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Clone of 826; A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version.

Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ 86		
	♥ JT6		
	♦ AJ83		
	♣ KQ75		
West		East	
♠ KJ943		♠ Q752	
♥ 943		♥ A52	
♦ K9		♦ T54	
♣ T32		♣ 864	
	South		
	♠ AT		
	♥ KQ87		
	♦ Q762		
	♣ AJ9		

This set of six deals is by the famous British author David Bird. There is no theme to these deals, just enjoy them as they come.

Hand 1. To plan a No-trump contract, you must start by counting your top tricks. You must then look for the line of play that will give you the best chance of creating the extra tricks you need.

This plan may consist of two parts:

1. Which suit to play;
2. How that suit should be played.

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

Lead: ♠ 4

West leads the ♠4 against our contract of 3NT, East playing the ♠Q.

We win the second round of Spades and see that we are certain to go down if we play a Heart; we'd lose one Heart and at least four Spades.

Our only chance lies in Diamonds. How will the cards have to lie to allow us to score four Diamond tricks? West must hold a doubleton ♦K. A low lead to the ♦J would then produce the four Diamond tricks that we need.

How can we tell if a suit is strong enough to allow we to lead a high card for a finesse? We must ask ourselves if we will be pleased to see our high-card lead covered. Here we would not be pleased. The defenders would be certain to win the third round in that case.


Suppose we held the ♦10 in one hand or another. We would then hold enough neighboring honors to allow us to lead the ♦Q on the first round. If that were covered by the ♦K and ♦A, there would be good chance that our remaining honors could pick up the rest of the suit.



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Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North	
	♠ 84	
	♥ A53	
	♦ KQ86	
	♣ AJ54	
West		East
♠ QT52		♠ 9763
♥ T64		♥ KJ92
♦ T93		♦ 754
♣ 862		♣ T7
	South	
	♠ AKJ	
	♥ Q87	
	♦ AJ2	
	♣ KQ93	

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

See if you can spot the two chances on this deal and how they can be combined.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	2NT
P	6NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ T

Adding his 14 points to the 20 to 21 shown by our 2NT opening bid, North quite rightly reckons that he has enough to raise us to 6NT. When we have 34 points or more, it is usually right to play in No-trumps rather than a suit fit. We avoid the risk of a bad trump break or an adverse ruff.

West makes the safe lead of the ♦10. (We can see how unwise it would be to lead a Spade, the 'fourth-best from longest and strongest', immediately giving us the twelfth trick). We win and count eleven top tricks. We have a chance of a twelfth trick in both Spades and Hearts.


Suppose we take the Spade finesse first and it loses. That's no good! With one trick already lost, we would not be able to lead towards the ♥Q. East would simply rise with the ♥K and we'd be one down.

Instead, we should lead towards the ♥Q first. This move is successful and we can claim the contract – whether East goes in with the ♥K or not. If West had won this trick with the ♥K, we would still be able to take our second chance – a finesse of the ♠J.



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Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North	
	♠ AJ8	
	♥ A5	
	♦ T763	
	♣ AKJT	
West		East
♠ T52		♠ 9763
♥ JT962		♥ Q743
♦ Q95		♦ K8
♣ 96		♣ 875
	South	
	♠ KQ4	
	♥ K8	
	♦ AJ42	
	♣ Q432	

Sometimes you arrive in a contract that you would rather not have been in.

Never mind. Perhaps you can make it!

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	6NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ J

We open 1NT and partner raises exuberantly to 6NT. West leads the ♥J against our slam.

We have just ten top tricks and must create two extra trick from the Diamonds.

The best play in the suit is low to the ♦J. This will give us the slam when (a) East holds both the missing Diamond honors, or (b) when East started with a doubleton ♦K or ♦Q. His honor will fall under our Ace on the second round and dummy's ♦10 will be good. The second chance pays off here and we make the slam.


Suppose dummy's Diamonds were only ♦8 7 6 3. The situation would be grim but not hopeless. We would again lead towards the ♦J, hoping that East held ♦K Q ×.



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Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ 542	
	♥ 532	
	♦ A9764	
	♣ 54	
West		East
♠ JT986		♠ 73
♥ Q64		♥ K987
♦ QT		♦ KJ8
♣ 862		♣ QJT7
	South	
	♠ AKQ	
	♥ AJT	
	♦ 532	
	♣ AK93	

An important element in planning the play of a hand is to ensure that you will have the entries needed.

Don't start playing this contract (or any contract!) until you have made a plan.

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ J

With a balanced 21 points we open 2NT, despite the weakness in Diamonds. Partner scrapes up a raise to game and West leads the ♠J.

We start with seven top tricks and must score two extra tricks from somewhere. If Diamonds break 3-2, we can make three Diamond tricks. However, we need to preserve the ♦A entry until the third round of the suit. We must duck the first two rounds of Diamonds.

(If East wins the first ducked Diamond and shifts to a Heart, we must put in the ♥J or ♥10. West would not then be able to continue the suit without giving us two Heart tricks).



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Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S


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

Lead: ♥ 9

East opens 1♥ giving us a small problem as South. A bid in Spades might mislead North so we Double first and then bid Spades. Any suit bid following a take-out Double shows strength and this describes our hand well. If North had nothing (and his 2♣ response promises nothing more) he could Pass. As it is, realizing we have shown something good, North raises to game. West dutifully leads his partner's suit – the ♥9.

East wins with the ♥A and returns the ♥J to our ♥K. If we play a trump next, it is evident that East would give his partner a Heart ruff, putting us one down. To prevent this, we must play three top Clubs and discard our ♥Q. We can then play a trump. If East rises with the ♠A and plays another Heart, we'd ruff with a high trump to prevent an over-ruff. We can then draw trumps and knock out the ♦A to make the contract.

Perhaps you know a player or two who would say: "That's too difficult for me, throwing away a winner!" Of course, it's not! As declarer, you know that you are almost certain to go down if you play a trump. In that case it is essential to look for some better way to play the contract.

	North		
	♠ 863		
	♥ 543		
	♦ Q73		
	♣ KQ76		
West		East	
♠ 72		♠ A9	
♥ 92		♥ AJT86	
♦ T9654		♦ AJ8	
♣ JT94		♣ 852	
	South		
	♠ KQJT54		
	♥ KQ7		
	♦ K2		
	♣ A3		

Sometimes you have to look into the future, as declarer.


By foreseeing what the defenders might do to beat your contract, you at least have a chance of working out a counter.



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Y2 VBlue #15 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North	
	♠ 86	
	♥ 876	
	♦ J7432	
	♣ AQ5	
West		East
♠ A92		♠ 73
♥ JT5		♥ AK92
♦ T96		♦ KQ85
♣ T983		♣ J62
	South	
	♠ KQJT54	
	♥ Q43	
	♦ A	
	♣ K74	

On this last deal of the set, you and your partner overbid a little.

Is that a social gaffe? Not at all. There are plenty of players who enjoy overbidding, particularly when they manage to make the contract.

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

Lead: ♣ T

West leads the ♠10 against our very thin Spade game. We win in our hand and play the ♠K to West's ♠A. He returns a second round of Clubs, won in the dummy.

The only real chance of avoiding three Heart losers is to lead twice towards the ♥Q, hoping that East holds the ♥A and ♥K. Not a good chance but the only chance.

We cannot draw the remaining trumps at this stage because we are in dummy for the penultimate time and need to play a Heart. When we lead a Heart, East rises with the ♥K and shifts to the ♦K. We win with the ♦A, draw the remaining trumps and cross to dummy's remaining Club entry to lead another Heart. East wins with the ♥A and tries to cash the ♦Q.

Not today, my friend! We ruff and claim the contract.