




[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ AJ98		
	♥ K963		
	♦ T		
	♣ AK84		
West		East	
♠ 3		♠ 7542	
♥ Q75		♥ AT2	
♦ 742		♦ KQJ95	
♣ T97653		♣ J	
	South		
	♠ KQT6		
	♥ J84		
	♦ A863		
	♣ Q2		

**This series of eight deals is our general series of hands, often a random mixture of hands. Here, though, there is something of a theme to them; all the deals are played in suit contracts.**

**We won't explain any further, we will just tell you that you will be declarer in all of these hands.**

Hand 1 is a real-life hand from a recent local event. It was played thirteen times and many declarers (how shall we put it?) failed to cover themselves with glory.

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♦	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ 4

This hand turned up in a duplicate event where many declarers failed to make 4♠. You reach this contract after East has interjected 1♦ into proceedings and West leads one.

A count of tricks shows there to be just eight on top (four Spades, one Diamond and three Clubs).

Declaring without due care and attention many South players carelessly drew two rounds of trumps with the ♠A J before realising they needed Diamond ruffs. A Club to the ♣Q was followed by a Diamond ruff and the ♠A.

Disaster! East ruffed and returned a trump, simultaneously removing any more ruffs while trapping declarer in his own hand. After that declarer was relieved to make a miserable eight tricks.

Butchery, sheer butchery.

Correct play is to take stock and make a plan before playing a card (ever heard of **Count-Plan-Execute**? Well – VuBridge users have but some of these declarers clearly had not).

Diamond ruffs are essential so declarer should do the necessary at trick two. Then it's a case of returning to hand (with a trump) and taking a second ruff. It is easy then to cash dummy's last trump, cross to the ♣Q and draw the remaining trumps. That's eight tricks and the ♠A K remain for ten.

Just five declarers (out of thirteen) made 4♠ on this deal. Five declarers failed and three declarers managed to play in a ridiculous 3NT.



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

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

Lead: ♣ 7

This is another hand where some experienced players took their eyes off the ball.

Everyone reached 4♠ by some means or another and West led a Club. The problem is to dispose of the losing Diamond, always assuming that the suit breaks 4-2.

Some declarers decided that they would set up dummy's Hearts and relied on a 3-2 break. Unlucky, maybe, but you really need Spades 3-2 so asking for another 3-2 break is pushing your luck a little.

Correct timing is to cash one high Spade (the ♠A for choice) and then develop the side suit by leading the ♦K. East has to take that with the Ace and plug away in Clubs.

South can ruff that, cash the other top trump (the ♠K) and then play off the Diamonds, ruffing the last on table. It is of no consequence whether any of the master Diamonds gets ruffed, nor does it matter if the fourth round of Diamonds gets over-ruffed. East has a boss trump – he can have the trick whenever he pleases.

Declarer can only ever lose one trump, one Heart and one Diamond – he makes the rest.

Many players went down by cashing two trumps before playing Diamonds. Now East could take his ♦A and cash the boss Spade. This removes the last trump from the table and gives declarer a last round Diamond loser.

North

♠ A52  
♥ 87532  
♦ KQ6  
♣ A2

West

♠ 73  
♥ JT94  
♦ T842  
♣ 973



East

♠ QJ8  
♥ Q  
♦ A9  
♣ KQJT854

South

♠ KT964  
♥ AK6  
♦ J753  
♣ 6

This is another real life deal where some declarers mistimed the hand and went down.


Can you do better?



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General 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		
	♠ A764		
	♥ AQJ6		
	♦ 92		
	♣ K63		
West		East	
♠ T8		♠ Q93	
♥ T753		♥ 42	
♦ KJ74		♦ T8653	
♣ QJT		♣ A98	
	South		
	♠ KJ52		
	♥ K98		
	♦ AQ		
	♣ 7542		

You play in a decent contract here but the first few tricks go badly for you.

What is the best chance to make the hand?

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

Lead: ♣ Q

On this deal you reach 4♠ as South having opened 1NT and received a Stayman enquiry.

West finds the irritating ♣Q lead and the defenders rapidly cash three tricks in that suit. What next? Well, the whole deal depends on picking up trumps successfully. If you can find the ♠Q then the contract will make. If not – it won't. It really is that simple.

East returns a Diamond at trick four and you are well-advised not to take the finesse (if you can pick up trumps you can later throw your second Diamond away). So it's all down to the Spades – what is the percentage play in that suit?

Well, you may have heard of **Eight Ever, Nine Never**, an old bridge aphorism that suggests that you should finesse for a missing Queen when you have eight cards and play for the drop when you have nine cards. How much weight you place on all of these adages (and there are plenty of them, believe us!) is up to you but certainly the percentage play in Spades is to cash the ♠A and to finesse the ♠J.

On this layout the percentage play is the successful play – you can pick up the Queen of Spades and can extract all of the opponents trumps without loss. After that the hand is easy.

West tried a desperate con-play on this deal – did you notice? On the ♠A he dropped the ♠10, hoping to look like a man who started with ♠Q 10 alone. You shouldn't trust your opponents when they start shenanigans like this. Trust in the odds – not in the opponents!



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)


This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 07/10/2015	Board #: 4
Dealer: West	Vulnerable: All
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1NT
P	2♣	P	2♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ Q

This deal has echoes of the previous deal (Hand 3) Again you reach 4♠ via a Stayman enquiry and again you have a trump suit of eight cards missing the ♠Q. Should you attempt to draw trumps on this deal in the same manner that you did on Hand 3?

North		East
♠ A764		♠ T2
♥ 873		♥ K64
♦ A752		♦ JT864
♣ A6		♣ QT4
West		South
♠ Q98		♠ KJ53
♥ QJT9		♥ A52
♦ Q9		♦ K3
♣ J982		♣ K753

Well, counting your tricks is not a bad idea (actually, it's essential!) and here it gives you an alternative play. On Hand 3 you needed to pick the trump suit up for four tricks – here you don't. You do, however, need to make five trump tricks to make your contract. (That's because you have five top tricks in the outside suits). Five Spade tricks might be achieved by making four trumps and one ruff in dummy but easier is to aim for three trumps and two ruffs on table.

The trump suit here is similar to that of Hand 3.

So the plan is to cash the ♠A K. As long as trumps are 3-2 (well within the odds) the contract is home and dry. As so often the right play is to ignore the defenders' boss trump and go about your business.

Is there any reason to play the suit differently?

So, the play in detail. West leads the ♥Q so you take the ♥A and cash the two top trumps. When everyone follows (and the ♠Q remains at large) you can ruff two Clubs on table (♣A, ♣K, ruff a Club, Diamond to hand, ruff a Club). Now you can cash the ♦A and claim one of the remaining trumps as your tenth trick.

Note what would happen if you were to play the ♠A and finesse the ♠J. West would take his ♠Q and would play another trump. Now you would be unable to ruff two Clubs in dummy. One off.



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 07/10/2015	Board #: 5
Dealer: North	Vulnerable: All
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	

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

Lead: ♣ A

On this deal you reach 4♠ after West has bid Clubs up to the three level. When dummy comes down you see that you have three unavoidable losers (the ♠A K and the ♦A) so you must avoid losing a Spade trick.


You can only act as a spectator for the first three tricks – West cashes the ♠A K (East pitching a Diamond) and then tries his luck with the ♦A and another Diamond. Finally on lead you have to decide what to do next.

Well, you have enough tricks if you can pick up the trumps. You cash the ♠A and play another Spade and note that East follows with a low Spade and then the ♠10. Do you finesse or play for the drop?

If you look at the Spade suit purely on its own the odds are very close but (as most textbooks will tell you) it is fractionally better to play the ♠K, playing for the ♠Q to drop. This is where **Eight Ever, Nine Never** comes from, suggesting that you should never finesse when you have nine cards missing the Queen.

Never? *Never say "Never"*. The odds can be swayed quite dramatically by your knowledge of the opponent's hands. Here, West is known to have seven Clubs (East showed out at trick two) and also has played two rounds of Diamonds. After following to the ♠A he has only three missing cards. East on the other hand, is known to have one Club, three Diamonds and two Spades. He has seven unidentified cards. The odds, therefore, are as high as 7-3 in favor of playing East for any missing card. That makes the finesse a 70% shot, rather than odds against.

On this layout, playing the ♠J is successful and 4♠ is easily wrapped up.

	North	
	♠ A92	
	♥ KQ42	
	♦ Q42	
	♣ T53	
West		East
♠ 8		♠ QT4
♥ 873		♥ JT96
♦ A7		♦ 98653
♣ AKJ8642		♣ 9
	South	
	♠ KJ7653	
	♥ A5	
	♦ KJT	
	♣ Q7	

What is the percentage play on this deal?


With some obvious top losers you cannot afford a trump loser.



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

	North		
	♠ K92		
	♥ KQ4		
	♦ QJT42		
	♣ T8		
West		East	
♠ Q84		♠ T	
♥ 98632		♥ JT7	
♦ A853		♦ 96	
♣ 9		♣ AKJ7642	
	South		
	♠ AJ7653		
	♥ A5		
	♦ K7		
	♣ Q53		

Another deal where you have to find the percentage play in the trump suit.

Does the early play give you any clues?

West	North	East	South
-	-	3♣	3♣
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ 9

Here (in a vague echo with Hand 5) East opens 3♣ and you play in 4♠. The defenders cash the ♣A K (West showing up with a singleton) and then play two rounds of Diamonds. Although you have tricks to burn in the red suits you have to pull the trumps in without loss to make your contract. How should you play?

Well, if West has ♠Q 10 × you have no chance. East is highly unlikely to have a holding of ♠Q 10 × (he is known to have seven Clubs and at least two Diamonds). So it looks as though you will have to play for trumps 2-2. However there is a small extra chance that may come to your rescue if you cash the ♠A first.

Here, East drops the ♠10, allowing the possibility of finessing the ♠9 in dummy. Well, is it right to play a Spade to the ♠9 or to play a Spade to the ♠K?

The arguments are identical to Hand 5 – East has only three unknown cards as against seven unknown cards in the West hand so taking the finesse is more than twice as good as playing East for ♠Q 10 alone. After the ♠9 has held it is a simple matter to extract the last trump and run off the remaining winners.



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 07/10/2015	Board #: 7
Dealer: South	Vulnerable: All
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	

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

Lead: ♦ K

You have a lovely hand here and finally reach 4♠ having tortured partner in the auction.

4♠ is no thing of beauty but what game is better? It is often right (when holding two equal length suits) to play in the weaker one. Here 4♠ is better than 4♥.

West kicks off with the ♦K lead. Holding such commanding trumps he is not interested in leading his singleton Club and getting Club ruffs. This defence is a powerful one as it forces you to trump a Diamond at trick two and shortens your trumps, making your holding vulnerable. What now?

Well, the technique on this deal is a useful (and common) one. You should cash the ♠A K (leaving two boss trumps out) and play on the solid side-suit. By running off the Hearts you are allowing East-West to take their master trumps by ruffing – as they do so your baby trumps are promoted to winning rank.

West ruffs the fifth Heart and plays yet another Diamond but you can ruff and play the ♣A K. Again West ruffs but your ♠5 scores the decisive tenth trick.

North

♠ T9  
♥ J4  
♦ J64  
♣ KJ6542

West

♠ QJ82  
♥ T873  
♦ KQT3  
♣ 9



East

♠ 76  
♥ 96  
♦ A9852  
♣ QT87

South

♠ AK543  
♥ AKQ52  
♦ 7  
♣ A3

Here you pick up a lovely hand. Having bid to a decent contract you have to be careful with the play.

Any ideas?



[www.vubridge.com](http://www.vubridge.com)

This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. Although a mixed set of hands there is a theme running through these deals - that of how to play trump contracts. ACOL version

VB#12 Y2 Eight General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

West	North	East	South
P	1♥	P	1♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ 9

You are propelled rapidly into 4♠ on this deal and West leads a trump.

You can count eight tricks (four Spades and two Ace-King combinations) so need two extra tricks from somewhere. These can only come from ruffs so you win the Spade lead in hand and immediately play a Club, creating a void on table.

Annoyingly, West leads another trump and you have to play carefully. You should be planning a **crossruff** at this point and you need to keep high trumps in hand. The ♠5 is perfectly high enough for one Club ruff so that can stay in dummy. So you take dummy's ♠10 and cash the red winners.

Now taking the ♦A K and the ♥A K is essential play. Why? Well, suppose you were to lay off the ♥A K and ruff a Heart prematurely. Now West would chuck away a Diamond and you'd never be able to make the ♦A K.

Having taken the precaution of **cashing outside winners before embarking on a crossruff** you are home and dry. You simply ruff two Hearts in hand and two Clubs in dummy, happily conceding the last two tricks.

You make, in all, six trump tricks, two Hearts and two Diamonds.

North

♠ KT53  
♥ AK94  
♦ AK83  
♣ Q

West

♠ 9876  
♥ Q6  
♦ 97  
♣ AJT73



East

♠ 2  
♥ JT872  
♦ QJT6  
♣ K52

South

♠ AQJ4  
♥ 53  
♦ 542  
♣ 9864

You have a poor hand here but that doesn't stop partner propelling you into a game.

How easy is it to bring in the requisite number of tricks?