

Using Dealmaster Pro with PlayBridge Dealer4

Pete Matthews, March 19, 2008; minor updates July 3, 2009

Required Software

Obtain and install:

1. The Dealer4 software that came with your PlayBridge Dealer4.
2. Dealmaster Pro, \$60 from Ward Software, <http://www.dealmaster.com/>.
3. CutePDF Writer, free from <http://www.cutepdf.com/>.
4. Adobe Acrobat Reader, free from <http://www.adobe.com/>.

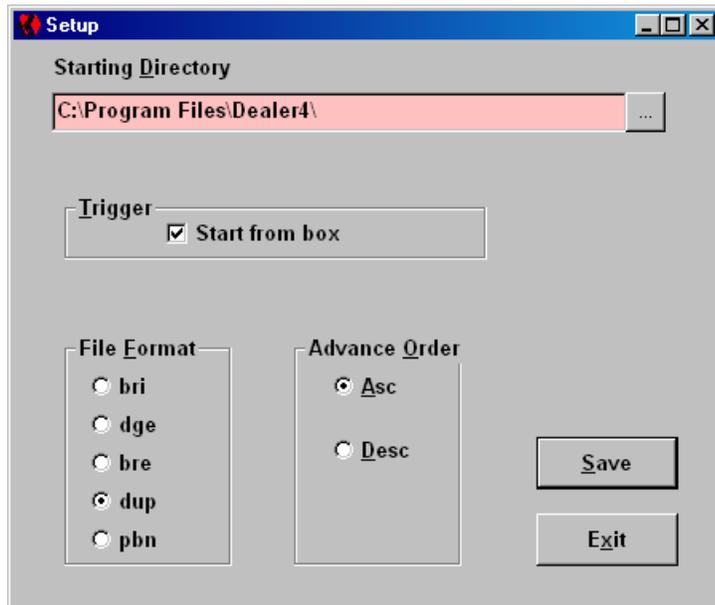
Primary File Formats

Four file formats are handled by both Dealmaster Pro and the PlayBridge Dealer4 software:

- .BRI** Dealer4, Autodealer, and BridgePartner (the Dealer4 default)
- .BRE** Autodealer
- .DUP** Duplimate (older DOS format, good for ACBL-generated deals, works with ScoreBridge)
- .PBN** Portable Bridge Notation (includes GIB)

Other formats: Dealmaster Pro will also “Import” these other formats: .DLM (Duplimate for Windows), .CDS, .LIN (Bridgebase), and an exported Dealmaster Profile. You can create files in various formats from DM Pro, by checking the “Create Files for...” box (instead of Print North...) - see “Create the Hand Records” below. Any file that can be loaded into Dealer4 can be saved in the formats above.

Dealer4 Setup

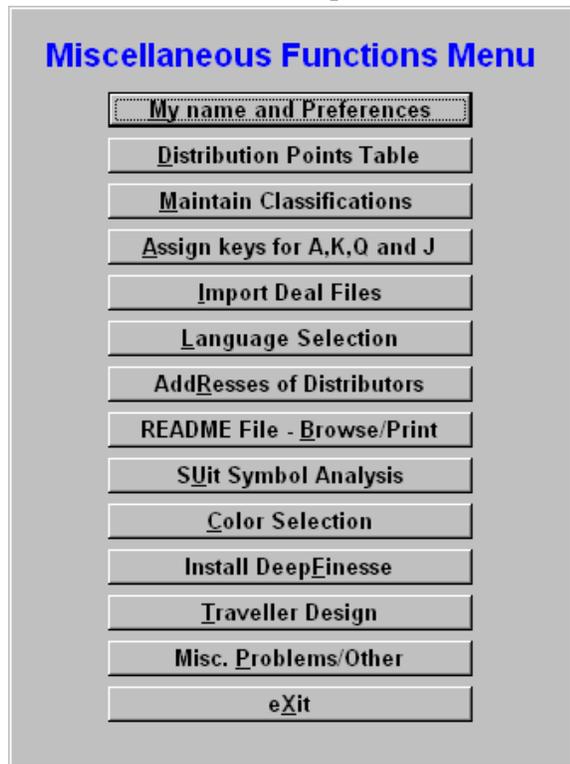


One time only, start the **Dealer4** software and click **Setup** on the Dealer4 main menu (see “Deal the Cards”).

- a. Select one of the four primary deal types (any here except .dge), and
- b. click **Save**.

Choose any **one primary file format**, and try to stick to it. Choose the format that is most likely to be used by your bridge organization. I used .dup for a year, but now use .pbn – I may use it with a free program called [ACBLmerge](#).

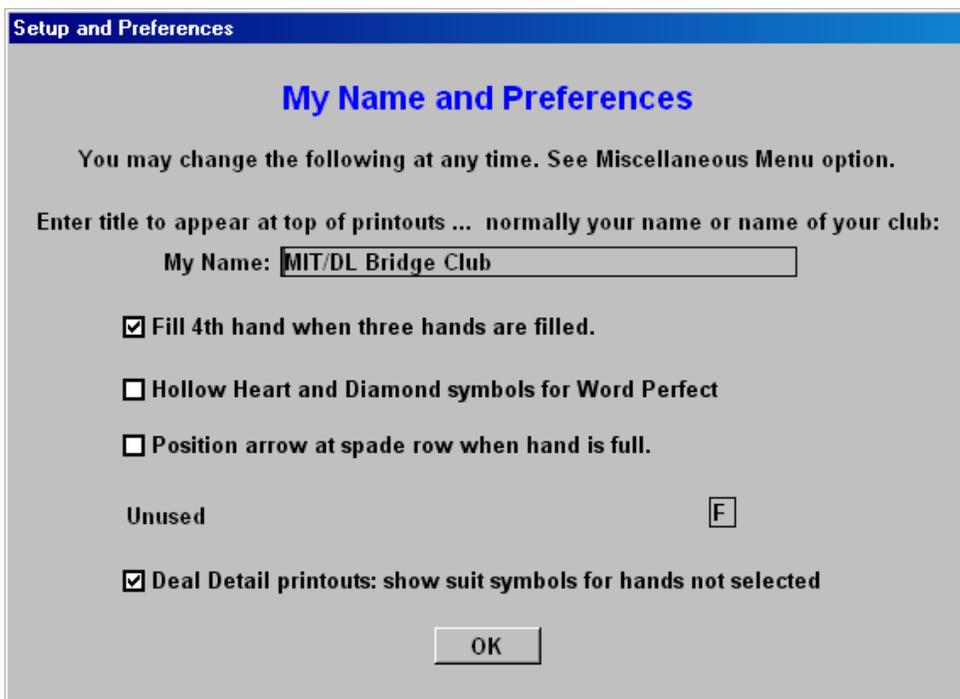
Dealmaster Pro Setup



One time only, start the **Dealmaster Pro** software (see “Generating Random Deals”), and click **Miscellaneous** on the main menu.

Then, in turn, click

- My Name and Preferences,**
- Language Selection,** and
- Misc. Problems/Other**



Enter the name of your bridge club as **My Name**, and click **OK**.

Language Selection

The selection of a language and entry of words at the right will affect the basic printout of deals.

* English (USA)
 ** Italian
 ** French
 ** German
 ** English (not USA)

* = Dates in MM/DD/YY format
 ** = Dates in DD/MM/YY format

Enter the correct word in your language for the English word:

English	Your Language
"North"	North
"East"	East
"South"	South
"West"	West
"Deal (Hand) No."	Deal No.
"Dealer"	Dealer
"Neither Vulnerable"	Neither Vulnerable
"N-S Vulnerable"	N-S Vulnerable
"E-W Vulnerable"	E-W Vulnerable
"Both Vulnerable"	Both Vulnerable
"Opening Lead"	Opening Lead
"All Hands"	All Hands
"Illustrates"	Illustrates
"All Pass"	All Pass
"Pass"	Pass
"Double"	Dbl
"Redouble"	Redbl
"NT"	NT
"Board No."	Board No.
"Contract"	Contract
"By"	By
AKQJT (Honor cards)	AKQJT

OK

Select your **Language**. If not English (USA), you may need to enter the information on the right. Click **OK** when done.

Miscellaneous Options

Copy Count Problem

DMPRO font now active

The DMPRO font is used to insert suit symbols in Notes. See Help topic "Notes" for a complete description of this valuable function.

Be sure that **DMPRO font now active** is displayed. If not, click **Deactivate/Activate DMPRO font**, and then **Exit**.

Generate Random Deals into a Deal File

Skip this section, if you already have a deal file in one of the four primary file formats.

The Dealer4 software may generate random deals, but you really need other software for that, such as Dealmaster Pro. This powerful program has a quirky interface, but ultimately it will produce top quality hand records, including analysis by Deep Finesse. (If you teach bridge, you should appreciate the ability to create a library of categorized hands for lessons, but that's beyond the scope of this article.) For our purposes, the best thing to do is to limit use of DM Pro to the distinct operations required. To generate the deals for one session:



1. Start Dealmaster Pro.



2. Click the first option on the main menu: **Create random deals for club/tournament play.**

Create Random Deals

Help file topic "Big Deal" has extensive information about Big Deal and under what circumstances it is advisable to use it. Generally, it is preferable for generating deals for tournament use where the deal generator must be capable of generating all of the 53,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000+ possible deals. Big Deal can do this. Dealmaster Pro can generate slightly fewer.

There are many more output options for deals generated by Dealmaster Pro. All the options for deals generated by Big Deal are given below.

- 1. Use Dealmaster Pro deal generator
- 2. Use Big Deal deal generator.

Big Deal Options

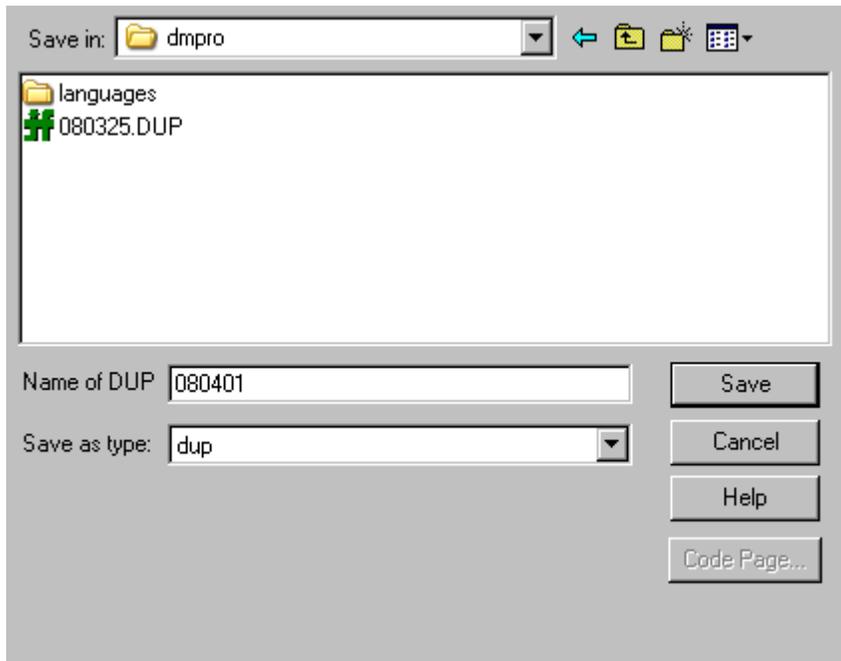
Session: Name:
Date:
Number of deals: (Max: 50000)
 Print Hand Record
Output File options:
 PBN (Portable Bridge Notation) file
 Duplimate DLM file
 Duplimate DUP file
 Autodealer BRI file
 Autodealer BRE file
 Save Hand Record and File option as defaults

OK

3. Select **2. Use Big Deal deal generator**, and then:
 - a. Enter **any name** (won't be saved in the deal file)
 - b. Specify the **date of the game**
 - c. Enter the number of deals (likely **36** or **32**)
 - d. Do **not** check Print Hand Record
 - e. Select one of the four primary file formats (e.g. **Duplimate DUP file**)
 - f. Check **Save Hand Record and File option as defaults**
 - g. Click **OK**

Do you want a statistical summary of the Random Deals just created?

4. Click **NO**, do not show a statistical summary.



5. Save the deal file:

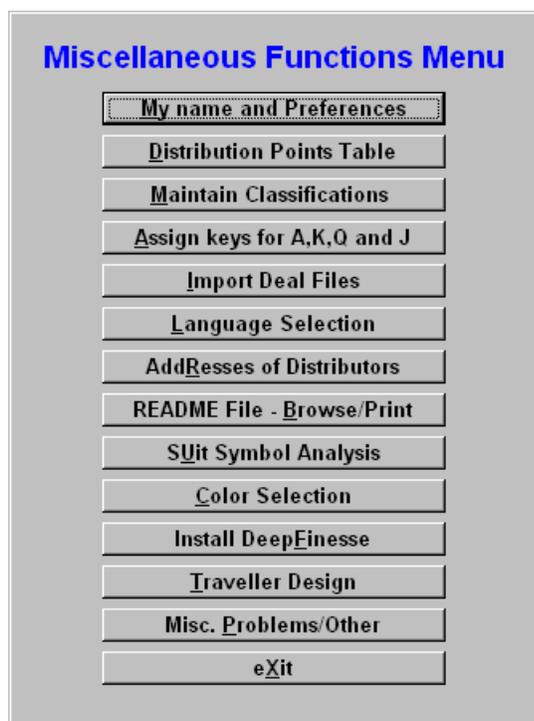
- a. Name the deal file. For use with ACBLscore, **YMMDD** or **YMMDDs** (where s is M, A, E or L) is appropriate – 080401 is for April 1, 2008.
- b. It's best to use the default DM Pro directory, **C:\dmpro**.
- c. Click **Save**.

In subsequent steps, this deal file will be used to both create the hand records and deal the hands.

Create the Hand Records

Creating the hand records takes quite a bit of computer processing. You could do this in the step above, but you would not get the deal file until the very end. Separating the steps allows you to start the hand records, and deal the cards while waiting.

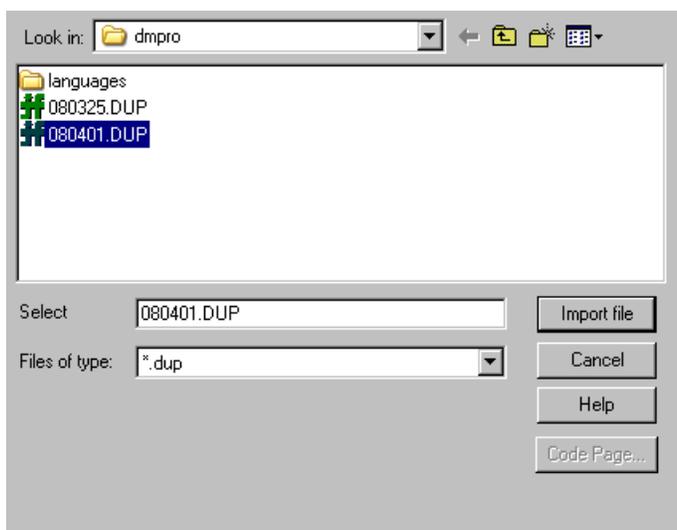
1. Start **DM Pro**, if not already started (see "Generating Random Deals").
2. Click the **Miscellaneous** option (see "Dealmaster Pro Setup" above).



3. Click **Import Deal Files**.



4. Select your **deal file type**, and click **OK**.



5. Select the **deal file**, and click **Import File**
6. Click **OK**, if a blue informatory screen appears.

Output Options for selected/imported Deals ★ Click on to create a text file of this printout's data will be shown just before the document is printed.

Number of Selected Deals: 36 Enter Session Name:

Option (Select 1 or more) Session Date: 04/01/2008

A Add selected deals to Browse File

B Select Deal Printouts desired:
 1 deal/page 2 deals/page 3 deals/page 4 deals/page

C Select any Hand Record printouts desired:
★ Print North, South, East and West hands Print South only
 Print North and South hands only Print East only
 Print East and West hands only Print West only
 Print North only Print Date Color Choice:

D Indicate "Practice Bidding" Printouts wanted:
Print Sheet for: ★ North ★ East ★ South ★ West Format: 3 Across 4 Across

E ★ Print Goldway Practice Bid format (Used by Bobby GOLDman-Paul SoloWAY)

F Create files for GIB, Q-Plus, Microbridge, BridgeMate, Perfect Partner; DUPLIMATE & AUTODEALER machines

G Print Traveller with cards held by N,E,S and W

★ = Option to create output Text file

On Printouts, show Dealer and Vulnerability? Yes No

Enter text to appear at top of "Hand Record" or "Practice Bidding" Printout:

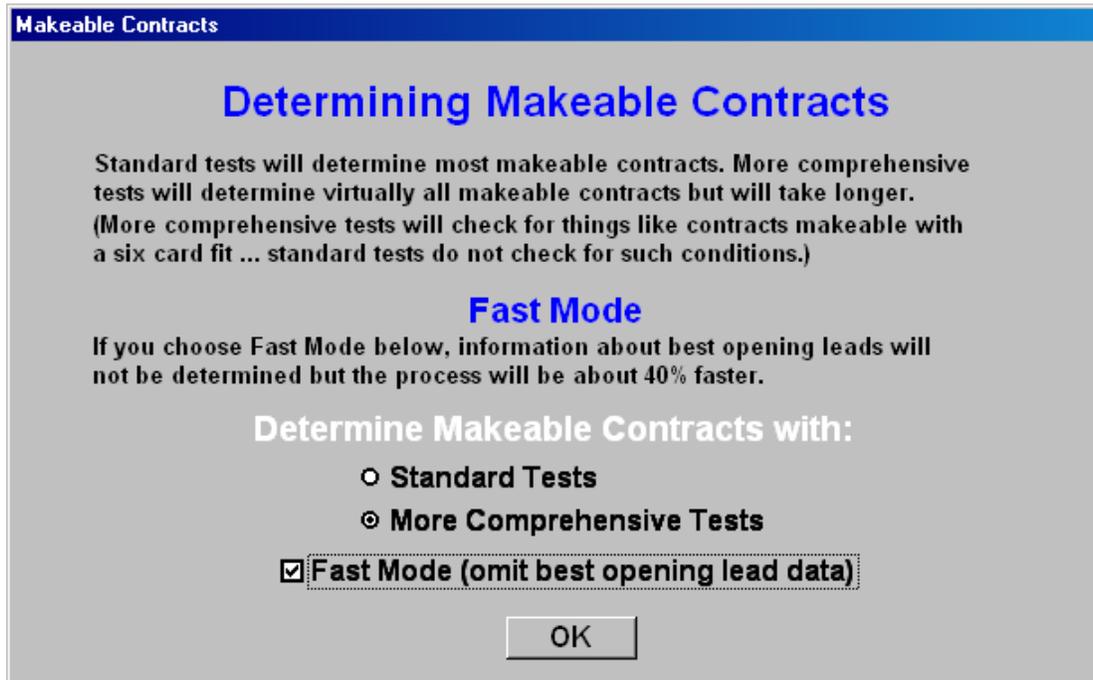
Check here to print line in 14 pt bold

7. Be sure to get this page right:
 - a. Leave the **Session Name** blank
 - b. Change the **Session Date** to the date of the game
 - c. Check **Print North, South, East and West Hands**

d. Click **OK**



8. Click **Yes**, show makeable contracts on Hand Record.



9. Select **More Comprehensive Tests**, not **Fast Mode**, and **OK**.

Note: A comparison of the results with **Fast Mode** checked and unchecked, showed no difference in makeable contracts for a set of 36 boards, but I no longer check this box. The comprehensive tests check 6-card fits.

Computation of the makeable contracts will begin. It's probably time to deal the cards (see below). Just let the computation continue, no matter how long it takes.

Usually, I prepare a bunch of deals in advance, so that I can deal and print quickly.

Print Hand Record for Four Hands

- ⊙ Three across (18/page)
- Four across (24/page)

Header on Hand Record can have either of two formats

- ⊙ **Format 1: Standard Header**

Standard format includes your name, Session Name, date(optional), and an optional 14 character large print entry in upper right corner.

Enter optional text for large print in upper right corner of the Standard Header format (max. 14 characters)

See Help File topic "Hand Record" for help.

- **Format 2: Big Bold Unique Header**

Big Bold format will print as the header only that which is entered in the "Big Bold Header" box below.

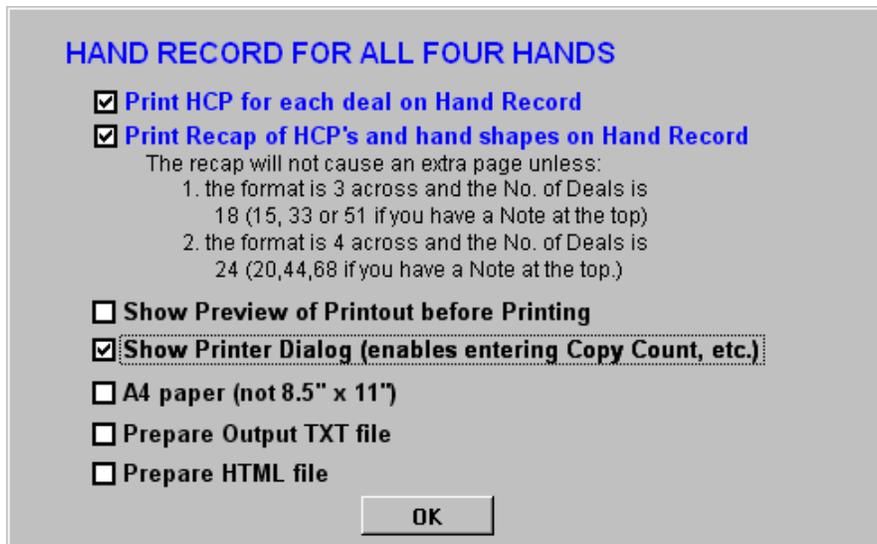
If you want the **date to show**, it must be in the Big Bold Header entry.

Double click on the entry you want. Select "New" to create a new Big Bold header.

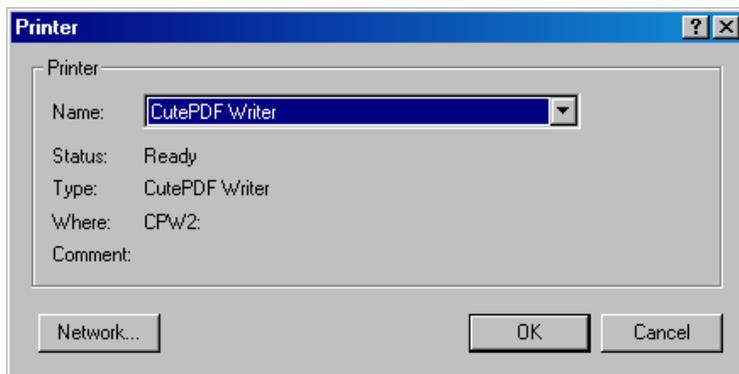
Big Bold Header : Modify as required. To delete an entry, clear it to all spaces.

Maximum size is about 60 characters of upper and lower case. Use mostly lower case unless your entry is very short. Heading will be left justified. To center it, insert spaces at the left and then use the following to see how well it is centered.

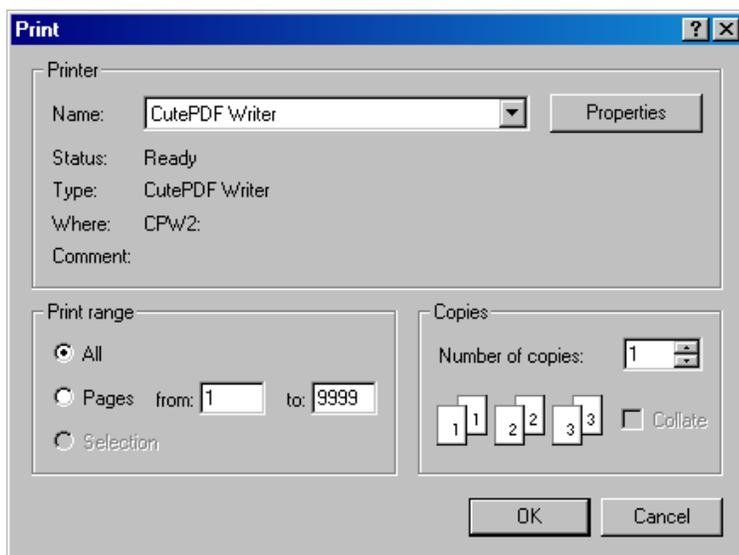
10. When computation of the makeable contracts completes, this box will appear - *be sure to get this right, there's no going back*:
- Select **3 across (18/page)**, unless you are doing only 24 boards.
 - Select **Format 1: Standard Header**
 - Enter the **type of game** in the box under the Format 1 bullet, e.g. **Handicap**
 - Click **OK**.

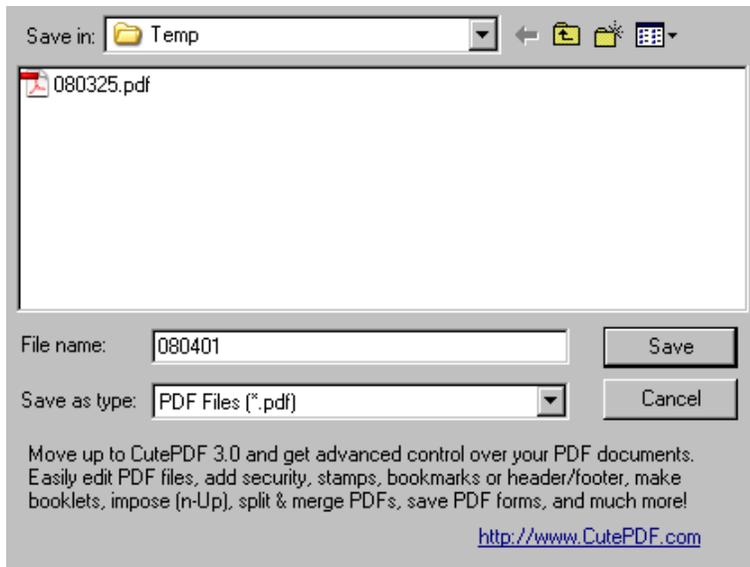


11. Check the box for **Show Printer Dialog (enables entering Copy Count, etc.)**. In Europe, you probably want to check **A4 paper (not 8.5" x 11")**. Click **OK**.



12. Select **CutePDF Writer** as your printer, and click **OK**. Then click **OK** again on the following:





13. Save the PDF file to disk:

- a. Name the resulting PDF file (**YYMMDD** or **YYMMDDs**, for consistency with ACBLscore)
- b. Select the **output directory** (for example, **C:\Temp**)
- c. Click Save



14. Click **NO**, do not print again.

15. Exit, Close Dealmaster Pro.

Deal the Cards

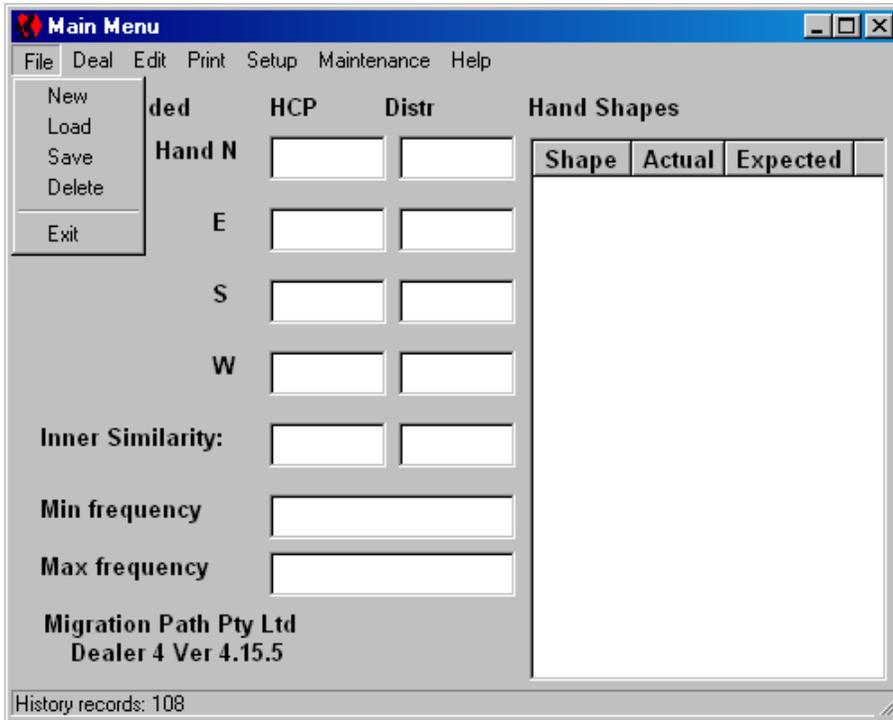
Pay attention to your posture to avoid repetitive strain or back injury!

I use flip-open boards. (If you don't have them, an assistant can definitely speed up the process, by removing cards from boards for you.) Here's my method of setting up the area for dealing:

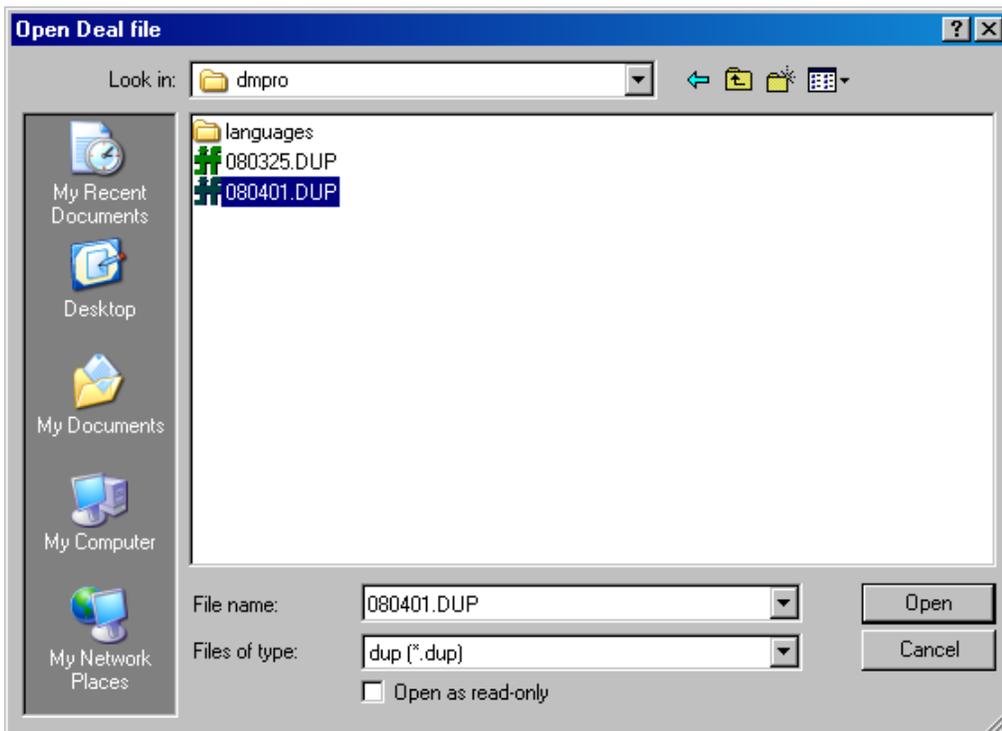


Dealer4

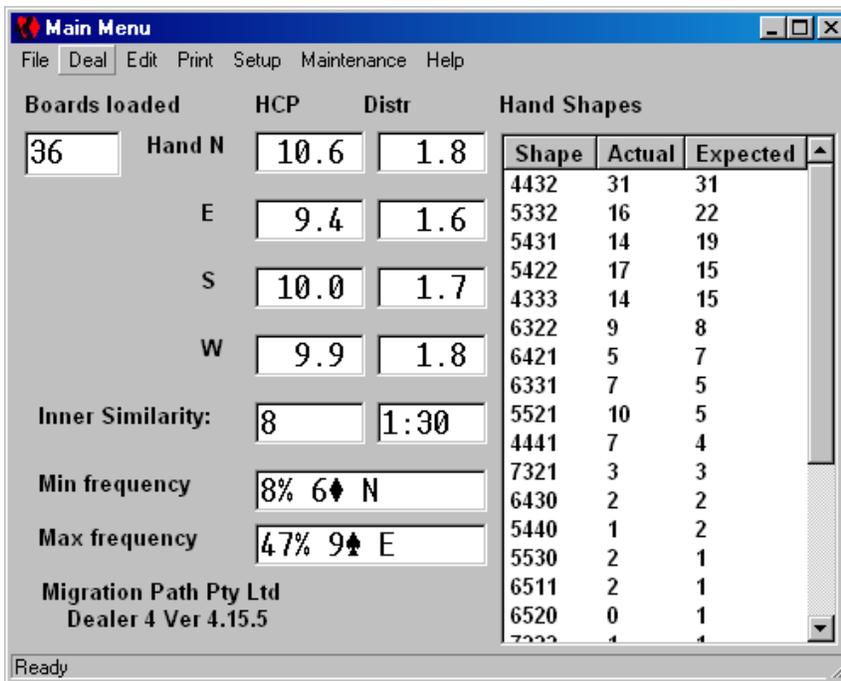
1. Start the Dealer4 software.



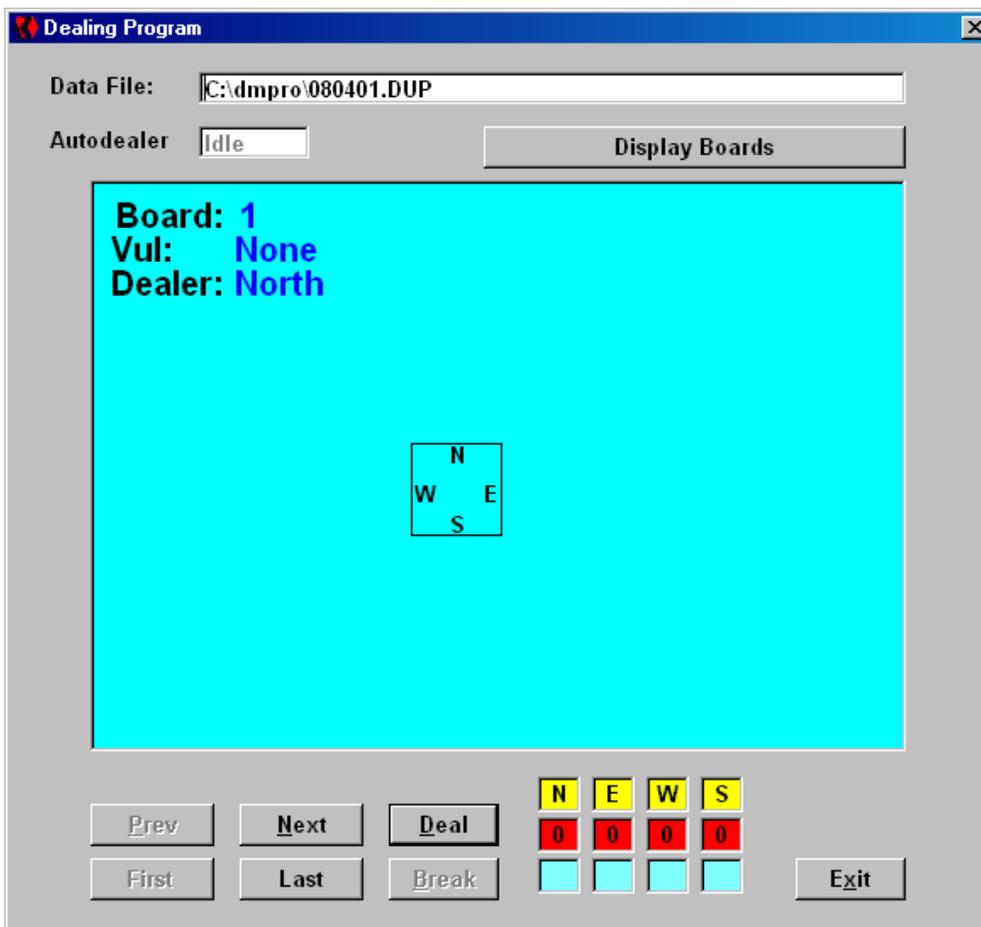
2. Select **File – Load**.



3. Browse to where the deal file is (**C:\dmpro**), **select the file**, and click **Open**.



1. Click **Deal**. Click **Deal** again on the next window:



2. Clear the area to the left and right of the monitor, push the keyboard and monitor back to allow 10+ inches (.25m), and set the PlayBridge Dealer4 machine back against the keyboard. Be sure it's connected to the computer and powered on. A good 60 inches (**5 ft, 1.5m**) of width is useful, with you in the center, in front of the machine, with an extra 4 inches (.1m) in front of that.
3. **Connect the machine to power and the computer.**
4. Check that the **lens is clean**. If not, use compressed air or a soft brush to clean it.
5. Get all 36 boards out and stack them up to your right, 12 to a stack, north pointed away from you, board 1 on top and nearest.
6. Remove the cards from the **last two boards** (35 & 36), and put them into the hopper, **face down**. This rotates the decks, so that they will wear evenly.
7. Remove the cards from board 1, and put them onto the hopper. They won't fit, but the extra weight will help.
8. Continuing for all boards:
 - a. Insert the open, empty board into the machine
 - b. Grab the next board, and put it on your lap, opening away from you
 - c. Remove the cards, two hands at a time, stacking them in front of the machine (to reduce wear on the joint, I don't open the board at this time)
 - d. Put the new cards onto the hopper
 - e. Look through the top – if a card is leaning, push the top of the board down, and either poke the card down with a finger, or jiggle the aluminum flip plate until the card drops (see "The Flip Plate" below).
 - f. Remove the board from the machine, snap it securely closed, and stack it to the left, upside down - make three stacks of 12 boards, neatly enough that they do not fall over.

The machine may have trouble with warped cards, especially if bowed up in the middle. Bend the cards down in the center, or hold them down lightly, if cards do not feed. While the last board is dealing, it helps to press down lightly on the middle of the deck with a finger nail.

Errors Detected by Dealer4 Software

After correcting any of these errors, you will usually have to click **Continue**, or press the **Start** button on the front left of the machine.

Card Recognition Error: The machine could not recognize a card. Check the bottom card (might be a Joker or upside down), the lens, and that there is sufficient weight on the hopper.

Card Feed Error: Usually, this means that the card on the bottom is not straight and flat, but it could indicate a card jam. Check the bottom card and the feed area.

No Card Box: The machine does not detect the presence of a bridge board, (or the flat dealing plate). Jiggle or press the board in firmly.

Lost Communication: Check both ends of the USB cable. Jiggle it or move to another port, if necessary.

The Flip Plate and Leaning Cards

The flip plate, on models designated “PlayBridgeDealer4” instead of just “Dealer4”, is intended for use with flip-open boards. It generally improves the alignment of cards into the boxes of the board. However, it also contributes to the possibility of leaning cards.

The Dealer4 will not normally deal while the flip plate is raised, because card jams would result. You should be able to deal onto the flat plate with the flip plate in place, but you will have to raise the flip to remove the cards, and lower the flip for the next deal.

To remove the flip plate, from the designer’s instructions:

1. Open the flip plate.
2. Using small pliers, remove the springs from both sides.
3. From the left side, remove the screw that is holding the flip plate in position.
4. Slide the flip plate off the right screw (it is not required to remove the right screw).
5. Be careful to save the plastic washers on both sides.
6. When the plate is removed, you cannot deal because software will issue a "Flip Plate Open" Error. To override it, first connect the machine to power and the computer. Click **Maintenance** on the Dealer4 software main menu. Check **Disable Flip Plate Switch**, and click on **Save Parameters**.

To reinstall the flip plate, reverse the above procedures. Dealing with the flip open (failing to reset the Maintenance option) will result in major card jams.

To reduce the likelihood of leaning cards, be sure the **card width adjustment** on the machine is not too tight (which could cause cards to twist, when dealt), and use sufficient pressure in the hopper, as recommended above. Clean cards should help.



My Dealer4 with spring-loaded aluminum “flip plate” and navy blue “new generation” bridge board in place. The Dealer4 software requires the flip plate to be down, whether dealing into a board or onto the plastic plate. Poke a finger through a hole or tap the side of the board to clear leaning cards.

For the first year with the Dealer4, I used Grimaud barcode cards that I got with with a Duplimate. At the end of that year, these cards had been used perhaps 60 times over two years. They still had some life in them, but being thicker and now slightly warped, they tended not to fall cleanly into the card boxes, as well as the occasional leaner. I replaced the Grimauds with ACBL cards, which are thinner: they rattle in the card boxes. Leaners are now very rare, and only an occasional shake or tap is needed to get the cards to nestle into the card boxes.

Final Check

When done dealing, remove the North hand from the next to last board (35) and check the spade suit against the hand records. This assures that the board set and hand records correspond, and that the cards were really dealt into the correct boards. (Early on, I had the hands and boards get out of sync a couple of times, especially when dealing onto the plate. The latest version of the Dealer4 software has eliminated this problem, but this check is easy.)

Examine and Print the Hand Records

Open the PDF file with Adobe Acrobat Reader, examine the results, and print as desired. If your printer will print two-sided automatically, then you probably don't need to know anything more.

If you have a 1-sided printer, open the paper tray (or feeder), take out a sheet of paper, write a word on it in pencil, put it back, and print something on it. Open the tray and use tape to label the inside to describe where the top of the page will print. This will come in handy for a number of applications.

Now, use this technique to print two-sided hand records:

1. **Click on the displayed first page**, just in case.
2. Click the Printer icon (**File-Print**).
3. Select **Current Page**, select the desired **number of copies**, and click **OK**.
4. Take the output, **square the pages, and insert them into the paper tray**, ready to print side two.
5. Scroll to the end of the file in Acrobat Reader, and **click on the second page**, just in case.
6. Click the Printer icon (**File-Print**).
7. Select **Current Page**, confirm the desired **number of copies**, and click **OK**.