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

Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4♠
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 965	
	♥ 65	
	♦ A542	
	♣ AT52	
West		East
♠ QJ8		♠ 2
♥ J94		♥ KQT72
♦ JT93		♦ Q86
♣ KQ8		♣ J643
	South	
	♠ AKT743	
	♥ A83	
	♦ K7	
	♣ 97	

This set of six deals is by our guest author David Bird.

There is no real theme to these hands, except that you must avoid falling into carefully set traps! Enjoy.

Hand 1: To avoid mistakes, you must sometimes look into the future and imagine what the defenders might do if the cards lie in a particular way.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♠
P	2♠	P	3♥
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ J

The contract is 4♠ played by us against the ♦J lead by West.

There are two important lessons on this deal.

The first is that the South hand is easily worth a game-try after 1♠ – 2♠, despite its modest point-count.

The second is that we should be careful of drawing too many rounds of trumps when we need to take a ruff in the dummy. If we play the ♠A and ♠K here, the defenders may remove dummy's last trump when we subsequently give up a Heart trick.


To make 4♠ we must lose a Heart trick before playing both top trumps. This way we can take a ruff in the dummy (the short trump hand, you should note). Playing off the ♠A is fine but then we must lose our inevitable Heart loser, either by playing off the ♥A and another or by ducking a Heart.

Ten tricks come from five Spade tricks in hand, one ruff on the table, the ♥A, the ♦A K and the ♣A.



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Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North	
	♠ KT62	
	♥ KQ32	
	♦ A76	
	♣ A7	
West		East
♠ Q84		♠ 7
♥ T854		♥ 97
♦ JT83		♦ Q95
♣ T6		♣ KQJ9543
	South	
	♠ AJ953	
	♥ AJ6	
	♦ K42	
	♣ 82	

The opponents' bidding will often give you assistance when you end up playing a contract your way.

On this deal East opens with a preempt. Bear that in mind when you play the hand.

West	North	East	South
-	-	3♣	3♣
P	6♣	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ T

We reach 6♣ after East opens 3♣ and we venture into the auction with an aggressive 3♣ overcall. When dummy is displayed it is clear that we have an unavoidable Club loser and that success hinges on not losing a trick in trumps.

You will play many, many deals where you have to guess the position of a Queen.

When we are missing four cards in the suit and there is no distributional information, we will normally play for the drop. This will give us a 52% chance of being right.

If we have the slightest information that one of the defenders is longer than his partner in some other suit (for example, he has opened with a preempt or made an overcall) we should play that hand for shortage in the trump suit and finesse the other defender for the missing Queen.

Every good player knows this. *By following this advice you will make hundreds of extra contracts over your bridge career!*



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Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

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

Lead: ♥ 3


West leads the ♥3 against 3NT.

If we look at the Heart suit in isolation, what could be more natural than to play low? By running the lead to our ♥Q we would ensure that we make two Heart tricks.

Yes, but on this occasion, East would win with the ♥K and play the ♠A, ♠K and the ♠J. When the ♠10 falls from West, the ♠9 would be the defenders' fifth trick.

"Well, that would be a bit unlucky", some players might say. So it would, but there is no need to take risks like that. The essence of **Planning** is **Counting**. Here, when dummy goes down, we can count nine tricks (to wit: one Heart, five Diamonds and three Clubs).

It's not worth very much to make an overtrick in 3NT (except in match-point pairs). Our first objective should be to ensure the contract.

	North	
	♠ Q3	
	♥ A75	
	♦ KJ876	
	♣ Q92	
West		East
♠ T74		♠ AKJ9
♥ J9832		♥ KT6
♦ T2		♦ 95
♣ T64		♣ J853
	South	
	♠ 8652	
	♥ Q4	
	♦ AQ43	
	♣ AK7	

Every bridge player makes mistakes, yes, but sometimes you can be left thinking: "Why on earth did I do that?"

Make sure you do not end up saying something similar on this deal!



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Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

West	North	East	South
1♣	X	P	2♣
P	3♣	P	4♣
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ Q

We arrive in 4♣ having made a jump response to partner's take-out Double.

This is a typical deal where we need to make a plan right at the start. The winning play is to lead twice towards dummy's ♥K Q 6 3, hoping to set up a discard for our Diamond loser.

It is essential to win the Diamond lead in our hand, so that we can make the first of these Heart leads towards dummy. If, instead, we win the first trick with dummy's ♦A, we would go down. We'd have to use the ♦K as an entry for the second Heart lead and this would leave us with no protection in Diamonds. (The ♠7 6 4 2 in our hand are such small pips that they do not give us a further entry).

On most deals where we hold nine solid trumps between we, we would draw trumps straight away. We cannot do that here because it would prevent us from leading Hearts twice towards the dummy.

North
♠ KQJT
♥ KQ63
♦ A54
♣ 73

West
♠ 3
♥ AJT4
♦ QJT
♣ A9852



East
♠ 985
♥ 982
♦ 9732
♣ KT6

South
♠ A7642
♥ 75
♦ K86
♣ QJ4

They key to good declarer play lies in making a **Plan**.

There are many players who play a few tricks, get into trouble and – halfway through the hand – pause to make a plan.


It is not a winning strategy!



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

Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North	
	♠ A73	
	♥ K83	
	♦ 632	
	♣ Q962	
West		East
♠ JT952		♠ K86
♥ 6		♥ T72
♦ AT98		♦ QJ5
♣ 875		♣ JT43
	South	
	♠ Q4	
	♥ AQJ954	
	♦ K74	
	♣ AK	

It's all very well taking a risk when there is no alternative.

When you can avoid taking a risk, you should grab the opportunity.

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

Lead: ♠ J

We reach 4♥ after a simple 1♥ – 2♥ – 4♥ sequence and West leads the ♠J against our contract. Should we play high or low from the dummy?

To answer this question we must make a **Plan** for the whole hand. We do this, in a suit contract, by counting the potential losers in the long-trump hand. Here we start with one in Spades, none in Hearts, three in Diamonds and none in Clubs. We have four possible losers and must reduce this to three. How can this be done?

Looking at the Spade suit alone, we have the chance of running the opening ♠J lead to our hand. This would save us a Spade loser if West has led from the ♠K J 10. In Diamonds we would lose only two tricks if East holds the ♦A. What plan should we make, looking at the whole deal?

We should plan to discard a Spade on the surplus Club winner in dummy. Playing a low Spade from dummy at trick one risks the contract! East may win with the ♠K and switch to a Diamond through the King, allowing the defenders to score three Diamond tricks.


Instead we should rise with the ♠A and play the Ace and Queen of trumps. When Hearts break 3-1, we hasten to cash the ♣A and ♣K. We then cross to the ♥K, and discard the ♠Q on dummy's ♣Q. Ten tricks are then guaranteed. We can lead towards the ♦K, seeking an overtrick, but on this occasion West holds the ♦A.



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Y2 VBlue #11 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North		
	♠ J3		
	♥ 753		
	♦ 875		
	♣ A9752		
West		East	
♠ T74		♠ 92	
♥ QJT8		♥ 962	
♦ T43		♦ K962	
♣ KT4		♣ QJ86	
	South		
	♠ AKQ865		
	♥ AK4		
	♦ AQJ		
	♣ 3		

What is the most important thing to learn about declarer play? That you should draw trumps straight away? That you should hold up an Ace in No-trumps? No.

The most important thing to remember is that you should always make a **Plan** at the start.

When you are playing in a suit contract, you begin by counting the potential losers in the long-trump hand. You must then look for the safest way to reduce them to the number that you can afford.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	2♣
P	2♦	P	2♠
P	3♣	P	3♠
P	5♠	P	6♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ Q

North bids aggressively and we reach a borderline slam. West leads the ♥Q and we can see a potential loser in both Hearts and Diamonds.

There is little prospect of avoiding a Heart loser, so we have to hope that we can finesse in Diamonds and find East with the ♦K.

We have two entries to dummy: the ♠J and the ♣A. We have to use these to take two Diamond finesses.

We win the Heart lead, play the Ace and Jack of trumps and finesse the ♦Q. Yes, it wins! We draw the last trump and return to dummy with the ♣A. A second Diamond finesse wins and the slam is made.

If we were to make the mistake of drawing three rounds of trumps at the start, we would go down. With only one entry left to dummy (the ♣A), we'd only be able to finesse once in Diamonds.