

Ten Things You Need to Know

A hand holding a fan of playing cards against a geometric background. The cards are fanned out, showing various suits and colors. The background features a pattern of overlapping squares and diamonds in shades of gray and white, with a diagonal line of light and shadow.

Thomas Rush
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PlayBridgeWithThomas@GMail.Com

Overview – Ten Things

- Eight Ever, Nine Never?
- Let's learn a new convention!
- Don't Be So Pushy, or, Strategic Bidding
- Bid Now (or forever hold your peace)
- Brilliant!
- I don't want "good luck!"
- Why we overcall
- Ways to get "extra" tricks
- Who's your friend? (I)
- Who's your friend? (II)
- Special bonus "Thing"



Eight Ever, Nine Never?

- “Eight Ever, Nine Never”: Says to finesse for the Queen with 8 cards in a suit, spurn the finesse with 9 cards
- Applies ONLY when missing only the Queen of a suit where you hold nine cards (NEVER missing the King!)
- The odds of a finesse are a priori 50%. Dropping the Queen by playing the A and the K is a 52% plan
- The odds for “never” are close! Anything you know about the hand can change the odds in favor of a finesse (i.e., LHO has preempted to show a 6- or 7-card suit)

Use the rule if you must, but see what you can find out about the hand and distribution if you're looking for a Queen outside the trump suit

Eight Ever, Nine Never? – II

If your suit is... Does “eight ever, nine never” apply?

- A. AK975 JT2 Finesse
- B. A9863 JT52 Finesse
- C. A9863 KT42 Finesse if an honor drops
- D. AQJ74 T953 Finesse
- E. AQJ74 T9532 Finesse
- F. AJT64 K973 Drop

Let's Learn a New Convention!

- **STOP THAT!**
- **Seriously! Just *STOP!***
- **How often do even “common” conventions like Stayman and Blackwood come up for your side?**
- **Why learn more conventions rarely come up when...**
 - **You defend on half the hands**
Learn to defend!
Improve your scores on up to half the boards
 - **You declare on a quarter of the hands**
Learn to play the hand!
Improve your scores on up to 1/4 of the boards

Don't Be So Pushy

- Q: Partner opens 2♠, 2nd hand bids 3♥, what do you do with a fit, (Axxx, Jxx, Axxx, Qx) or (Axx, Jxx, Axxx, Qxx)?
- A: My advice: If you can't set 4♥, ***DON'T BID 3♠!***
- Feel free to pass, or to bid 4♠, but don't bid 3♠ unless you *want* the opponents to bid 4♥ (that is, you can set it)
- This applies to *all* decisions that push opps to game

Don't push the opponents into a making game!

Bid Now (or forever hold your peace)

Or, Effective Bidding when Partner Preempts

- Your most effective preempts are those that put the maximum pressure on opponents – that steal the most bidding space, and force them to act on guesses
- Which is better for us, the preempting side? (ans: the 1st)

2S - X - 4S - ??
3H

2S - X - P - 3H

2S - X - P -

P - 4H - 4S - ??

P - P - 4 3S - ??

- Use the rule of 2-3-4 as opener (bid or not?) and as responder both to continue the preempt and to determine your makeable contracts.
- See <https://www.acbl.org/the-rule-of-2-3-4/> for info on the rule of 2-3-4

Brilliant!



Brilliant, Don't Be

- Lots of people look for the “brilliant” play (say, underleading an ace) or the “brilliant” bid

It rarely works

- How many thousands of bridge books have been written?

If your “brilliant” thing were the right thing to do, it would be in the books as *being the right thing to do*

Work on making the book plays, the percentage plays (which are right more often than not) rather than the “brilliant” plays which don't work often

Don't Wish Me "Good Luck!"

(AKA, "Be a tiger")

- What's "good luck"? Suits breaking, finesses on?
- If they're on for you, they're on for every other declarer!
- Bad suit splits and finesses off-side give you a chance to shine – to make the contract others don't, to score the overtrick that only a few others find
- I wish my friends "a few interesting hands" so that they will have a chance to score a great board

Work to shine, when the others might fall down – no luck necessary! Don't give up; be a tiger at the table!

Why We Overcall

There are a number of good reasons to overcall. “I had 12 points” is not one of them!

Good reasons:

- It may be our hand (strong, or trick-taking potential)
- To help partner know what to lead
- To steal bidding space (harder for opps to find the right strain or level)
- We may be able to push the opponents too high
- To find a profitable sacrifice

RHO opens 1H, you have Jxxxx, Qxx, Axx, Kx – overcall or P?

(I recommend “no” - bad suit, flat hand, less than opening, don’t want P to sacrifice, etc.)

Ways to get “extra” tricks (I)

Here are some of the most common ways to develop more tricks on a hand – make sure you consider them all when you make your plan as declarer!

- Finesse
- Ruff in the short trump hand
- Set up a long suit (any 4-3 or 5-0 or better is possible!)
- Set up an end play (spades are trump; trump are drawn):

Dummy: ♠ xx ♥ AQ ♦ KJx ♣ –

Declarer: ♠ xx ♥ xx ♦ ATx ♣ –

How many tricks do you need?

- All? Take the finesses
- All but one? Play ♥A and Q to guarantee just 1 loser!

Ways to get “extra” tricks (II)

Here are some of the most common ways to develop more tricks on a hand – make sure you consider them all when you make your plan as declarer!

- Finesse
- Ruff in the short trump hand
- Set up a long suit (any 4-3 or 5-0 or better is possible!)
- Set up an end play
- **Cross-ruff** **AKxxx** **Axxx** **x** **Qxx**
 QJxx **x** **Axxxx** **AKx**
- Ruffing finesse
- Hold-up
- Squeeze

Who's your friend? (I)

There's one person at the table who's 100% on your side:
your partner

- No matter your level of frustration, don't take it out on that person across the table
 - It will distract him from this hand or the next one
 - It will damage your partnership
- Don't teach unless you're being asked, or paid, to teach (even then, save it until...)
- The time to discuss hands (other than compliments) is after the last board

Who's your friend? (II)

“Director, please!”

The director is there to ensure the game goes as smoothly as possible, not to “get” you. Rules have been changing to emphasize equity, not punishment

- When there's any irregularity, call the director**
- Even if you know what the ruling is**
- Even if it's not a big deal**
- Even if the opponents are your friends**
- Many situations are more complicated than you realize**
- You might lose your rights or the best options by delaying a director call**
- Be nice to the director and your opponents!**

Recap

- Play for the drop of the Queen if you have a nine-card fit AND nothing else to go on
- Work on defense and declarer play to take your game to the next level – not more conventions!
- Think ahead: Be happy with -170 instead of -420 (or -300!)
- Learn to do the percentage things before you try for brilliance
- “Good luck” is a bunch of average boards; be a tiger!
- Plan the hand; esp. at matchpoints, look for “extra” tricks
- Partner and the directors are your friends
- Make smarter game tries - no more 1-2-3

To better bridge!



Thomas Rush

BBO: ThomasRush

PlayBridgeWithThomas@GMail.Com

832-228-7835