




A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

		North			
		♠ J7			
		♥ K873			
		♦ AQ4			
		♣ QJ43			
West		East			
♠ KQ3		♠ T9864			
♥ J62		♥ T			
♦ T986		♦ KJ7			
♣ T87		♣ A965			
		South			
		♠ A52			
		♥ AQ954			
		♦ 532			
		♣ K2			

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

Whether you are a world champion or someone taking their first tentative steps in the game, there is one good rule to follow: You should always make a plan before playing the first card from dummy.

There are many players who have a different idea about how to play the game. They make a plan only when the contract seems to be in difficulty. By then, it may be too late!

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	P	1♥
P	2♥	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ T

This is a typical suit contract. In 4♥ we start with five potential losers (assuming that the trumps do not break 4-0). We can see that we can ruff a Spade in dummy. One possible method of avoiding one of the Diamond losers is to finesse the ♦Q at trick one. Not many defenders like to lead away from a King, however, so it is likely that the ♦K lies offside (with East).

In any case, there is another possible way to get rid of a Diamond loser and that is to set up a discard on dummy's Clubs. We can draw two rounds of trumps with the Ace and Queen and lead the ♣K. When this is allowed to win, we can play a Club to the ♣Q and ♣A.

By good fortune it is East who wins the Club trick. We capture his Spade return, cross to dummy with the ♥K and discard a Diamond on the ♣J. Then we give up a Spade and eventually ruff a Spade on the table.

There are many occasions when it is wrong to finesse at trick one when the opening lead comes through an A Q combination. We need to plan the play carefully to see if we have to take the finesse immediately.



A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David Bird's Deals, SA	Contract: 6H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♣
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	4♥	P	6♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ J

Ambitious bidding lands us in a thin 6♥ contract. How should we play it after the ♦J lead?

Once dummy's ♦Q is covered by the ♦K, we can see that we must lose a Diamond trick. We now have to make plans to dispose of our three Club losers.

The plan must be to finesse the ♣Q (hoping that East holds the ♣K). If we survive this step, we could then ruff the ♣5 and ♣2 in dummy.

The first ruff should be taken with the lower trump and the second ruff with the ♥J. If we mistakenly ruff high on the third round of Clubs, East would be able to overruff on the fourth round.

North ♠ J8742 ♥ QJ8 ♦ Q54 ♣ 43		East ♠ Q96 ♥ T32 ♦ K832 ♣ KJ6	
West ♠ KT53 ♥ 6 ♦ JT96 ♣ T987		South ♠ A ♥ AK9754 ♦ A7 ♣ AQ52	

One of the golden rules of bridge is that if you bid the cards aggressively you have to be able to play them well.

So on this deal, firstly you have to bid your cards to a high-level contract and secondly, you have to find the best way of steering your ship into the harbor.

Good luck!



A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David Bird's Deals, SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

<p>West</p> <p>♠ KQJT5</p> <p>♥ K96</p> <p>♦ J6</p> <p>♣ Q98</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ 9642</p> <p>♥ JT5</p> <p>♦ Q9</p> <p>♣ K762</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 87</p> <p>♥ 832</p> <p>♦ AK7543</p> <p>♣ 43</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ A3</p> <p>♥ AQ74</p> <p>♦ T82</p> <p>♣ AJT5</p>		

Your partner takes a bit of a gamble on this deal.

Whether it will pay off depends on how you play the contract!

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

Lead: ♠ K

We arrive in 3NT and contemplate a dummy where we have mutual weakness in Spades. After the ♠A has been knocked out by the opening lead we need to take nine tricks quickly or we will suffer defeat.

The lesson of this deal lies in the Diamond suit. We must avoid **blocking** the suit. What does that mean? It means we should not leave ourselves in the wrong hand. After taking the first three tricks in the suit, which we can do only if the defenders' Diamonds break 2-2, we want to be in the dummy.


To achieve this, we must play the ♦10 and ♦8 on the first two rounds. Dummy's ♦7 can then win the third round and the suit can be run off without interruption.

If we were to lead the ♦2 on the first round of the suit we cannot make the contract! Try it out and see.



A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David Bird's Deals, SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 96	
	♥ KQ8	
	♦ AK84	
	♣ T943	
West		East
♠ QJT53		♠ 8742
♥ 973		♥ 652
♦ 962		♦ QT73
♣ A6		♣ K8
	South	
	♠ AK	
	♥ AJT4	
	♦ J5	
	♣ QJ752	

On this deal you arrive in the second-best contract. (Yes, I know that you would have bid the hand differently...)

There is not much point sitting there, wondering how the bidding should have gone. Perhaps you can make the contract that you have reached?

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

Lead: ♠ Q

We arrive in 3NT having opened the bidding with a slightly warped 1NT. West leads his longest suit – a Spade – and we have to think of the best way of making nine tricks without losing five.

"Play on your longest suit!" did I hear you say? Well, that's a reasonable rule in general but we shouldn't play bridge just by rules. We need to apply some brain power to the game as well.

There are actually two points to note on this deal. The first is that we cannot afford to play on Clubs, seeking the extra tricks that we needed. That's because we have only one Spade stopper remaining after the opening lead and we need to knock out two Club stoppers. The defense would have the tempo to set up three Spades and two Clubs.

The second point is that we have a chance of scoring an extra Diamond trick by leading towards the honor that we were hoping to score (the ♦J). This is a 50-50 chance, but it's better than no chance.

So the right play is to win the Spade lead, cross to dummy with a top Heart and lead a low Diamond towards the ♦J. If East (on our right) has the ♦Q he can do nothing to thwart us. If he takes the ♦Q and returns a Spade we could win, unblock the ♦J, cross to the other top Heart and take the ♦A K. Finally, we take the last two Heart tricks.

And if West has the ♦Q? Then 3NT fails. As the French say - *C'est la vie*.



A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David Bird's Deals. SA

Date: 03/07/2016

Dealer: South

[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 3N

By: South

Board #: 5

Vulnerable: All

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

Lead: ♠ 7

How should we play 3NT when West leads the ♠7? The *Rule of Eleven* states that we should subtract the value of the spot-card led (7) from 11. The answer (4) tells us the number of cards higher than the 7 that are held by the other three hands (North, East and South).

We can see three of these cards in our own hand and the dummy. It follows that East will hold the remaining one. This must be the King, Queen or Jack, because West would lead an honor if he held the ♠K Q J. We play low from dummy and East plays the ♠Q. Should we win this trick or not?

Yes! Dummy's ♠10 5 4 will then act as a second stopper in the suit. We play on Clubs and West takes his ♣A at some stage. He can score only two Spade tricks, so the contract is ours. We will score at least one Spade, three Hearts, two Diamonds and three Clubs.

Look what will happen if we mistakenly duck the first round of Spades. East would play another Spade to remove our ♠A. West would then be able to cash three more Spade tricks when he wins with the ♠A.

The Rule of Eleven is not as useful as some teachers claim, but it does have its day!

North			
♠ T542			
♥ KQT			
♦ T8			
♣ JT93			
		East	
		♠ Q6	
		♥ J43	
		♦ Q9754	
		♣ 864	
		South	
		♠ A8	
		♥ A65	
		♦ AK32	
		♣ KQ72	



Some of the famous guidelines to good bridge play are more useful than others.

See if you can spot one that may help you on this deal.



A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #9 David Bird's Deals, SA

Date: 03/07/2016

Dealer: North

[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 3N

By: South


Board #: 6

Vulnerable: All

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

Lead: ♥ 6

We reach 3NT and West leads the ♥6. How should we play the contract?

North		East	
♠ AKQ7		♠ JT85	
♥ K42		♥ J83	
♦ QJ53		♦ K964	
♣ K4		♣ 96	
West		East	
♠ 94		♠ JT85	
♥ Q9765		♥ J83	
♦ A8		♦ K964	
♣ A853		♣ 96	
South			
♠ 632			
♥ AT			
♦ T72			
♣ QJT72			

Many players would go down on this contract.

Afterwards they would all agree about one thing – they should have made it!

The original declarer saw that he could score three Heart tricks if the opening lead were from the ♥Q J. He played low from dummy and won East's ♥J with the ♥A. When he played a Club to the ♣K, this won the trick. West won the second round of Clubs and continued with the ♥Q, judging that the best chance of beating the contract was to find the ♥10 bare in declarer's hand.

He soon cleared the Heart suit and the contract went one down.

Did you spot the key move that declarer missed? Yes, he failed to make a plan!

Nine easy tricks are available, with three Spades, two Hearts and four Clubs. To ensure that there is an entry to the long Clubs, we must win the opening lead with dummy's ♥K. We can then clear the Club suit (by leading the ♣K first) and will subsequently use the ♥A as an entry to the long cards.

There are myriads of bridge books that entreat players to make a plan before playing the first card from dummy. Sometimes this excellent advice pays dividends...!