




A series of declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue. The difficulty level is suitable for VB#2 students

VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ A9	
	♥ AT64	
	♦ A52	
	♣ JT53	
West		East
♠ QJT832		♠ 754
♥ 932		♥ QJ8
♦ 8		♦ KT94
♣ Q96		♣ K84
	South	
	♠ K6	
	♥ K75	
	♦ QJ763	
	♣ A72	

**This series of six deals is by David Bird of England.**

Hand 1. Sometimes the cards lie well and you survive by choosing the second-best line. Not on this deal!

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1NT
P	2♣	P	2♦
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ Q

You arrive in 3NT as South after a Stayman auction. West leads the ♠Q and you see that you have to set up Diamonds for your nine tricks.

As you see, you would go down if you ran the ♦Q to East's ♦K at Trick 2. He would clear the Spade suit and you would then have only eight tricks when Diamonds broke 4-1.


The correct play is to cash the ♦A at trick 2 (you never know, maybe the ♦K will fall...) and then lead up to the ♦Q J 7 6. When the ♦Q wins you can cross to dummy and lead another Diamond up to the ♦J, giving East no winning option. In all you take two Spades, two Hearts, four Diamonds and a Club.

You must play similarly when you have a suit of, say, ♦A 7 3 (dummy) opposite ♦Q J 6 2 (your hand). If you start incorrectly by leading the ♦Q, you will need a 3-3 break to score three Diamond tricks whoever holds the missing ♦K. You can improve your chances by cashing the ♦A and leading twice towards the ♦Q J. You will then make the contract when Diamonds break 3-3 or East holds the ♦K.



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VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

		North		
		♠ Q86		
		♥ A64		
		♦ QJT		
		♣ AJT5		
West		East		
♠ T32		♠ 754		
♥ KQJ93		♥ 852		
♦ K8		♦ 7432		
♣ 963		♣ K84		
		South		
		♠ AKJ9		
		♥ T7		
		♦ A965		
		♣ Q72		

On this deal you will come to a split in the pathway. Take the correct turning and you will make the contract. Choose the wrong path and... disaster awaits you!

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ K

You reach 3NT after the briefest of auctions and West leads the ♥K from his fine sequence.

You can see that you have to play on either Clubs or Diamonds for your contract.

When you have a choice of finesses to take, it is generally right to **finesse into the safe hand**. What does that mean?

After you have held up the ace of the suit led for two rounds, winning the third round, you expect your right-hand opponent to have no cards left in the suit. He is known as the **safe hand** or **safe defender**, because he cannot do you any damage.

West, who has two Hearts ready to cash, is the **danger hand** or **dangerous defender**.


You should finesse into the safe hand, not into the danger hand. In this case that means taking the ♥A, crossing to a Spade and running the ♣Q. If East takes that with the ♣K then he has no Heart left (or - if he has - then Hearts were 4-4).

When East returns a Diamond there should be no temptation to take that finesse. With sufficient tricks for your contract you should take the ♦A and run for home.



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VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

		North		
		♠ 873		
		♥ KQ62		
		♦ T94		
		♣ T43		
West		East		
♠ QT5		♠ 2		
♥ J854		♥ 973		
♦ J65		♦ Q8732		
♣ K85		♣ AQ97		
		South		
		♠ AKJ964		
		♥ AT		
		♦ AK		
		♣ J62		

You will play many, many deals where it is essential to make a plan right at the start.

In fact the odds are high that you will play one such deal in the next minute or so!

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♠
P	2NT	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ 4

You arrive in 4♠ having opened with a rare strong 2♠ and West, with a dismal choice of leads, decides to try a low Heart. You can see immediately that you have three Club losers on the hand and maybe the defence have a trump trick.


It sometimes happens that you can benefit by winning the first trick in your hand with a higher card than is necessary. By winning trick one with the ♥A, you can lead the ♥10 to the dummy and score a further two Heart winners, discarding one of your Clubs. If instead you win mistakenly with the ♥10, you will score only two Heart tricks and go one down.

Suppose dummy held ♥K Q 6 2 and you held ♥A J. Again you should win with the ♥A, so that you can overtake the ♥J with the ♥Q later, if that proves necessary.



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VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 6S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

		North	
		♠ J964	
		♥ AQ6	
		♦ J3	
		♣ AJ75	
West			East
♠ 53			♠ 7
♥ 3			♥ KJ9854
♦ K98642			♦ QT75
♣ 9863			♣ T4
		South	
		♠ AKQT82	
		♥ T72	
		♦ A	
		♣ KQ2	

The opening lead is made and down goes the dummy. What is the first thing that you do? OK, you thank partner for the dummy. Well, in that case what is the *second* thing that you do?

Right, you make a plan for the contract.

West	North	East	South
P	1NT	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	4NT
P	5♥	P	6♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ 3

You arrive in 6♠ after North opens 1NT and West leads a Heart. How should you play the hand?

Well, the first rule of declaring is that you *count your tricks*. Here, you can see twelve, if you make the effort to do your chores (six Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and four Clubs. So, do you take the Heart finesse at trick one?

Suppose you were playing this deal in a duplicate pairs (match-point scoring). Some players might say to themselves: "At pairs scoring, I should finesse the ♥Q at Trick 1. If the finesse wins, I can draw trumps and throw away my last Heart on the Clubs. That would give me an overtrick."

It is not the right way to think. Firstly, not many players lead away from a king against a slam. It is too likely to give declarer an undeserved extra trick. Secondly, there may be plenty of pairs who have not even bid the slam.

Taking the finesse at trick one is an unnecessary risk - you should take the ♥A, draw trumps and claim your slam. If you do finesse you go down immediately as West obtains a Heart ruff.



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VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

<b>West</b> ♠ JT65 ♥ 8 ♦ J6532 ♣ KQJ		<b>East</b> ♠ A984 ♥ A7 ♦ T94 ♣ T985
<b>North</b> ♠ K732 ♥ JT62 ♦ Q7 ♣ A43		
<b>South</b> ♠ Q ♥ KQ9543 ♦ AK8 ♣ 762		

They say in London that the 134 bus always arrives two at a time. Sometimes, on VuBridge a similar thing happens. You encounter two deals in a row where you need to make a good plan right at the start.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♥
P	3♥	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ K

Here you play in 4♥ after partner raises your six-card suit. West leads a Club and you can see that he has attacked you in a vulnerable spot. How can you avoid losing two Clubs and two major-suit aces?

Now, unless there is a particular good reason not to, you should normally draw trumps straight away. However, on this deal there is a pressing reason why you should not play a trump immediately - namely that you will go down if you do!

You must play three rounds of Diamonds immediately, to ditch of one of dummy's Club losers. Having done that you can then draw trumps.



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VB#7 Y2 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

<b>West</b> ♠ T62 ♥ K94 ♦ T95 ♣ AKQ8		<b>East</b> ♠ 8 ♥ JT8752 ♦ J32 ♣ T95
<b>North</b> ♠ KJ73 ♥ 63 ♦ Q764 ♣ J43		
<b>South</b> ♠ AQ954 ♥ AQ ♦ AK8 ♣ 762		

Some players know how to treat an A Q combination. "Yes, we've learnt that already. You have to play low to the queen!"

See if you think it's the right play on this deal.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	2♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ A

You play in 4♠ and West makes a nuisance of himself by cashing the ♠A K Q. How should you play to make the rest of the tricks?

It is always a good idea to combine two chances of making a contract, rather than just relying on one chance.

Here you could test the Diamond suit first, to see if it divided 3-3. If no luck came from Diamonds, you could fall back on a finesse of the ♥Q.

You would make the contract if the Diamond suit broke 3-3, or if East held the ♥K. Two chances for the price of one!