

DAVID BIRD



25



BRIDGE MYTHS

EXPOSED





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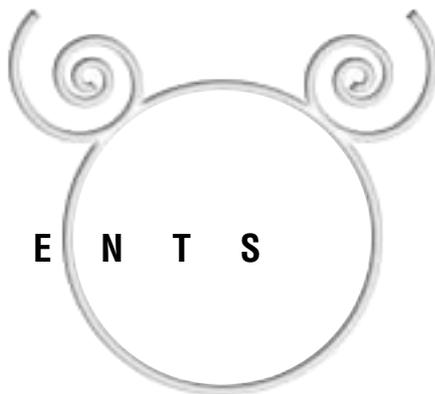
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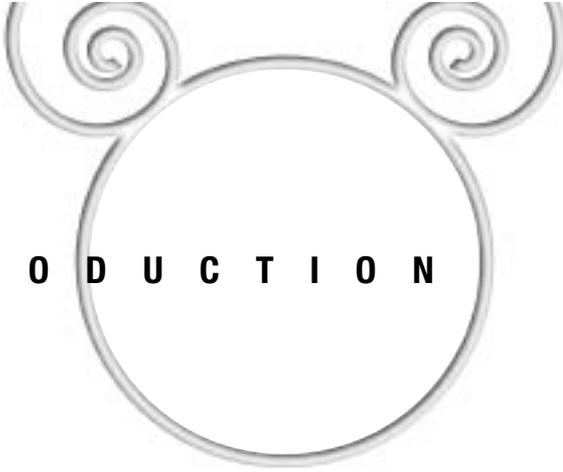
P U B L I S H E R ' S N O T E

The quotes which begin each chapter in this book are taken from *Advanced Bridge* by Joseph Bowne Elwell, the 'Wizard of Whist', who was the leading authority on bridge-whist and auction bridge in the early twentieth century. His pupil and partner, Harold S. Vanderbilt, was eventually to invent contract bridge as we know it today. Elwell was well-known as the author of a number of popular books on bridge and whist, although it is now believed that his wife Helen (who was probably the stronger player of the two) may well have been the actual writer.

Elwell also became notorious as the victim, in 1920, of a famous unsolved murder mystery, a case which has been the basis of a number of books, both fact and fiction (*The Benson Murder Case*, by S.S. van Dine, is perhaps the best-known).

Reading Elwell's advice, one is struck by two things: first, how long many Bridge Myths have been in existence, and second, how even a century ago, expert players recognized these guidelines for what they are — simply guidelines, and not inflexible rules. A final quote from the great man sums it up:

'Certain rules, that govern the technicalities, are absolute, as they are in any game of cards, but rules in general are not the masters of bridge; rather they should be considered as second to circumstance and the fall of the cards. Brilliant plays are made in contravention of the rules...' J.B. Elwell

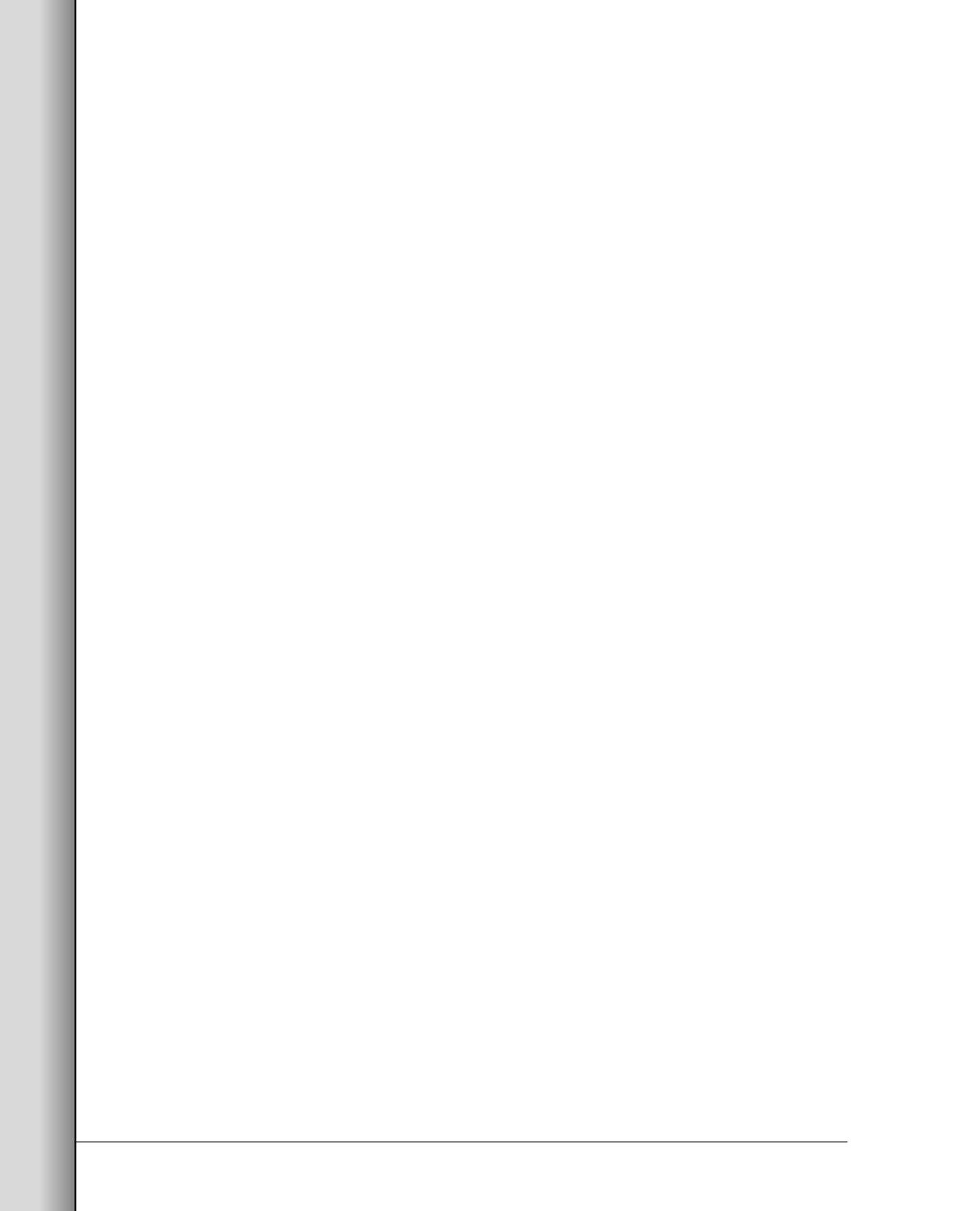


I N T R O D U C T I O N

Do you remember the first few times you ever played bridge? The cards in the dummy looked like thirteen random numbers and you had little idea of how to play a contract, even less of how to defend. To get you started, some friend probably gave you a few helpful hints. “You must always cover an honor with an honor, partner. He would have gone down then!” There are many such general guidelines — some of them valuable, some not. We refer to them as Bridge Myths, because every one has several exceptions and none should be followed blindly. The advice always to cover an honor with an honor, for example, is very ill-conceived. Countless tricks are lost by those who misguidedly follow this rule.

In the book we will look closely at twenty-five different Bridge Myths, covering both dummy play and defense and in not a single case are they universally true. We will look briefly at the rationale behind each guideline and then see several situations where you should ignore it. Each chapter ends with a Summary, followed by a Quiz to see if you have absorbed the material.

It was great fun writing this book and I hope you will enjoy reading it. Even if you find the book rather hard work, at least you can enjoy winning more often when you return to that greatest of sporting venues — the bridge table!



C H A P T E R

1

DRAW TRUMPS STRAIGHT AWAY

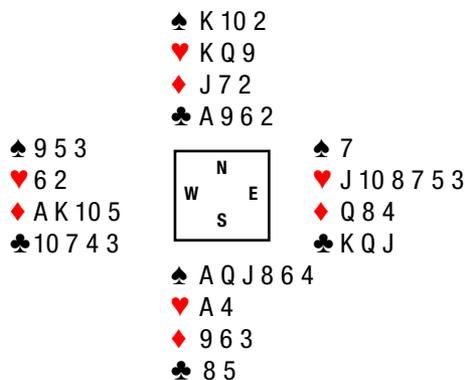


A knowledge of trump management – to know when and when not to lead trumps – is no small part of declarer's requirements.

J.B. Elwell

What is one of the greatest horrors you face, as a newcomer to the game? That one of your winners will be ruffed by a defender! Such is the fear of this ignominy that beginners tend to draw all the enemy trumps straight away, even before making a plan.

The best advice is: draw trumps straight away unless there is a good reason for not doing so. Let's remind ourselves first why it is generally right to draw trumps as soon as possible. Look at this deal:



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
pass	2♣	pass	1♠
pass	4♠	all pass	2♠

You arrive in 4♠ and the defenders take the ace, king and queen of diamonds. East then switches to the club king, won with the ace in dummy. What should you do next?

You cannot afford to lose another trick. Suppose you try to dispose of your club loser before drawing trumps. You play the ace of hearts and continue with the king and queen of hearts, throwing your club loser. Disaster! West will ruff the third round of hearts, putting you one down.

Even a beginner would probably make that contract. With the maxim ‘always draw trumps immediately’ fresh in mind, he would play three rounds of trumps before seeking the discard. West would not then be able to ruff the third heart and the game would be made.

That was easy, then, and reminded us of the general reason why you should usually draw trumps straight away. Not so simple are the many deals where you must turn a blind eye to this guideline. Let’s look at some now.

Drawing trumps would prevent you from taking a ruff

The most common reason for not drawing trumps immediately is that you need to take one or more ruffs in the dummy. That is the case here:

	♠ Q 2											
	♥ Q 4											
	♦ K 9 7 5 2											
	♣ 10 9 6 2											
♠ 8 4 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 5	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ J 9 8 5		♥ 10 6 3										
♦ J 8 3		♦ A Q 10 6										
♣ K Q 3		♣ A J 7 4										
	♠ A K J 10 9 7											
	♥ A K 7 2											
	♦ 4											
	♣ 8 5											
West	North	East	South									
pass	1NT	pass	1♠									
pass	2♠	pass	2♥									
all pass			4♠									

West leads the ♣K against your spade game and continues with queen and another club to his partner's jack. You ruff the third round of clubs in your hand. What now?

Suppose you draw trumps straight away. Since you have only nine tricks you may decide to play a diamond towards the king next. This does not work. East wins with the ace and you will make only nine tricks.

Before embarking on any contract you should make a plan. Here you can see three certain losers in the minors and must seek to dispose of another possible loser — the fourth heart. As we have seen, you need some luck to achieve a discard on the ♦K. A better plan is to ruff a heart in dummy. After ruffing the third round of clubs, you should cash the queen and ace of hearts. You then ruff your remaining low heart with the queen of trumps. You take the ruff with a master trump just in case East started with only two hearts and would otherwise be able to overruff. You can then draw trumps and score your tenth trick with the ♥K.

Drawing trumps would waste an important entry to dummy

Sometimes you need to use dummy's trump suit as a means of gaining access to a long side suit there. In that case you must delay drawing trumps until the side suit is ready to run. Look at this deal:

♠ 10 8 5		♠ K J 6 3
♥ J 8 4		♥ 9 6 3
♦ K Q 10 2		♦ A 7 6
♣ 9 6 2		♣ 10 7 4
♠ Q 9 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ 7 5		
♦ 9 5 3		
♣ K Q J 8 3		
♠ A 7 4		
♥ A K Q 10 2		
♦ J 8 4		
♣ A 5		

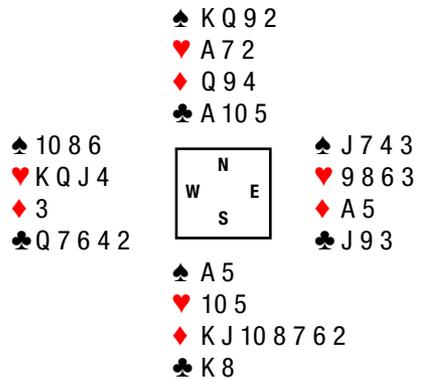
West	North	East	South
pass	2♥	pass	1♥
all pass			4♥

West leads the ♣K and you win immediately since a spade switch would be unwelcome. What will happen if you draw three rounds of trumps now? When you turn to the diamond suit, East will hold up the ace for two rounds. You will then have no entry to the good diamond in dummy. You will lose two spades, one diamond and one club. One down!

To enjoy the long diamond you must leave the jack of trumps in dummy, as an entry. So, win the first club and draw two rounds of trumps with the ace and king. You must now risk playing on diamonds, even though there is still a trump out. As the cards lie, the defenders cannot score a diamond ruff. Let's assume that East holds up his diamond ace until the third round. When you regain the lead you will cross to the jack of trumps, drawing the defenders' last trump. You can then throw one of your spade losers on the good diamond in dummy.

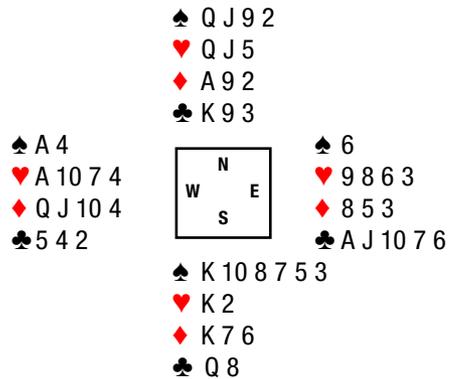
Drawing trumps would allow the defenders to cash a trick

Another common situation where it is wrong to play on trumps straight away is when the opponents will gain the lead and will be able to cash a setting trick. Take the South cards on this deal:



You reach a small slam in diamonds and West leads the ♥K, won with dummy's ace. You can see what will happen if you play trumps straight away. East will win and the defenders will score a heart trick to put you one down. Before playing trumps you must dispose of your heart loser. You can do this by playing three rounds of spades. The defenders both follow all the way and you discard the last heart from your hand. Only then is it safe to play trumps.

On the next deal the opening lead has not yet set up a defensive trick but you must prepare your discard before you tackle the trump suit:



You bid to the spade game and the ♦Q is led. Suppose you win the trick and play a trump immediately. When West takes the trump ace, he will play another diamond and establish a trick in the suit. There is no way to avoid a diamond loser and you will go one down, losing one trick in every suit.

The highest priority, after winning the diamond lead, is to establish a discard for your potential diamond loser. You should therefore play on hearts, forcing out the ace. When you win the second round of diamonds you can discard your diamond loser on the third round of hearts. Only then will it be time to draw trumps.

Does anything else occur to you on that last deal? If West ducks the first heart and wins the second, then knocks out your second high diamond, you will need a quick entry to dummy in order to take a discard. You must therefore win the opening lead in your own hand, with your diamond king. The ace of diamonds will then serve as an entry to the established heart in the dummy.

Summary

- ✓ It is usually best to draw trumps straight away unless there is a reason for not doing so.
- ✓ Do not draw trumps immediately if this would exhaust dummy's trumps and you need them to take a ruff or two.
- ✓ Do not draw trumps immediately when this would remove a high trump in dummy that you need as an entry.
- ✓ Do not draw trumps straight away if this would allow the defenders to score or establish a setting trick. Look for a way to discard your potential loser, or to set up a discard for it.

D R A W T R U M P S S T R A I G H T A W A Y

NOW TRY THESE...

To Answers

1)

♠ Q 4
♥ A 8 3
♦ K Q 4
♣ 10 8 7 5 2

♣Q led



♠ K 9 5
♥ K Q J 10 7 2
♦ A 10 3
♣ A

You bid to 6♥ and West leads the ♣Q to your ace. Will you draw trumps straight away? If not, why not?

2)

♠ A 4
♥ A 8 3
♦ J 8 2
♣ A 9 7 4 3

♥J led



♠ K Q J 10 9 5
♥ K 4
♦ A 7 3
♣ K 2

You arrive in 6♠ and West leads the ♥J. How will you play the hand? Will you draw trumps straight away? If not, why not?

3)

♠ K 9 5
♥ Q J 8 5
♦ Q 10 4
♣ K 8 5

♣Q led

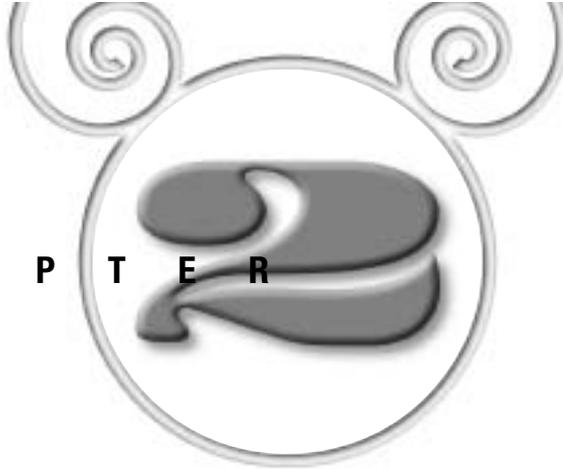


♠ 4
♥ K 10 9 6 3
♦ K J 9 6
♣ A 6 4

West leads the ♣Q against your heart game. Will you draw trumps straight away? If not, why not?

- 1) To bring your total to twelve tricks you will need a spade ruff in the dummy. Suppose you draw two rounds of trumps and find that they break 3-1. When you knock out the ace of spades the defender who wins may be able to play a third round of trumps, depriving you of your ruff. One down! To prevent this from happening, you should play on spades at Trick 2, forcing out the ace. When you regain the lead you will draw two rounds of trumps with the king-queen and take a spade ruff with the ace.
- 2) You have only eleven certain tricks and must set up at least one club trick to make the slam. Suppose you win the opening heart lead with the king and draw trumps. With only one side entry to dummy remaining (the ♥A), you will then need clubs to break 3-3. If instead you retain the trump ace as an extra entry, you can succeed against a 4-2 club break. Win with the ♥K and play the king and ace of clubs. Ruff a club with the king and draw two rounds of trumps with the queen and ace. If clubs broke 4-2 you can now ruff another club with the jack, and proceed to draw trumps. The established club will give you the slam and you still have the ♥A in dummy to reach it.
- 3) If you win the club lead and play trumps immediately, the defenders will win and set up their club trick. You will then go one down, suffering a loser in every suit. You need to set up a discard for your club loser. However, it is no good knocking out the ♦A because you would not be able to take a discard on the fourth diamond until trumps had been drawn. The only chance is to win the club lead with the ace and lead a spade towards dummy's king. If West holds the ♠A, you will set up a quick discard for your club loser.

C H A P T E R



HOLD UP AN ACE



Holding up is a strategy whose idea is to retain a high card until one hand is exhausted and cannot lead the suit to the opposite hand. *J.B. Elwell*

You reach 3NT and the opponents attack in their best suit, where you hold ace third. Very early in their bridge careers, beginners are told that they must **always hold up an ace**. What is the point of doing this? It is to break the communications between the defenders, so that they cannot enjoy the long cards in the suit. Let's see a typical deal where it is good play to hold up an ace.

♠ K Q J 9 5	♠ 10 3	♠ 8 6 4									
♥ 9 6 4	♥ K J 2	♥ 10 8 7 3									
♦ 9 5	♦ K J 7 2	♦ Q 8 4									
♣ Q J 3	♣ A 9 6 2	♣ 10 7 4									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A 7 2										
	♥ A Q 5										
	♦ A 10 6 3										
	♣ K 8 5										

Partner raises your 1NT opening to 3NT and West leads the king of spades. You can count eight top tricks and need one more to make your game. If you win the first or second round of spades the defenders' communications are intact (East still has a spade). You will therefore need to score a ninth trick without letting either defender on lead. It is no good playing for a 3-3 break in clubs because you would lose one club and four spades. Instead you will have to guess which defender holds the $\heartsuit Q$.

Good players hate having to guess to make a contract. There is absolutely no need to guess on this deal! You should hold up the ace of spades until the third round. You then play the ace of diamonds and a diamond to dummy's jack. Even though this loses, you will still make 3NT. Thanks to your hold-up East has no spade to play. (If he did have a spade left, the suit would have broken 4-4 and pose no threat.) You will make one spade, three hearts, three diamonds and two clubs — a total of nine.

After your hold-up East became the 'safe hand'. Since you could afford to have him gain the lead, you took the diamond finesse 'into the safe hand'.

The time has come to look at some situations when it would not be a good idea to hold up an ace.

Holding up an ace would allow a dangerous switch

Sometimes a continuation of the suit that has been led is not the biggest threat to your contract. If you hold up the ace of that suit the defenders may switch elsewhere, setting up enough tricks to beat you. That is the case here:

	\spadesuit 9 5										
	\heartsuit 3										
	\diamondsuit K J 10 9 7 5 2										
	\clubsuit J 4 3										
\spadesuit Q J 6 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		\spadesuit K 8 7 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
\heartsuit K 8 6 4		\heartsuit Q 10 9 5									
\diamondsuit 6		\diamondsuit A 4									
\clubsuit K 9 5 2		\clubsuit 10 7 6									
	\spadesuit A 10 4										
	\heartsuit A J 7 2										
	\diamondsuit Q 8 3										
	\clubsuit A Q 8										
West	North	East	South								
	3 \diamondsuit	pass	3NT								
all pass											

Playing fourth-best leads, West starts with the $\spadesuit 2$ against your 3NT. How should you play when East contributes the king?

Let's think what may happen if you hold up the $\spadesuit A$. East knows from his

partner's ♠2 lead that he holds only four spades. You surely have a spade stopper for your 3NT bid, so a spade return from East is likely to net only three spades and the diamond ace — not enough to beat the game. East may well switch to the ♥10. This is not good news for you. If you rise with the ♥A immediately and play on diamonds you will lose one spade, three hearts and the ♦A. If instead you duck the heart, or cover with the jack, the defenders can beat you by playing either major.

Now let's consider what will happen if you win the first round of spades and play on diamonds. You will make the contract! You too know from the ♠2 lead that West holds only four spades. The defenders will therefore be able to score just three spades and the diamond ace.

On the next deal you cannot be certain that the suit led by the opponents is breaking 4-4. What you do know is that East will make a very damaging play if you leave him on lead at Trick 2.

	♠ 7 6 ♥ K ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ Q J 10 8 7 4 2											
♠ K J 9 4 ♥ 10 8 3 ♦ Q 10 8 3 ♣ 6 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ J 9 6 5 4 ♦ J 9 ♣ A 9	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ A 8 3 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ A K 6 4 ♣ K 3											
West	North	East	South									
pass	3NT	all pass	2NT									

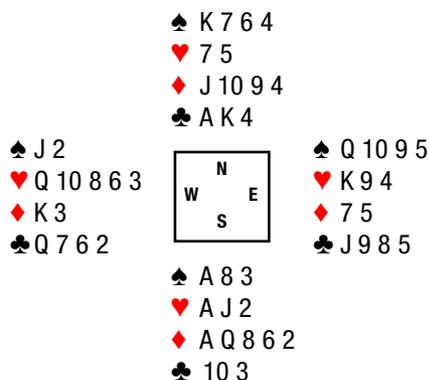
West leads the ♠4 against 3NT, East playing the queen. On many similar deals it would be right to hold up the spade ace. When spades were 5-3, you would then make the contract when the ace of clubs lay with the three-card spade holding. What will happen if you hold up the ace of spades on this deal? East will surely seize his chance to kill dummy's club suit by switching to a heart, removing the only side entry to the dummy. When you play on clubs, he will hold up the ace until the second round and the dummy will then be useless to you. Even if the diamond suit breaks 3-3, allowing you to set up an extra trick there, you cannot bump your total to more than eight tricks.

So, even though it is entirely possible West holds five spades to his partner's three, you should take what is your only practical chance of making the contract by winning the first spade. You continue with the king of clubs, ducked, and a second round of clubs. When the spade suit does prove to be 4-4, you make the game. If the spades had been 5-3, you were not destined to make the contract.

Holding up an ace kills a second stopper

When you hold a stopper of A-J-x in the suit that has been led, you must consider your play carefully. If the defender on your right is likely to gain the lead later, you should normally hold up the ace for two rounds, playing as if you held only A-x-x. If instead the defender on your left is likely to gain the lead, you do best to win the ace immediately. Your remaining J-x will then act as a second stopper.

This deal illustrates the situation:



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
pass	2♣	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	2♦

West leads the ♥6 against 3NT, East playing the king. Before deciding whether to hold up, you must consider your play of the contract as a whole. You have six top tricks and can score three more from the diamond suit, even if the finesse loses. Since West may gain the lead when you play on diamonds but East cannot, you should win East's king of hearts with the ace. You cross to a club and take a diamond finesse, which loses. That causes no problem, because with West on lead your ♥J-2 stops the suit. If West switches elsewhere, you will score the nine tricks you need. If he persists with hearts, you will make an overtrick.

Look back at the diagram and imagine that the ace-queen of diamonds were in dummy, the jack-ten-nine in your hand. You would then allow East's king of hearts to win the first trick. You would hold up the heart ace on the second round too, winning on the third round. When you took a losing finesse into the East hand, all would again be well. East would have no heart to return.

Holding up an ace would prevent a throw-in

When you hold ace third in the suit led, it is sometimes best to win the second round of the suit, planning to put a defender on lead later — with a third round. He may then have to give you a trick after cashing his winners.

Take the South cards on this deal:

♠ K 10 4 ♥ Q 10 3 ♦ 5 2 ♣ K Q J 9 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 7 6 3 ♥ K 8 5 2 ♦ K J 9 4 ♣ 6 3	♠ J 9 8 ♥ 9 7 6 4 ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ 7 5 4
N						
W E						
S						
West	North	East	South			
pass	3♣	pass	2NT			
pass	3NT	all pass	3♠			

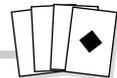
West leads the ♣K against your contract of 3NT. Suppose first that you hold up the ♣A for two rounds, to exhaust East of the suit. It doesn't help you much, does it? There is no way of creating an extra trick that involves East gaining the lead. That's because both the major-suit finesses will be into the danger hand (West). Can you see anything better?

The first step in planning any notrump contract is to count your top tricks. Here you have eight top tricks and therefore need one more. You could rely on luck, taking one or the other of major-suit finesses. A better idea is to win the second round of clubs, play three rounds of diamonds (to remove West's safe exit in that suit) and then throw West on lead with a third round of clubs. He can cash two more clubs but this does not embarrass you for discards. You throw two spades and a heart from dummy, two spades from your own hand. These cards will remain:

♠ K 10 ♥ Q 10 3 ♦ — ♣ —	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 7 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ J ♣ —	♠ J 9 8 ♥ 9 7 ♦ — ♣ —
N						
W E						
S						
♠ A Q ♥ A J ♦ 3 ♣ —						

BY THE WAY

Did you see why it would have been wrong to play all four diamonds before executing the throw-in? You needed the ♦J as an entry to dummy, should West choose to exit in hearts.



West must now give you an extra trick by leading into one of your tenaces. Whether he plays a spade or a heart you will have a ninth trick.

Summary

- ✓ The purpose of holding up an ace is to cut the communication between the defenders. You do this by exhausting one defender of the suit that has been led. He then becomes the 'safe hand' and you can develop tricks safely if you take care to lose the lead only to him.
- ✓ Do not hold up an ace when a switch to another suit is dangerous and you may be able to make the contract without a hold-up.
- ✓ When you hold ace third in the suit that has been led, you can sometimes execute a throw-in by winning the second round and later exiting in that suit.

HOLD UP AN ACE

NOW TRY THESE...

[To Answers](#)

1)

♠ 8 6
♥ 9 4
♦ K J 4
♣ A J 10 8 7 4



♠ A 9 5
♥ K 7 3 2
♦ A Q 3
♣ Q 9 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
pass	3NT	all pass	1NT

West leads a fourth-best ♠3 to his partner's queen. Will you hold up the spade ace? What is the reason for your choice?

2)

♠ A 6
♥ A J 10 3
♦ Q J 10 8 3
♣ 7 4



♠ K Q J 5
♥ Q 4
♦ A 9 7 4
♣ A 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
pass	2♣	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	2♠

West leads the ♣K against 3NT. Will you hold up the ace? What is the reason for your choice? Whether or not you decide to win the first club, how will you play the contract?

- 1) You should not hold up the ace. Let's consider first what will happen if you take the spade ace immediately. You will make ten tricks if West holds the ♣K and you will go down if East holds that card. So, that gives you a 50% chance of success. What will happen if you hold up the spade ace? First of all, East may switch to hearts and the defenders could take four heart tricks, beating the contract even when the ♣K was onside. Secondly, the hold-up is never likely to gain. If East holds the ♣K and the ♥A he will see that it is futile to persevere with spades after your hold-up. (That will give the defenders only two spades, the ♥A and the ♣K.) He will therefore switch to hearts at Trick 2, setting up at least three heart tricks to go with the two black-suit winners. Hold up the spade ace and your prospects, against sensible defense, are very poor indeed. Better to grab the solid 50% chance!

- 2) You have seven top tricks and need to develop two more. Suppose you win the first or second club. The defenders' communications will still be intact in the dangerous case where the clubs are divided 5-3. You will therefore have to guess which red-suit finesse to take. A better idea is to hold up the ace of clubs for two rounds. East is now the 'safe hand' (either he has no clubs left or the suit started 4-4 and poses no threat). You must look for a safe way to develop your extra tricks. A diamond finesse would be 'into the danger hand'. If it failed you would go down. A better idea is to run the ♥Q. You don't mind if that finesse loses because it will be the safe hand that gains the lead. You set up an eighth and ninth trick for yourself and will lose at most three clubs and a heart.



DECLARER'S MYTHS

- Draw trumps straight away
- Hold up an ace
- Win as cheaply as possible
- Play low in second seat
- Eight ever, nine never
- Ruff losers in the dummy
- Finesse whenever you can
- Play on your longest suit first
- Lead towards high cards
- Ruff the defenders' winners
- Lead low to a trick
- Run your longest suit
- Leave the big decision until last

DEFENDER'S MYTHS

- Third hand high
- Return partner's suit
- Cover an honor with an honor
- Second hand low
- Capture an honor with an honor
- Lead through strength
- Discard from your weakest suit
- Score a ruff when you can
- Never give a ruff-and-sluff
- Split your honors
- Follow low when a trick is lost
- Don't ruff partner's winner

Do you remember the first few times you played bridge? To get you started, a friend probably gave you a few helpful hints — perhaps one of the ones listed to the left. There are many such general guidelines for bridge players— some of them valuable, some not. But these are the *Bridge Myths*, not the *Bridge Rules* — because they all have exceptions and none should be followed blindly. In reading this book you will get to see what it is about each guideline that makes it so useful; more importantly, you will also learn to recognize the times when you should ignore it.

David Bird is the author of more than fifty books, including the award-winning *Bridge Technique Series* (with Marc Smith) and *Saints & Sinners* (with Tim Bourke). He writes two newspaper columns in the UK, and his work appears regularly in numerous bridge magazines. He lives near Southampton, in England.

