



2010 AGM: Proposal for a Dealing Machine Trial

Following discussion at various Committee meetings, we propose that the club take a 'Duplimate' dealing machine on trial.

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A trial would enable the club to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a dealing machine (some *perceived* ones are listed at the end). **On completion of the trial, the club would be in a position to make an informed decision on whether or not to continue using a dealing machine.**

Requirements for a trial

We are able to make a lengthy trial of a 'Duplimate' dealing machine because the supplier has offered to refund its cost in full if we return it within 12 months. Its initial purchase would be funded by a group of members who wish to remain anonymous.

In addition to the dealing machine we would need three sets of its rectangular boards (£47 per set of 32) and some packs of bar-coded cards (£316 for 200 packs). The treasurer considers that these costs could safely be met from the club's reserves.

Machine-dealt boards would be used on Monday and Tuesday evenings. At the end of the session, records of the hands dealt and computer assessments of makeable contracts would be put on the website. *If we also provided everyone with a printout each session and the trial ran for a full year then the printing cost would be about £214.*

At the end of the trial

If the club decided not to keep the dealing machine, its loss would be small. In time, the bar-coded cards could be taken into use as the ordinary cards wear out. The same would be true, though over a longer period, of the extra boards.

Beyond the trial

The following points are mentioned to complete the picture. *They do not affect the immediate decision about a trial, but would affect the decision about keeping the dealing machine when the trial ended.*

If the club kept the dealing machine then it would need to repay the capital cost (£2,908) over the next four years. In addition, there would be running costs of perhaps £290 a year; £214 of this is printing costs, which could be much lower if players instead referred to the website. Once the capital had been repaid, a reserve would need to be accumulated to fund the eventual purchase of a replacement. The annual subscription would therefore need to rise by perhaps £10. To the proposers, this seems reasonable; but it would be for the club as a whole to decide, at the end of the trial, whether the benefits warranted it.

Perceived advantages of a dealing machine

- Records of the hands dealt and computer assessments of makeable contracts, providing opportunities for learning and improvement.
- Genuinely 'random' deals, providing more varied and therefore more interesting hands.
- Automated dealing of specified hands (for Sims competitions and the Christmas Party).

Perceived disadvantages of a dealing machine

- Cost.
- 'Freak' hands, making it impossible to rely on normal methods of bidding and play. (Those dealt by machine are in fact genuinely 'random'.)
- Boards of a different shape from those in current use, making them less easy to handle.

If you have questions please contact Mike Clements (01483 505982: mikeclements47@gmail.com) or any of the proposers.