such as “Chris and Sarah” for easy identification
- Share copied versions with other players

This flexibility allows partnerships to develop agreements that suit their preferred style while still ensuring opponents receive proper disclosure.

Choosing the Correct Card

When a partnership is formed, the players must decide which system card they are using.

At the start of every tournament, StepBridge sends a message asking the partnership to select the system card that will be in play. The chosen card is then identified at the table with an icon showing whose card is active.

Unfortunately, many players simply click “accept” without checking whether the correct card has been selected.

This often leads to:

- The wrong system card being used
- Partners having different expectations about agreements
- Bidding misunderstandings
- Opponents receiving incorrect information
- Director calls and complaints
- Frustration for both partners

The Challenge with Automatch Partnerships

The problem becomes even more significant with Automatch partnerships.

Automatched players are paired only five minutes before the start of play. During this short period, partners should:

- Communicate about their preferred methods
- Decide which system card will be used
- Review any unusual agreements

- Confirm they are both willing and able to play the selected system

Sadly, this opportunity is often not used effectively.

Too frequently, play begins with players randomly accepting a card without discussion, and then failing to follow the agreements shown on the card anyway.

This creates unnecessary problems:

- The new partner may feel misled or unsupported
- Opponents may receive inaccurate explanations
- Misunderstandings can affect the fairness of the game
- Directors may be required to resolve avoidable disputes

Your Responsibility as a Player

Selecting a system card is not just a formality.

When you accept a system card, you are confirming that:

- You know which card is being used
- You understand the agreements on the card
- You intend to follow those agreements during play

If you are unfamiliar with a convention or agreement on the selected card, it is far better to discuss it before the round starts rather than improvising during the auction.

The Individual Tournament System Card

To assist players in Automatch and casual partnerships, StepBridge also provides an Individual Tournament System Card.

This card was specifically created to offer a simple, straightforward system for players who may be partnering a different player each round or who have limited time to discuss agreements before play starts.

Many players choose to use this card because it:

- Provides familiar and uncomplicated methods
- Reduces the need for lengthy partnership discussions
- Helps avoid misunderstandings with new partners
- Creates clearer expectations for opponents
- Is especially useful when time is limited before the start of play

The Individual Tournament System Card can be an excellent option for Automatch partnerships, particularly when players have only a few minutes to prepare.

Rather than hurriedly accepting an unfamiliar card, players may find that using a recognised basic system leads to smoother and more enjoyable games for everyone involved.

A Simple Reminder

Before the tournament begins:

1. Check which card has been selected
2. Talk to your partner
3. Make sure you are both comfortable playing the same methods
4. Follow the agreements shown on the card

A few moments of preparation can prevent confusion, complaints, and disappointment for everyone involved.

Good partnership communication and accurate system card usage help create a fair, friendly, and enjoyable StepBridge experience for all players.