

Hold Up the Trump Ace II

By Giorgio Belladonna

It is not only when you are long in trumps that you should be reluctant to part with the ace. In the next deal you are East:

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

	♠ A K 10 9 3		
	♥ Q 6		
	♦ Q J		
	♣ A J 9 8		
♠ J 7	♠ 8 6 5 4	♥ A 4	
♥ 5 3	♥ A 10 7	♦ A 10 7	
♦ K 9 5 3 2	♣ K 10 3 2		
♣ Q 7 5 4			
	♠ Q 2		
	♥ K J 10 9 8 7 2		
	♦ 8 6 4		
	♣ 6		
West	North	East	South
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	3 ♥

South opens three hearts and North raises to four hearts. West leads the three of diamonds and you win with the ace.

As the three of diamonds is presumably your partner's fourth highest, you can place South with three diamonds. The opening preempt suggests a seven-card suit so South can have only three cards in the black suits – all taken care of by dummy's ace-king of spades and ace of clubs. Unless you can take three diamond tricks you are unlikely to beat four hearts.

If you were to return the ace and another trump, with the object of preventing a diamond ruff, South would easily take the balance. To keep control you must hold on to the ace of trumps and return a low trump. Now South must go down.

My bridge tip is simple:

TIP: *Whenever you, as a defender, include the ace of trumps among your assets, you should consider whether to hold up this card when trumps are first played.*

After all, the ace of trumps is the one card in the pack that you are always sure to make!