This user manual is also a Tutorial. Print it, if you can, so you can run Bridge HA alongside the Tutorial.

Bridge HA
User Manual

This document is downloadable from

www.eriksen.com.au/mybridgetools

ABSTRACT

My Bridge Hand Analyzer (Bridge HA) may help you in a game of Bridge by recommending a good Opening bid. This User Manual can be downloaded for free from the My Bridge Tools website.

Sven Eriksen

My Bridge Tools

My Bridge Hand Analyzer User Manual/Tutorial

The User Manual/Tutorial for my Bridge Hand Analyzer document contains brief explanations, instructions and recommendations about the Bridge HA app for use on an Apple iPhone or a Google Android phone.

The screenshots in this document were captured on a Nokia 3 Android phone.

What is Bridge HA?

Bridge HA is a mobile phone app for use by people who play Bridge, the card game. Bridge HA is based on standard American 5-Card Major bidding conventions. After receiving and sorting the cards on your hand it will take you less than 20 seconds to enter them into Bridge HA and after that, at the press of a button, you will receive a recommendation for a good Opening bid based on that hand.

Bridge HA 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 HA is not likely to be useful in Bridge Clubs where focus is on competition between more than four players. Even though the challenges of finding the right bids are the same, Bridge Club mechanics of bidding and rules of scoring are significantly different.

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 private "cheat sheets" (little booklets or fold-out charts) to help you along with the bidding.

Fast forward to the 21st century where we all agree that times have changed dramatically. 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. On that basis I think tools like Bridge HA will be quite acceptable at the Bridge table, provided all four players agree and if used in an ethical manner.
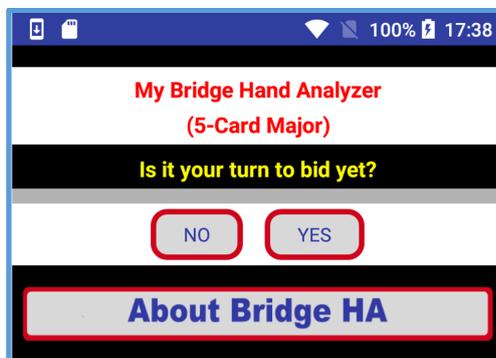
Practical Recommendations you may adopt at the Bridge table:

1. Hold the cards in your left hand and place the phone on the table in front of you.

2. It's a little early, but as soon as the cards have been dealt, and if the three other players have no objections, you may as well start Bridge HA there and then.

3. Press YES and then NO so you are ready if you get the chance to make an opening bid.

4. If you can see straight away that the cards on your hand do not qualify for any opening bid, you don't need to go any further with these cards. Otherwise, to save time you may as well go ahead and enter your cards on the on-screen keypad.

5. The cards you enter will be displayed in a very small font (nobody is looking anyway).

6. Use your index finger on your right hand to tap the buttons on the Bridge HA keypad.

7. Apply firm and accurate finger touch and use the Delete buttons to make corrections.

8. Even if you don't get the chance to make an opening bid, because one of the other players beats you to it, you may as well press the yellow Analyze Hand button to make Bridge HA recommendation from Bridge HA. That way you are ready for bidding.

9. Do not feel obliged to follow the opening bid recommendation put forward by Bridge HA. Go with your own ideas, if you think they are better.

How to get Started

After downloading and installing Bridge HA from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store onto your mobile phone, sit down in a comfy chair, get ready for a bit of learning and start the app by touching the Bridge HA icon.

A Start screen similar to the following will appear:

The "About Bridge HA" button will tell you that Bridge HA is primarily intended for self-study and that printing this User Manual is best done using the Internet from a computer that has a printer attached to it (your mobile phone may not be set up for this). Try pressing the button.

As you can see on the above screen, the first thing Bridge HA wants to know is whether it is your turn to bid yet. Yes or No?

If you answer No to the question "Is it your turn to bid yet?", the screen will merely refresh. The app is trying to prevent you from bidding out of turn.

If you answer Yes to the question "Is it your turn to bid yet?", then the app needs to know if someone else has already opened the bidding:

If you answer Yes to the question "Has someone else already opened?' Bridge HA will not be able to help you, because it can only do opening bids.

If you want more than what Bridge HA will give you, Bridge BG or Bridge BPG is the answer. These apps are available from the Apple App Store but only for the iPad.

Let's assume you answer No to the above question "Has someone else already opened?'.

Bridge HA will now want to know which cards you have on your hand. It therefore presents you with the card entry screen on which you can quickly enter your cards.

At this point no cards have been entered yet, which is why all suits are shown as "void" (no cards entered so far).

This is how I hold the cards in my left hand with the mobile phone on the table in front of me.

The cards you enter are shown in the card display at the top of the screen, but so small that only you can see them.
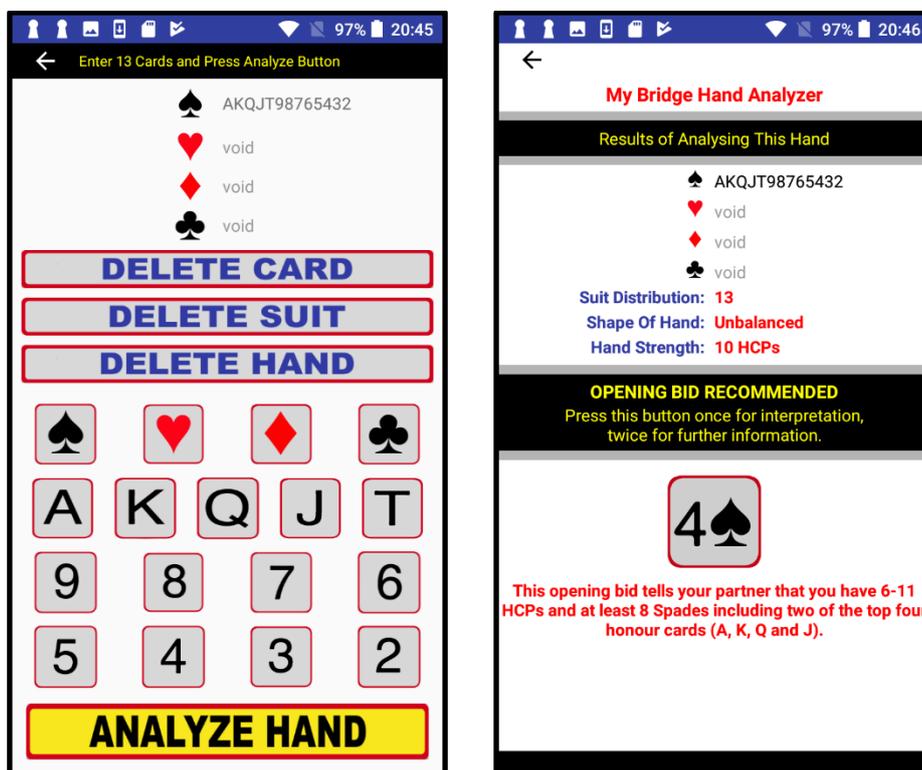
It will take you less than 20 seconds to enter all 13 cards. We'll try it out straight away.

Entering a Somewhat Unusual Hand

Hard to believe but let us imagine you have been dealt a hand that contains all cards in the Spade suit. Yes, this would be highly unlikely, happening once in a million years, but Bridge HA doesn't care.

So, press the button with the Spade card symbol and follow that up with one press of each of the buttons shown below it: A, K, Q, J, T, 9, 8, 7, 6 ,5, 4, 3 and 2.

Here they are, all the Spades. The three other suits are listed as "void" (no cards in those suits):

If you paid attention while entering the cards, you will have noticed that the Analyze button remained grey and disabled right up until you entered the 13th card. Now the Analyze button has come up bright yellow. Bridge HA is now ready to analyse the hand.

When you press the yellow Analyze button you will receive a recommendation for an Opening bid based on the cards you have entered.

Just for interest's sake, what opening bid would you make from a hand containing all the Spades? 7S? Sounds reasonable to me.

However, Bridge HA suggests 4S, because that is what it has been programmed to do.

This illustrates a very important point about Bridge HA:

Whilst Bridge HA is there to recommend an opening bid, you do not have to accept any of its recommendations. You are in charge and you do the thinking.

In this case, with all Spades on hand, I would definitely go for a 7S Grand Slam contract (not just 4S) because you would have no trouble winning it, regardless of what card is lead to the first trick.

Being dealt this hand is extremely unlikely, so let's take a look at a more realistic one.

Entering a Real Hand

Let's imagine you have been dealt the following hand:

♠AKT874
♥Q98
♦J96
♣T

What will Bridge HA make of this hand? Well, let's enter the cards and see what happens.

Start by pressing the Spade button followed by A, K, T, 8, 7, 4 in that sequence.

Then 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 become quite good at this. It's just like dialing a long phone number.
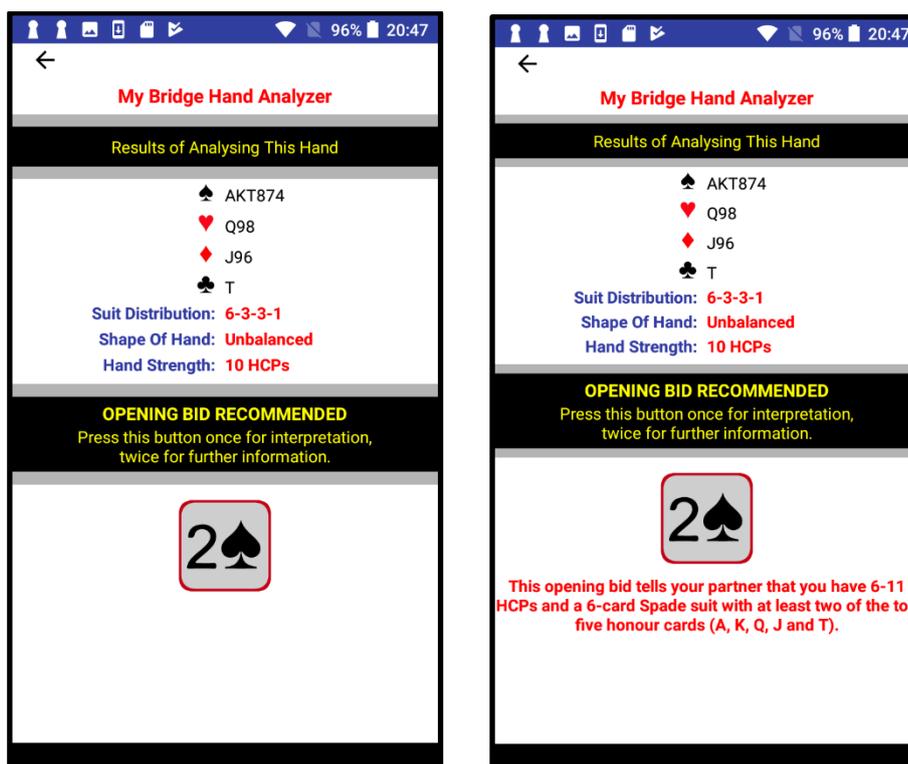

By the way, if you make a mistake, you have three DELETE buttons that will help you.

Now that you have entered 13 cards, you'll know what to do next.

When the 13th card has been entered, pressing the yellow Analyze button will make Bridge HA present the results of the analysis, including the distribution of the suits, the shape of the hand and its strength.

Below that, Bridge HA will recommend an opening bid of 2S, also known as a "Weak Two Opening", and it will show this in a 2S button at the bottom of the screen.

If you press the 2S button once, Bridge HA will interpret the bid for you in red text just below the button, explaining that 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).

By the way, in our chosen bidding system this recommendation for an opening bid based on this hand is called a "Weak Two" because you are short of points, but with a bit of support from partner the long Spade suit may well lead to a winnable contract.

If you press the 2S recommended bid button a second time, you will be told that if you want more than just opening bids you need Bridge BG or Bridge BPG. Bridge HA will only do opening bids.

If you have an iPad and want to find out about Bridge BG and Bridge BPG, I recommend that you visit the My Bridge Tools website (http://www.eriksen.com.au/mybridgetools) or go to your Apple App Store.

Starting, Stopping and Terminating Bridge HA (and/or Other Apps)

You may already know all about this, but if not, read on.

Starting, stopping and terminating an app like Bridge HA is easy, if you know how.

The basic procedures are different on an iPhone from what they are on an Android phone.

Basic iPhone Procedures:

Starting Bridge HA on an iPhone:

1. Turn on your iPhone and enter you PIN (if relevant).

2. Locate the Bridge HA icon on the Home page.

3. Tap the Bridge HA icon to see the Start screen.

Temporarily stopping Bridge HA on an iPhone:

1. On any of the Bridge HA screens, press the Home button once on the face of the phone. This will push the app into the background. However, it is still running and still consuming resources and draining the battery.

2. After having been stopped, Bridge HA can be recalled coming back on screen any time by tapping the Bridge HA icon just as you did when you first started it.

Permanently terminating Bridge HA (and/or other apps) on an iPhone:

1. On any of the Bridge HA screens, press the Home button twice. You will see part of the Bridge HA screen on the right.

2. Swipe upwards until the Bridge HA screen disappears. Bridge HA has now been terminated and is no longer running.

3. To reduce the drain on your battery, you may wish to also swipe up on other apps currently running in the background. Those apps will then have been terminated and will no longer be running in the background unless/until you restart them.

Basic Android Phone Procedures:

Starting Bridge HA on an Android phone:

1. Turn on your Android phone and enter you PIN (if relevant).

2. Locate the Bridge HA icon on the Home page.

3. Tap the Bridge HA icon to see the Start screen.

Permanently stopping and terminating Bridge HA (and/or other apps) on an Android phone:

1. Press the square button on the bottom edge of the phone below the screen to get to the Recent Applications menu.

2. If you currently have no applications running, you may see a message to that effect, e.g. "No recent items".

3. Otherwise with Bridge HA running, this will show the current Bridge HA screen with a termination button added at the top right.

4. Swipe to the left on the Bridge HA screen to terminate Bridge HA.

5. To terminate Bridge HA and any other app currently running on the phone, press the "CLEAR ALL" button at the top right of the screen.

Improving Bridge HA or Reporting a Problem via your iPhone

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

Should you discover a problem while using Bridge HA on your iPhone, I would be most grateful if you could send me a screen capture demonstrating the problem.

If you are using an email-enabled iPhone, and you have never done this before, here is how you do it:

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 in the left bottom corner of the screen and a new image will have been added to your Photos.

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 bottom left 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 iPhone.

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.

Happy Bidding!

Sven Eriksen

Improving Bridge HA or Reporting a Problem via your Android Phone

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

Should you discover a problem while using Bridge HA on your Android phone, I would be most grateful if you could send me a screen capture demonstrating the problem.

If you are using an email-enabled Android phone, and you have never done this before, here is an example of how you do it (the example uses a Nokia 3 Android phone):

1. Bring up the Bridge HA screen on which there is a problem.
2. Swipe down and press the down arrow, then swipe left.
3. Press the Screenshot button.
4. You will see the screen flash by in the centre of the screen and a new image will have been added to your Photos.
5. To find the screenshot so you can email it, open the Photos app and select Albums.
6. Press Screenshots.
7. Select the last screenshot in the list (the one you have just taken).
8. Press the leftmost button at the bottom of the screen (looks like a < symbol).
9. Type sven@eriksen.com.au in the To field.
10. Press Send button.
11. This will have share the screenshot with me.
12. Thank you for your effort.

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.

Happy Bidding!

Sven Eriksen