Compscore3 - Beta Testing

Thanks for considering a beta testing role for Compscore3.

This is not the finished product — but we're keen to get this build out to a range of users so that the core functionality is tested as widely as possible. There's a list below of what's not in this build, along with a comment about some of those items being dropped completely.

Background

Compscore3 (CS3) is very similar to Compscore2 (CS2) in terms of user experience – we have gone to great lengths to ensure that users do not need to re-learn the program.

The main reason for the change is that the programming language used for Compscore2 (Visual Basic 6) is past it end-of-life, and there will come a time when future versions of Windows cease to be able to run it. CS3 is built using the 2019 version of Visual Basic .Net.

Other benefits of the new development language include better stability and efficiency, especially in terms of cloud activity (uploads, downloads etc), and many processes are considerably faster than before. Also, the new version has given me the opportunity of smartening up the interface.

Sharp-eyed users may notice a few items that are missing. These are features that were not used by many people, or are no longer relevant, and the main ones are listed below.

One good thing about CS3 is that it uses exactly the same database structure as CS2 (Microsoft Access database – same as BWS files). This means that users can hot-swap between CS2 and CS3, even part way through a session or event. For example, if you use CS3 to start a session but part way though you encounter a bug and cannot continue, just open that same database using CS2 and all existing data will be retained.

We've been using CS3 in a local club since the end of 2020. It's also been used for some Pairs and Teams congress events. Beta testers have been using it in a variety of situations, including for live sessions.
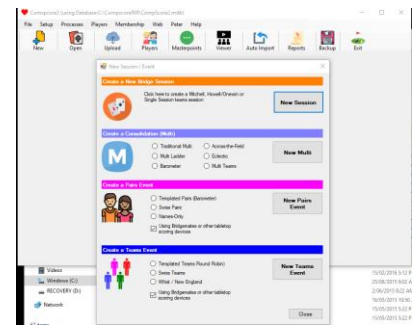
When we do finally have a product for release, there will be no compulsion for existing users to change over. CS2 will continue to be supported into the future, though it won't be updated once CS3 has been released. At that point, CS2 will no longer be for sale.

Changes from Compscore2

The biggest difference operationally – and one that all users will notice – is that the line between Sessions and Events has been blurred in the user interface, though the firm distinction between Sessions and Events remains as before.
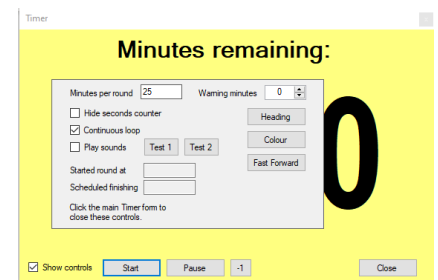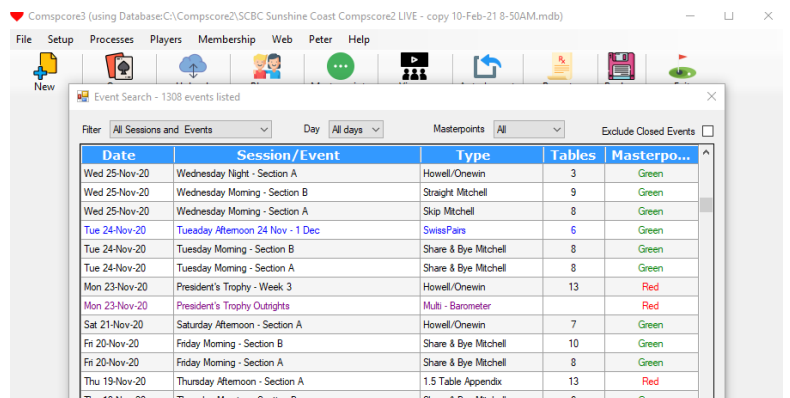
All Sessions, Events and Multis are now opened from the **Open** button and created with the **New** button, whereas in CS2, there were separate buttons to open and create Sessions as opposed to Events, and Multis were created by way of a separate menu item under Processes.

That change means that when creating new Sessions / Events, there is an intermediate form so that the user can nominate the type: Session, Multi, Pairs Event or Teams Event. This also means that when opening a Session / Event, a full list of all Sessions, Multis, Pairs and Teams Events is shown, but can be filtered to show just one type and with that filter selected remembered as the default.
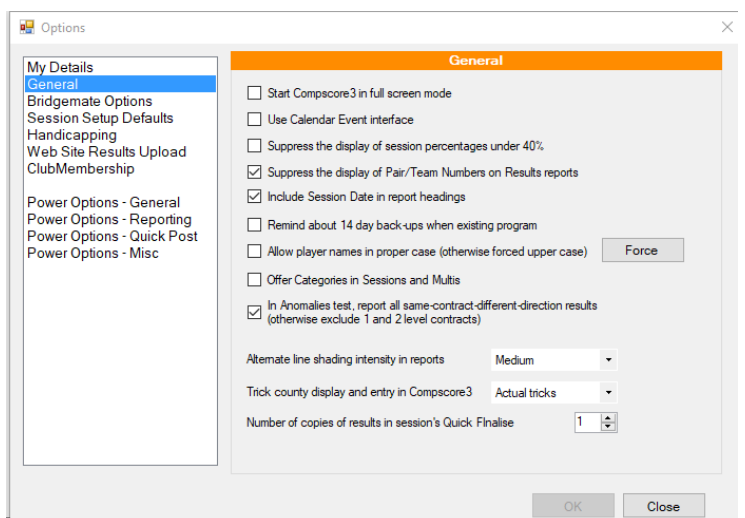
Other differences include:

- Timer is more sophisticated, with separate menu selections for minutes per rounds vs set finishing time, and some extra features to make it suitable for club sessions
- Membership module – no welcome letter, no letter to members, setup options now managed under Options
- Teams events – no Substitutes area (subs are recorded through Datums Management)
- Viewer (previously referred to Auto Previewer) – can now create pages using RTF documents, and when auto-displaying multiple documents, each has a different coloured background to help differentiate them.
- Live Results form only shows one section, so for multiple sections, open multiple Live Display forms
- More intelligent resizing of forms where more rows are visible, and some grids can have row heights re-sized
- Reports are accessed via a separate Reports button (previously under File menu)
- Options are now centralised under Setup | Options.

There's also some changes in the ways Windows works. One change that might take come getting used to is when you click on a control (e.g. a button) on a form that is not in focus, the first click only focuses that form, and a 2rd click will be required to fire that button.

Not yet done

Items in black will be done before official release. Items in red may be dropped completely, and the items in green may not be built in till after general release – please let me know if you think any of these decisions would be unwise.

- Pairs events – still to do: Multi BWS's, delayed draw, manual data entry (rarely used)
- Teams events – still to do: Multi BWS's (rarely used)
- Individual movements
- No New Zealand localising
- No Program Events interface
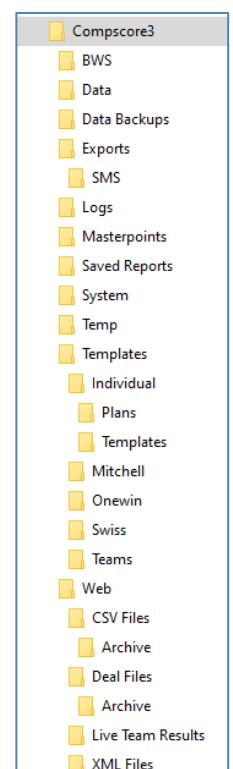
Installing the Beta

Go to this page www.altosoft.com.au/cs3latestbuild.asp to download Compscore3Setup.exe. Follow the prompts to install it to your local PC. The default location is c:\Compscore3 and you should accept that default. The directory structure is different from CS2 – we've taken then opportunity of rationalising the structure (tree structure shown at right).

(Note that regarding CS3 program updates, these will no longer be separate from new installations. The only download will be the full installation, simplifying things for everyone. This is the same way Bridgemate Control Software updates work.)

Once launched, you will be asked if you want to convert from Compscore2. This is recommended as it will give you some data and will copy over your existing preferences, templates etc. Note that choosing this action will not affect your Compscore2 installation at all – files etc will be copied into the Compscore3 space. If you want to run some live sessions, just open the appropriate database via File | Change Database. Remember that hot swapping is available, so if you're running a session with CS3 and encounter a problem, simply close CS3 and open the session / event with Compscore2.

There will be frequent updates to Compscore3 during the beta period, so re-visit the Download page frequently. There will be a link to the list of what's changed in the latest build.
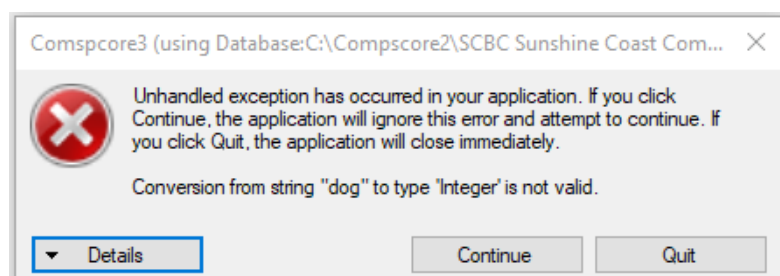
Important – when opening a database that you've used with Compscore2, make sure it has been upgraded to the latest database structure in Compscore2. Opening it with any build of Compscore2 on or after 27 February 2021 will update it to the latest structure.
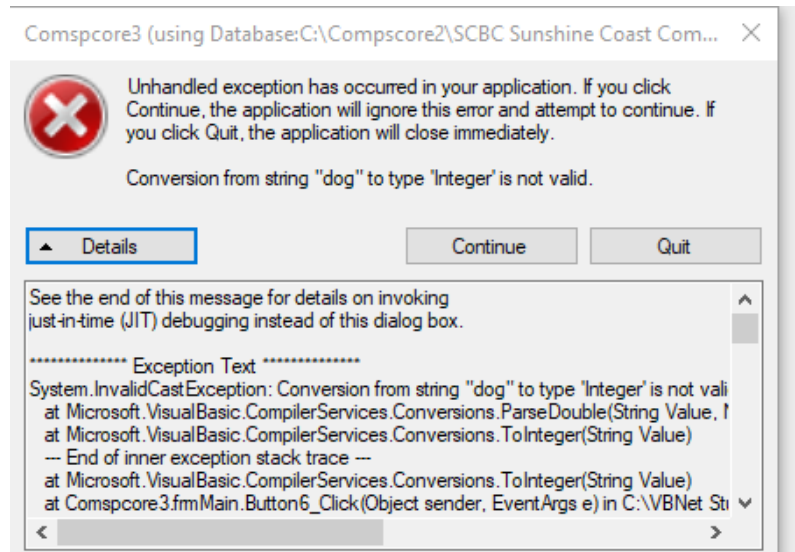
Reporting error back to us

Feedback from beta testers is encouraged.

If you encounter a crash, it will look like this.

Click **Details** and some text will appear below. Use the right mouse click to copy and then paste this into an email or other document for me, stating what you were doing at the time.

Forum for Beta Testers

We have set up a special Forum page on the Altosoft web site for Beta testers to lodge bug reports, suggestions and questions. It is passworded at this stage and beta testers will be given access when they sign up.

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