

U3A Duplicate Bridge Group – How are places allocated

A few people have asked me to clarify how I allocate places for the Radlett U3A Duplicate Bridge Group.

I currently (5th March 2019) have 95 people on my interest list and the maximum I can fit in and have equipment for is 48 people, but depending on other circumstances I may need to restrict this to 46 or 44. I have divided the people on my list into 4 categories, season ticket holders, group members, other Radlett U3A members and members of Other U3A's.

1. Season ticket holders. I 'sell' 46 season tickets for each term (typically a half year) and I have sold all of these for this term. Holders are always guaranteed a place if they want to play and I only ask that they let me know if they can't play on a particular date so I can offer their place to someone else.
2. Group members. These are Radlett U3A members that started playing in the group before 1st July 2018. I picked that date as after that I had quite a few new people join my mailing list and it was felt unfair for people that had support the group a long time, some going back to when it started in 2015, that they could not get a place when other 'newcomers' did. These people get the first choice of places after season ticket holders (see below for how I pick between them when there are fewer places available than there are people who want them). On my sign up list I have at each session they appear as 'Wait' if I have not yet got a space for them.
3. Other Radlett U3A members. These can get a place if I still have room after people from the first two groups have got spaces. The same process below applies for how I pick who plays. They appear as 'Radlett' on my sign up list.
4. Members of other U3A's. These can get a place if I still have room after all the above groups who want a place have got one. They appear as 'Other' on my sign up list.

How are the available places distributed?

For the people in each of the groups 2., 3. and 4. above I try to give them equal opportunities to play over time so I keep track of how often a person has played in the current term, or last 6 months at the start of a term. I give first choice of places to the people that has played least in that period.

Where I have a regular partnership in one of the groups I try to keep them together so they get the advantage that if one has played more frequently than the other they get the same 'ranking' as the less frequent one.

I also take account of when people tell me they are not going to play for a period of time (e.g. the next couple of months) and I will push them up the ranking so that they don't miss out on a space if they probably would have got one while they were away.

There are also a few 'special cases' where I will give a place to someone if they need to be there for a specific reason (e.g. if they are going to help run a session when I am not there).

I hope this clarifies things and assures you that I do try to be as fair as possible.