

This user manual doubles up as a Tutorial. Print it, if you can, so you can run Bridge BG alongside the Tutorial (for assistance with printing from iPad, see <https://support.apple.com/en-au/HT201387>)

If you are reading this on the iPad, and now wish to return to the Bridge BG app, touch the left arrow button in the very top left corner of the screen (to the left of the app name Bridge BG).



Bridge BG User Manual

This document is downloadable from
www.mybridgetools.com

ABSTRACT

My Bridge Bidding Guide may help you by recommending bids in the initial rounds of bidding, or in some cases right up to and including contract declaration. This User Manual can be opened from inside the app and it can also be downloaded for free from www.mybridgetools.com.

Sven Eriksen

My Bridge Tools

My Bridge Bidding Guide User Manual

Thank you for downloading the User Manual for my Bridge Bidding Guide (Bridge BG).

This document contains brief explanations, instructions and recommendations about Bridge BG for use on an iPad. To some extent it also doubles up as a tutorial.

What is Bridge BG?

Bridge BG is an app for use on an iPad by people who play Bridge, the card game. It is a tool in the sense that for a given hand of 13 cards it can possibly help you and your partner during the initial rounds of bidding. It is assumed that you and your partner have agreed between the two of you to do your bidding according to the 5-Card Major bidding system built-into Bridge BG.

Bridge BG is aimed at Bridge players who prefer to play the game in the comfort of their own homes with friends and family, or in a social Bridge group.

By the same token, Bridge BG is not likely to be useful in Bridge Clubs (even though the challenges of finding the right bids are the same). Bridge Club mechanics of bidding and the rules of scoring are significantly different because the focus is on competition between more than four players all out to prove their skills.

For many years I have been reluctant to make my Bridge tools available to anyone else for fear that they would not be accepted by Bridge players at large. Purists would say that at the Bridge table you are supposed to use only your cards, your hands and your brain. Even so, it has been socially acceptable for a long time to make use of your own private “cheat sheets” (the little booklets or fold-out charts people sometimes carry around) to help you along with the bidding.

Fast forward to the 21st century, where we all agree that times have changed dramatically as a result of Information Technology. In the 21st century many of us are totally atuned to using our mobile phones and computers to help us solve all sorts of everyday problems all day long, so why not for Bridge? On that basis, I think tools like Bridge BG will now be acceptable at the Bridge table, provided all four players agree and if used in an ethical manner.

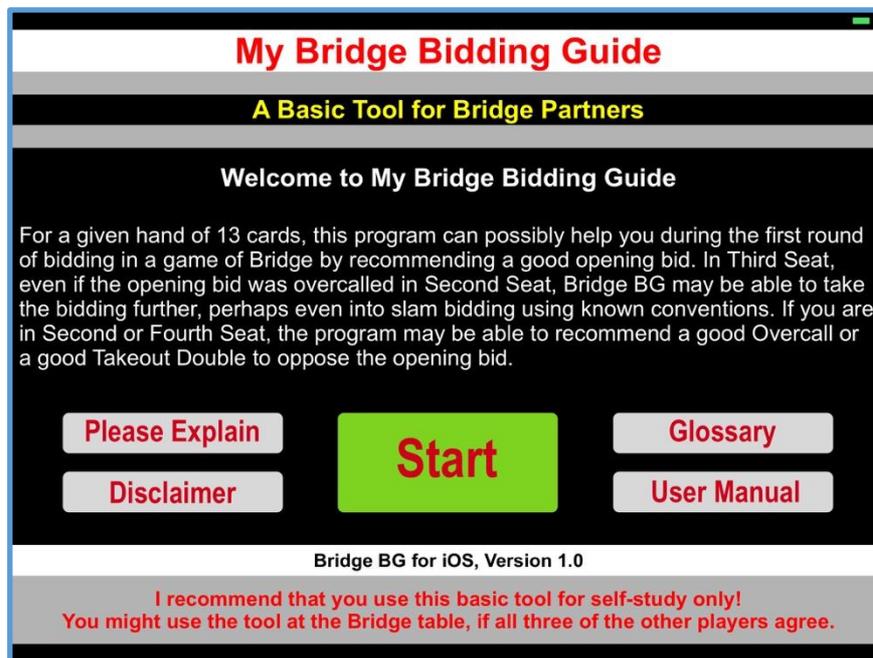
If Bridge BG is available to and being used by both you and your partner at the Bridge table (on separate devices), each of you may benefit from tracing the bidding as it unfolds. This will provide useful information on which both you and your partner can make bidding decisions.

Please note that for some of its functionality Bridge BG relies on back end support from an Internet website at <http://www.eriksen.com.au/mb>.

How to get Started

After downloading and installing Bridge BG from the Apple App Store onto your iPad, sit down in a comfortable chair, start the app by touching the Bridge BG icon on your iPad and read this manual following it as a tutorial.

A Home screen similar to the following will appear:

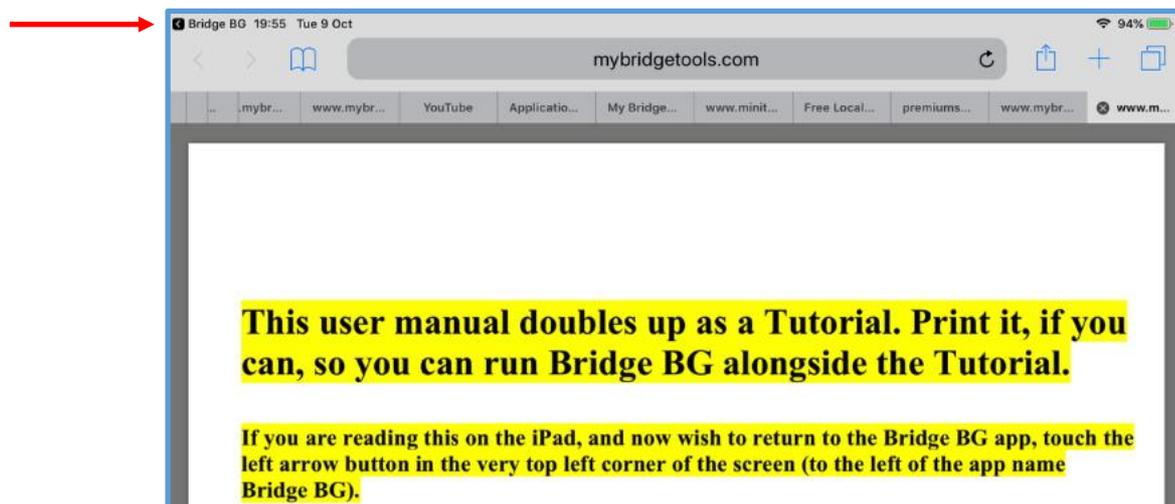


Here you can read a summary of what Bridge BG might be able to do for you, whether you are looking for an opening bid, or a bid in Second, Third or Fourth Seat.

Before pressing the big green Start button you might like to first take a look at what happens if you press each of the white buttons. They are pretty self-explanatory and provide you with additional information.

If you press the “User Manual” button while connected to the Internet, you will be shown the Bridge BG User Manual/Tutorial (this document). Alternatively, you can also download and print the document from the following webpage <http://www.mybridgetools.com/apps>.

To get back to the Bridge BG app, if you did go into the User Manual on your iPad, you will need to press the small “left arrow” in the very top left corner of the screen.



Note About the Internet

Please note that for correct functioning Bridge BG requires access to the Internet. Without it some of the buttons and links will be disabled.

Note About Seat Numbering

For purposes of discussion, there is a need to identify the position of the four players around the Bridge table (First Seat, Second Seat, Third Seat and Fourth Seat).

In the majority of Bridge literature, it is common practice to number the seats beginning with the player who deals the cards (the Dealer). There is some logic to that, since the Dealer is the first player to be given the opportunity to open the bidding. You can certainly argue that if the Opening Bid is preceded by one, two or three Passes, this does reveal something about the distribution of the cards around the Bridge table. However, that piece of information is just one more thing the players will need to consider during the bidding process.

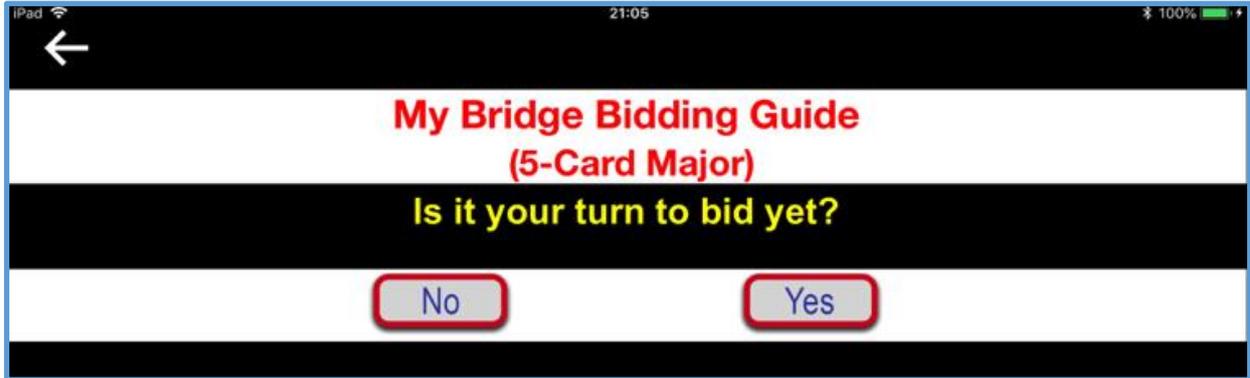
Another way of identifying seats is South, West, North and East, but for my purposes that is not sufficiently accurate.

For purposes of discussion and logistics in my Bridge apps and in my documentation I prefer the following accurate way of identifying the seats around the Bridge table:

1. The player who opens the bidding is considered to be in **First Seat**
2. The player to the left of the Opener, also known as the Left-Hand Opponent (LHO), is considered to be in **Second Seat**
3. The player opposite the Opener, aka the Responder, is considered to be in **Third Seat**
4. The player to the right of the Opener, aka the Right-Hand Opponent (RHO) is considered to be in **Fourth Seat**

Starting

After starting Bridge BG, and depending on which position you are in around the Bridge table, you will be presented with one or more Yes/No questions, such as this one:



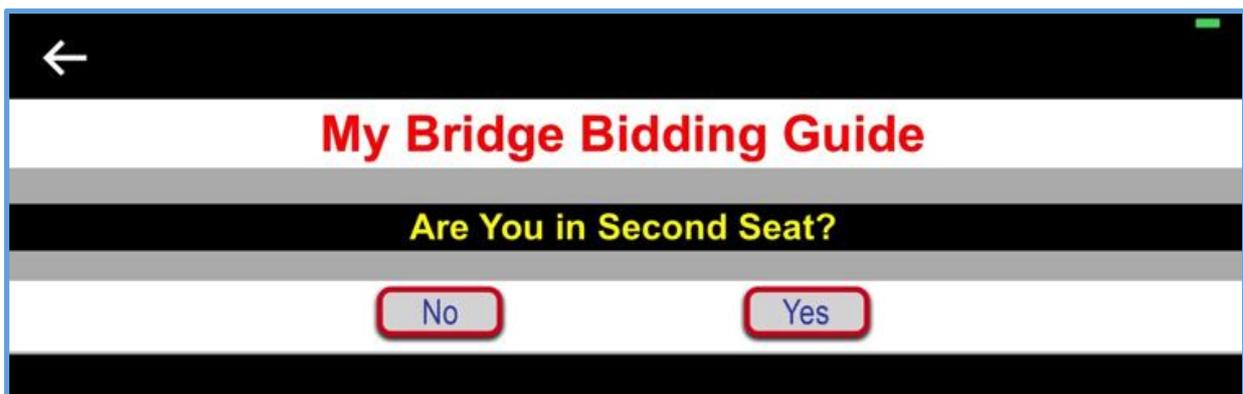
In this case, if you answer No to that question, the screen will merely refresh. Bridge BG is simply trying to prevent you from bidding out of turn.

If you answer Yes, Bridge BG then needs to know if someone else has already opened the bidding:



If you answer No to that question, Bridge BG will attempt to help you with a recommendation for an opening bid, and for that you will need to tell the app which cards you have on your hand (as explained in the following section of this document).

If instead you answer Yes, Bridge BG will want to know whether you are in Second, Third or Fourth Seat.



Depending on your answer to that question and similar questions for Third and Fourth Seat, Bridge BG will attempt to help you with a different bidding recommendation, and for all of those cases you will need to tell Bridge BG which cards you have on your hand.

Entering your Cards

This is the card entry screen, where you can tell Bridge BG which cards you have on your hand. No cards have been entered yet, so all four suits are initially shown as void and the Analyze is disabled (greyed out):



Your Hand

Let's imagine nobody has opened the bidding yet and you have been dealt the following hand and sorted the cards nicely into suits:



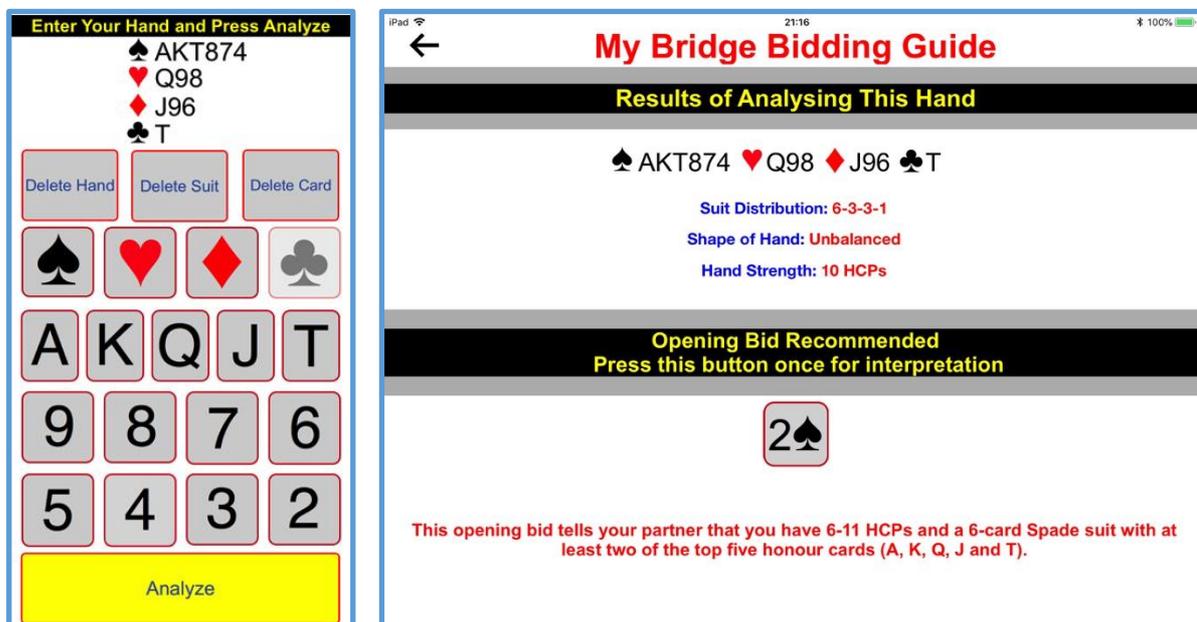
What will Bridge BG make of this hand? Is it good enough for an opening bid? If so, which one? Let's find out.

Enter the cards by pressing each of the relevant buttons for each suit one at a time. For the Spades, you would press the Spade button followed by A, K, T, 8, 7, 4 in that sequence. Following that you would press the Heart button followed by Q, 9, 8, then the Diamond button followed by J, 9, 6 and finally the Club button followed by the Ten. With a bit of practice, you will be able to enter any hand in about 10 seconds. It's just like dialing a long phone number. You'll soon get the hang of it. If you make a mistake, use the appropriate Delete button.

When the 13th card has been entered, the yellow Analyze button will now have been enabled so you can press it.

Analysing the Cards

Pressing the yellow Analyze button makes the Bridge BG analyse your cards according to the built-in 5-Card Major bidding system. I assume you and your partner have agreed to follow that system of bidding. Bridge BG then presents the results of the analysis and comes up with a bidding recommendation, including the distribution of the suits as well as the shape and strength of the hand. In this case, with the cards you have just entered, Bridge BG recommends an opening bid of 2S and shown this in an active 2S button, i.e. one you can press.

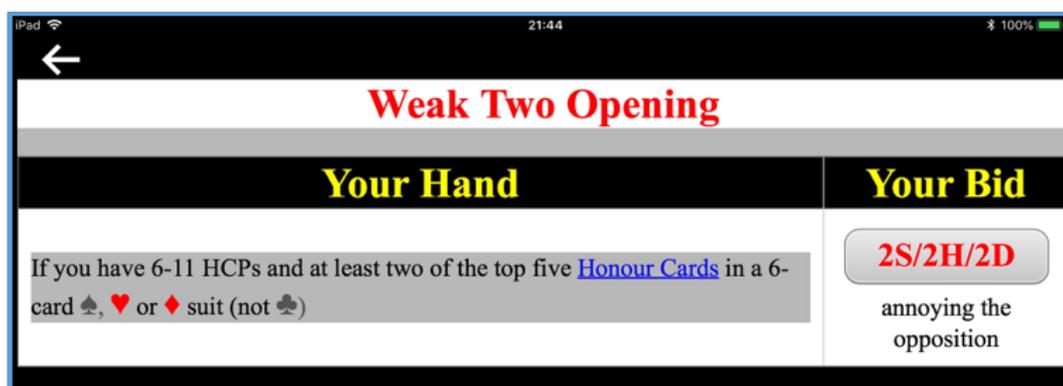


If you press the recommended bid button (2S) once, Bridge BG will interpret the bid for you, according to 5-Card Major bidding conventions. In this case, the interpretation shown in red text will be “This bid tells your partner that you have 6-11 HCPs and a 6-card Spade suit with at least two of the top five honour cards (A, K, Q, J and T)”.

It is your decision as to whether or not you wish to follow the recommendation.

Further Bidding Recommendations

If you decide to follow the 2S recommendation, you will announce the opening bid as per normal. You might like to press the recommended bid button (2S) for a second time. In the above example, you would then see this:



Here, in the “Your Hand” column, once again you are being told about your own cards. On that basis, In the “Your Bid” column, Bridge BG recommends that you make a “Weak Two Opening” to annoy the opposition.

If you have gone this far and your iPad is connected to the Internet, you will have come through to a comprehensive app support website featuring an integrated set of decision tables offering further bidding recommendations, including recommendations for partner's response to your opening bid.

If you decide to go ahead and make a 2S bid as recommended, wouldn't it be nice to know what options are then available for partner to choose from?

Well, the above screen will help you here. If you as the opener press the "2S/2H/2D" button in the "Your Bid" column, partner's options will be listed for you in a screen headed "Responder's First Bid after 2S, 2H or 2D Opening" so you can see what partner should be thinking about.

Partner's cards typically fall into a few cases based upon which partner will respond. In this particular case there are three possibilities (A, B and C):

Responder's First Bid after 2S, 2H or 2D Opening		
Your Hand	Your Bid	
<p>Case A. Fit and Extra Length If you have 2+ cards in suit opened, you have a Fit. Therefore you can now calculate your Total Points (TPs).</p>	<p>With 0-9 TPs Pass</p>	<p>With 10-12 TPs Raise by 1 closing off</p> <p>With 13+ TPs 2NT asking partner to indicate strength</p>
<p>Case B. Strength and a 5+ Card Suit If you have 13+ HCPs and another good 5+ card suit, you may prefer that suit to the one opened by partner.</p>	<p>New Long Suit at Lowest Possible Level looking for a Fit</p>	
<p>Case C. Otherwise If your hand doesn't match any of the above cases.</p>	<p>Pass</p>	

This screen shows what your partner might do in response to your 2S bid. Your partner will be looking to match his or her holding against one of three cases listed in the "Your Hand" column and then pick a bid from those listed in the right in the "Your Bid" column.

- If partner decides to raise your opening bid by 1 (after counting the so-called "Total Points"), you will know that partner came from Case A with a fit (meaning you and your partner has 8+ cards in Spades) and extra length. You will also know that partner does not expect you to bid again.
- If partner responds by bidding 2NT, you will know that partner came from Case A with a fit and extra length, but you do not yet know the strength of partner's hand.
- If partner responds by bidding a new suit, you will know that partner came from Case B with strength and a 5+ card suit, and that partner is looking for a fit with your hand.
- If partner Passes you will know either that partner came from Case A with less than 10 TPs, or that neither Case A nor Case B matched partner's hand. That is useful information on which you, the Opener, can base your second bid.

Let's imagine partner responds 2NT, indicating a fit and that partner has no less than 13+ Total Points on hand. What do you, the Opener, do then?

To receive a recommendation for your second bid after opening the bidding, you can press the 2NT button in the "Your Bid" column on your screen and you will then see this:

Your Partner's Bid	Your Bid		
<p>2NT</p> <p>Your partner has 13+ HCPs and 3+ cards in opened suit. Your partner is asking you to indicate strength.</p>	<p>With only 6-7 HCPs</p> <p>3 of opened suit</p> <p>closing off</p>	<p>With 8+ HCPs and the three top honours in opened suit</p> <p>3NT</p> <p>closing off</p>	<p>With 8+ HCPs and an honour in another 4+ card suit</p> <p>3 of New suit</p> <p>leaving decision to partner</p>

With partner responding 2NT, it looks like you, the Opener, have three options for your second bid. Your options are listed in the "Your Bid" column and in this case, you will make your decision based on your own HCP count.

- If you have less than 8 HCPs on your hand as analysed, you will bid 3S (to cancel the 2NT bid) and to instruct partner not to bid again.
- If you have 8+ HCPs with no less than 3 top honours in Spades, you will bid 3NT instructing partner not to bid again.
- If you have 8+ HCPs and a new 4+card suit, in which you have at least one honour card, you will bid 3 of that new suit to give partner a choice. This way you are leaving the decision to partner as to which of the two suits becomes Trump (Opener's Spade suit or your new suit).

In any case, your second bid after opening will tell partner what to do.

Conclusion

There you are! If you went through this as a tutorial and actually pressed the buttons on your iPad, you will have seen Bridge BG in action.

Yes, it takes a bit of getting used to pressing those buttons on the Bridge BG screens.

Of course, things might not always go as smoothly as this, especially not if the opposition intervenes in the bidding.

In any case, by now you will have a better understanding of what Bridge BG is trying to do for you.

Happy Bridging!

Sven Erikssen

Appendix A. Improving Bridge BG or Reporting a Problem

I hope you find the Bridge BG app useful. For more information, you might like to visit www.mybridgetools.com.

Should you discover a problem on a particular screen while using Bridge BG, I would be most grateful if you could email me either a photo or a screen capture demonstrating the problem.

In case you have never done a screen capture before, here is how you do it on your email-enabled iPad:

1. Bring up the screen on which there is a problem.
2. Hold down the Power button while briefly pressing the Home button. You will see the screen flash by and a new image will have been added to your Photos. The image will be shown in the bottom left corner of your screen.
3. Terminate the app by pressing the Home button.
4. Press the Photos icon on the Home screen and confirm that the screenshot was added.
5. Select the screenshot and press the little icon with an up arrow at the top right of the screen.
6. On a screen headed "1 Photo Selected", press the Mail icon.
7. This will have created a new email message with the photo attached to the email.
8. Add a few words of explanation for my benefit.
9. Address the email to sven@eriksen.com.au and send it from your iPad.

I would also welcome any suggestions for improvements. Only that way can I make it better. If you have any comments on the app or on this documentation, please send me an email addressed to sven@eriksen.com.au

Appendix B. Recommendations about iPad Setup for Bridge BG

Using an iPad in the middle of a Bridge table might work better if you spend a few minutes to set it up for this particular scenario. For example, it is not terribly convenient if the iPad keeps on turning itself off in the middle of the Bridge table. Ideally it should last for as long as it takes to play three rubbers. If you can afford it, it might even be a good idea to have an iPad dedicated to playing Bridge. That way you can set it up so it's always ready.

If you are happy to change a few iPad settings for playing Bridge, it might be a good idea to record your current settings before you change them, so you can restore them later.

Here are a few items to consider:

- The iPad will only work for an extended period of time on battery power, if it has a reasonable charge at the beginning. Ideally it should show “90%” charged (or more) in the top right corner. You can, of course, plug in a charger, but this is a bit awkward in the middle of the Bridge table.
- The iPad does use more battery power if you have the screen set to maximum Brightness, but it is important for all players to be able to see quite clearly what's on the screen, so this is perhaps one setting you may not wish to alter.
- If you have implemented a Passcode on your iPad it will lock itself after a certain period of time as per your preferred setting. To avoid having to enter your passcode while playing Bridge you may wish to change your Auto-Lock setting via Settings > General > Auto-Lock > NEVER. If you do this, remember to reset this setting for normal use.
- Some of the My Bridge apps do require wireless access to the Internet. Set this up via Settings > Wi-Fi > ON and select your network to provide the service. If you are using the iPad in somebody else's home, you will need their permission and their wireless network security key to log in and connect your iPad to the Internet.
- Other Settings recommended for optimal use of My Bridge apps are as follows:
 - Settings > Airplane Mode > ON
 - Settings > Location Services > Location Services > OFF
 - Settings > General > Usage > Battery Percentage > ON
 - Settings > General > Restrictions > OFF
 - Settings > General > Use Side Switch to > MUTE (rather than Lock Rotation)
 - Settings > Mail, Contacts, Calendars > Fetch New Data > Push > OFF

Again, if you make these changes, remember to reset these settings for normal use, unless your iPad is dedicated to playing Bridge.