



Alerts in BBO

Last material change by Paul Brake: 2020-05-06

In an on-line bridge game if you make a bid that requires an alert, you (not your partner) alert the bid. The opposition sees the alert (and any explanation). Your partner does not see if any bid you make is alerted, nor any explanation given by you ^[1]. This reflects the fact that alerts are for the benefit of the opposition, not your partner.

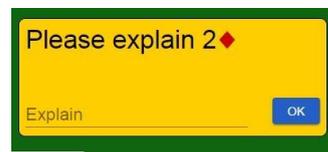
Take a situation where partner has opened 1NT and you have 5 or more hearts, and reply 2♦ (as a transfer to hearts). This is a bid that would be expected to be alerted in a face-to-face session. When it is your turn to bid and your bidding window pops up, there always will be an alert icon appearing.

Always press the “Alert” button before you enter that bid (Alert button will turn red):



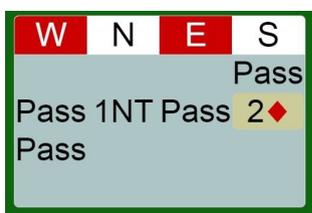
After pressing the “Alert” button, then do one of the three alternatives:

1. Make your bid, which will then appear in the bidding sequence shown at the table. Then after you make your alerted bid, click on your alerted bid (2♦ in this example)



and a yellow pop up window appears.

Click the grey Explain text, describe the meaning of your bid (“5+♥’s” or “transfer to hearts”), then click OK. The alerted bid then appears on a light brown background.



or

2. Provide an explanation of why you are alerting the bid, and then make your bid. So after you press the Alert button, type in the explanation of “5+♥’s” or “transfer to hearts” and then bid 2♦. Your opponents see both your bid and your explanation at the same time. Again the alerted bid appears on a light brown background, or
3. Just make your bid, and do nothing else for the time being. In this case, the bid has a red border round it, but it does not have a light brown background to the bid.



If an opposition player asks for an explanation, you must explain your agreement/s (if any), as per alternative 1. above. If no explanation is asked for, none is ever given. This option is not recommended if your bid is even slightly unusual (as you never want your opponents to assume that your bid meant one thing when it means something else).

Option 1 saves time over option 2 that other players can be thinking about their bids while you are typing up your explanation.

Playing on BBO in Australia, you must Alert and automatically offer an explanation of the strength of your 1NT and the type of 1♣ opening. Typical alerts may be “15-17” (if playing a strong NT), “3+” (if playing better minor) , 2+ (if playing a short club), and “Strong 16+” (if playing Precision).

At any time during the auction or play of the hand, you can ask an opponent what their bid means. Click on their bid and a “Please explain” pop-up appears on the bidders screen. The bidder now provides an explanation. If the bidder was declarer or dummy, both defenders see the explanation. If the bidder was a defender, their partner does not see their partner’s explanation.

If at any time during the auction or play you fail to alert, but then realise you should have, click on your own bid, and then provide the explanation. The opposition (not your partner) will see the explanation. You could alternatively send a private chat message to your opponents, but this is not recommended, as you may accidentally send the chat to the table (where your partner can see) or an opponent may send a table chat back in response.

When alerting

- You can use card symbols. For instance, rather than typing H for hearts, it is easy to insert the ♥ symbol by typing !H or !h
- You should describe what the bid means, not just give it a name, for instance, rather than saying “Multi-2”, say “Weak 6-c Major” or “Weak 6-c major or strong balanced”

The yellow window that doesn't go away.

Occasionally if you are the declarer, you may have an unwanted yellow window (with a “Please explain” note within it) on top of the dummy's cards, which window doesn't go away



when you click on it.

(This illustration is taken from a teaching table)

Click on the blue “ok” button within the yellow window. The yellow window disappears, but a further window appears which has the relevant bid with the notation “No explanation available”.



Click anywhere on this window and it will disappear.