

**MODERN WHIST  
TOGETHER WITH THE  
LAWS OF WHIST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649409143

Modern Whist Together with the Laws of Whist by Clement Davies

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**CLEMENT DAVIES**

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MODERN WHIST.

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# MODERN WHIST

TOGETHER WITH

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## THE LAWS OF WHIST

BY

*Henry*  
CLEMENT DAVIES, M.A.

TRIN. COLL. CAM.

Published at the Request of Members of the Union Club,  
Birmingham

NEW YORK:  
SCRIBNER & WELFORD

1886

1923.

## PREFACE.

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THE principles of Whist are here embodied under the form of maxims arranged in natural order, so as to render them self-explanatory, and in such terms as might be used when a point arises for criticism after the play of a hand, so that beginners will be less bewildered in learning from this than from more diffuse publications, while older players may learn something in a short space of time without a feeling of going to school again.

Previous writers have maintained that the selection of the suit depends on the cards in the hand: that trumps should be led when strong in them, and that when otherwise the lead should be from the numerically strongest

suit. "Playing to the score" has been treated only as a matter of after consideration, and recently two books have been published without a word in reference to it.

The present writer lays down that the relation of the scores is the guide for the early lead of trumps, and that playing to the score is of fundamental importance, and should receive the first consideration. From this follow as corollaries certain fairly definite rules, and thus a new departure has been made in the annals of Whist.

No pretence is made that the principles rest on a scientific basis, as in the infinite variety of Whist they cannot be rigidly proved. They are common-sense generalisations founded on *primâ facie* probabilities, and the inferences that may be drawn from the playing of the cards, and the knowledge that the players are generally guided by the same rules and conventions.

The plain suit leads are all given in seven lines, and the play of second hand in nine,



for which beginners should be thankful. The rules for these are all founded on the fact that a suit goes round usually twice—seldom thrice—out of a hundred times when you hold four, sixty-four times twice, sixteen times thrice. So, at the game of Ruff, as Whist used to be called, it is an object to gain if possible, both, or at least one, of the first two rounds in plain suits. But in trumps, as they cannot be ruffed, the object lapsing, the play and rules diverge accordingly. The rules for the play of trumps and plain suits are here properly separated for the first time, and hence the simplicity. That they have hitherto been given in such complexity explains why so many fail to master the alphabet of Whist.

Some traditional customs not founded on common sense are controverted. It is recommended that of sequences the indicating card—not the lowest, whatever the length—be led; and special attention is drawn to the lead of Ace and four small ones, and the play, second hand, of King or Queen and small one.

The Author's theory of *The Winning Game*, founded on his own experience, is quite original.

The very small advantage—two per cent.—ascribed by writers to fine players over bad ones, holds out no great inducement to read a book on the subject; but a recent writer, determined to have readers, in a third edition puts the advantage at five per cent. on the hand, and finds, by some rule of arithmetic known to himself, that as there are about seven deals to a rubber, the advantage is thirty-five per cent. on the rubber!

Probably the mean between these estimates may be gained by playing *The Winning Game*, and to the score against those who do not.

Illustrative hands are not given, as they are more difficult to follow than those of a good player by overlooking him; while the best preliminary practice is *Double Dummy*, for which no advice, rules, or judgment are necessary, which requires less memory than the ordinary game, but exercises greater analytical

skill—approximating to Chess, though more charming, through the variety of chance, and with the same advantage of having no partner to abuse.

It has not been thought well to give an explanation of the way Whist is played, for it can be best learnt by watching play; nor a glossary of terms, for the few necessary explain themselves on occurrence; nor Rhyming Rules, for humming is objectionable at the game; nor rules for playing with bad partners, as unfortunately they do not all play the same game; nor to liken trumps to "artillery," the progress of a hand to "the parabolic path of a shell from a mortar," Whist to a "trading partnership," or to "two powers at warfare;" nor to refer to "Waterloo," "Napoleon," and the "Great Battalions;" nor to offer "to choose a prime minister by his Whist playing;" nor to speak in awe of good players of their day who had no knowledge of the present game; nor to give the history of Whist, which is the ordinary one of evolu-