



DIY Bridge Boards for Cruise Ships

A Complete Guide to Creating Your Own Duplicate Bridge Boards When None Are Provided

Why This Guide?

Many cruise ships don't provide duplicate bridge boards, making it impossible to run a proper tournament. This guide shows you how to create professional-quality improvised boards using just playing cards and printed materials you can prepare at home.



The Problem

Cruise Ship Challenge: Most cruise ships have playing cards but NO duplicate bridge boards. Without boards, you cannot run a proper duplicate bridge tournament with pre-dealt hands and proper vulnerability cycles.



The Solution

DIY Board System: Create your own portable, reusable boards by combining:

- Regular playing cards (dealt fresh for each session)
- Printed board identifier cards (showing board number, dealer, vulnerability)
- Printed board slip templates (to cover each hand)
- Rubber bands to hold everything together

What You Need

Materials Required

- **Before the cruise (prepare at home):**
 - Print 30 board identifier cards (playing card size, 63mm × 88mm)
 - Print board slip templates (one sheet, cut into slips)
 - Heavy cardstock or photo paper for printing
 - Scissors for cutting
 - Optional: Glue stick for mounting on card backing
 - Small rubber bands (pack of 100+)
- **On the cruise ship:**
 - Multiple decks of regular playing cards (ship usually provides)
 - Your pre-printed board cards and slips
 - Rubber bands

Step-by-Step Assembly

1 Deal Four Hands

Deal 13 cards to each of the four positions (North, South, East, West) from a shuffled deck. Place each hand face-down on the table in front of you.

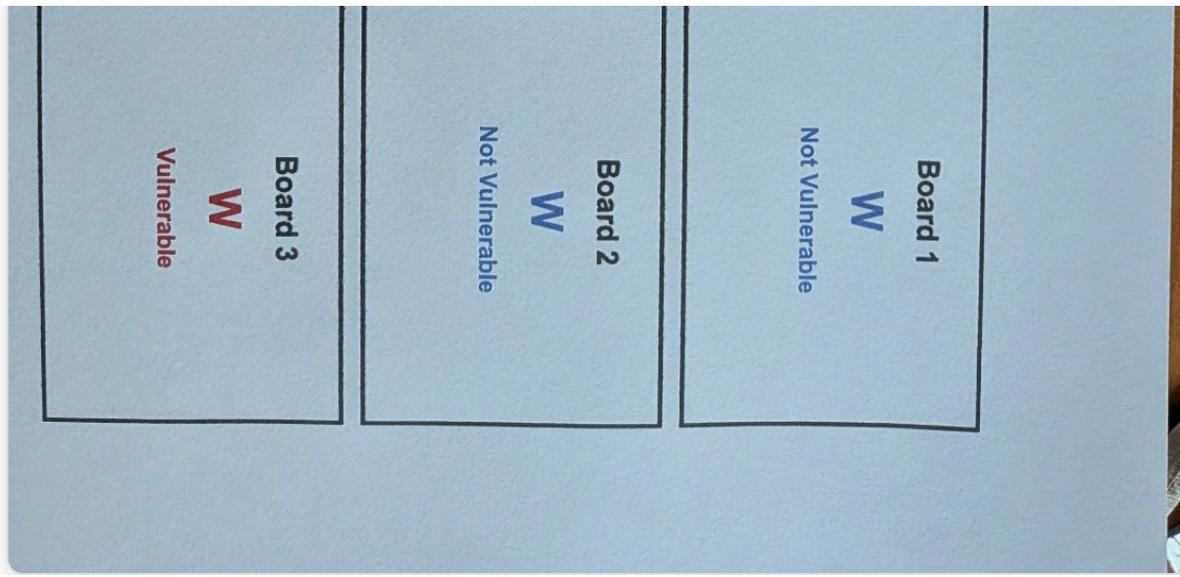
 **TIP:** Do this fresh before each session. Random deals create variety and prevent memorization.

2 **Cover Each Hand**

Place one board slip template over each of the four 13-card hands. These slips show the position letter (N, S, E, W) and vulnerability status.

Bridge-Modes Board Templates

Board 1 N Not Vulnerable	Board 1 E Not Vulnerable	Board 1 S Not Vulnerable
Board 2 N Vulnerable	Board 2 E Not Vulnerable	Board 2 S Vulnerable
Board 3 N Not Vulnerable	Board 3 E Vulnerable	Board 3 S Not Vulnerable



Four position slips arranged around the table - each marked with direction and vulnerability

⚠ IMPORTANT: Ensure each slip correctly corresponds to the vulnerability for that board number. Board 1 = None vulnerable, Board 2 = N-S vulnerable, etc.

3 Secure with Rubber Band

Gather all four hands (now covered with slips) together. Place one rubber band around the bundle to hold everything secure.

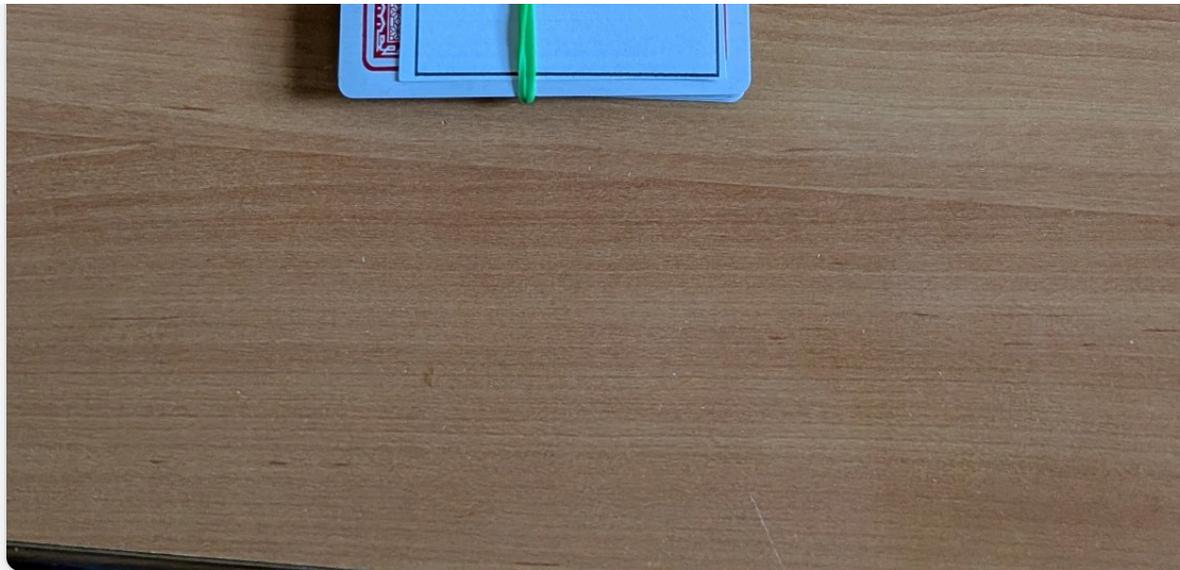
Board 1
N
Not Vulnerable

Board 1
W
Not Vulnerable

N (DLR)		
W	1	E
S		

Board 1
E
Not Vulnerable

Board 1
S
Not Vulnerable



Each position secured - ready to add the board identifier card on top

4 Add Board Identifier Card

Place the appropriate board identifier card on top of the bundle. This card shows:

- **Board number** (large, in center)
- **Dealer** marked with (DLR) - rotates N→E→S→W
- **Vulnerability** - Red (vulnerable) or Green (not vulnerable) for each position





Board 1 identifier card - North is dealer (marked DLR), all positions not vulnerable (green)

TIP: The colors match official bridge vulnerability: Green = Not vulnerable, Red = Vulnerable

5 Final Bundle

Secure the complete board with another rubber band (or use the same one wrapped around everything). Your improvised board is now complete!





Stack of completed improvised boards - ready for tournament play

Each board contains:

1. **Top:** Board identifier card (playing card size)
2. **Middle:** Four hands of 13 cards each, covered with position slips
3. **Secured:** Rubber band holding everything together

How to Use During Play

At the Table

1. Remove rubber band from board
2. Distribute the four hands to the four players (N, S, E, W)

3. Players remove their position slip to view their 13 cards
4. Reference the board identifier card for dealer and vulnerability
5. Play the hand normally
6. After scoring, players return cards face-down to their position slip
7. Reassemble with rubber band and pass board to next table

 **IMPORTANT:** Keep the board identifier card visible on the table during play so everyone can see dealer and vulnerability!

Pro Tips

 **TIP: Laminate for Durability:** If you play frequently on cruises, laminate your board identifier cards. They'll last for years and survive multiple trips.

 **TIP: Color Coding:** Use different colored rubber bands for different board sets (e.g., blue for boards 1-10, green for 11-20). Makes organization easier.

 **TIP: Storage:** Store all materials in a zip-lock bag or small container. Takes minimal space in luggage.

 **TIP: Dealing Strategy:** Deal all boards at the start of the session, or have a non-player deal boards continuously during play. This saves time between rounds.



Advantages of This System

✓ **Portable**

Entire system fits in a small bag

✓ **Reusable**

Same cards work for infinite sessions

✓ **Professional**

Follows official duplicate rules

✓ **Cost-Effective**

Printing costs under \$5



Download Templates



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many boards should I prepare?

A: 30 boards covers nearly two full duplicate cycles (16 boards each). This is enough for most cruise ship sessions which typically run 12-18 boards.

Q: Can I reuse the same dealt hands?

A: No! Always deal fresh hands for each session. Reusing hands defeats the purpose of duplicate bridge and allows memorization.

Q: What if the ship doesn't have enough decks of cards?

A: Bring your own! Pack 4-5 decks of playing cards in your luggage. They take minimal space and ensure you're never stuck without cards.

Q: Do the colors print correctly?

A: Make sure to:

- Enable "Print backgrounds" or "Background graphics" in print settings
- Print on color printer (home or print shop)
- Use cardstock or heavy paper (200gsm minimum)

Q: How do I ensure proper vulnerability cycles?

A: The board identifier cards automatically follow the official 16-board duplicate vulnerability cycle. Just use boards in numerical order (1, 2, 3...) and the vulnerability will be correct.

Packing Checklist for Your Cruise

Bridge Tournament Kit - Don't Forget!

- 30 printed board identifier cards (laminated if possible)
- Printed board slip templates (3-4 sheets, cut into slips)
- 100+ small rubber bands
- 4-5 decks of playing cards (backup if ship doesn't provide)
- Scissors (for last-minute adjustments)
- Pencils and scoring sheets
- Printed traveler sheets (from duplicateTemplates.js)
- Movement sheets (showing which pairs play where)
- Zip-lock bags for organization



Ready to Play!

With this DIY board system, you can run professional duplicate bridge tournaments anywhere - cruise ships, vacation homes, local clubs, or even parks! The system is portable, reusable, and follows all official duplicate bridge rules.

Happy cruising and good bridge!     

This guide was created for bridge players who love to cruise. Share it with your bridge club!

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