




This is a clone of series 1982 modified (by altering the hand order) for VB#23. ACOL version.

VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 6H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J4	
	♥ 765	
	♦ A9532	
	♣ A63	
West		East
♠ QT8753		♠ 962
♥ 942		♥ T3
♦ 7		♦ QJT8
♣ J75		♣ QT92
	South	
	♠ AK	
	♥ AKQJ8	
	♦ K64	
	♣ K84	

This set of six deals has been written by our British guest David Bird. There is no theme to these deals, just enjoy them as they come.

Hand 1: After this deal was played, it was noticed that a particular opening lead would have defeated the contract.

Don't worry. West will not find the killing lead when you play the hand. Try to take advantage of it!

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	2♣
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	3♥	P	4♥
P	6♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ 7

Sitting South, you open 2♣ and North decides to make a negative response, despite holding two Aces. This approach works well as it enables you to show your Hearts at the two-level and then show a minimum 2♣ opening bid. North then realises that his two aces entitle him to bid a small slam. West makes the natural lead of his singleton Diamond. You win with the ♦K, saving the ♦A entry to the weaker hand.

You draw trumps in three rounds and must now set up the Diamond suit to provide a discard for the possible Club loser. You lead a second round of Diamonds and duck in the dummy (saving the ♦A as an entry on the third round of Diamonds). East wins and switches to a Club. You must win in your hand with the ♣K. You cross to the ♦A and ruff a Diamond in your hand. The ♦9 is now good. You cross to the ♣A and play the ♦9, throwing your Club loser. The slam is made.

The main lesson of the deal is that it is often a good idea to duck an early round of a suit that you are planning to establish. In this way, you preserve dummy's honour as an entry on a subsequent round of the suit.

(Can you see which opening lead would have beaten the slam? There was no way that West could find it, but a Club lead would have been successful. It would knock out the ♣K and allow East to play another Club to remove the ♣A when a Diamond was ducked. You could not then reach the thirteenth Diamond for a discard.)



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VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

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

Lead: ♣ A

West cashes three Club winners against your contract of 4♥. He switches to a Diamond, won with the ♦A and you must now score the remaining tricks. You can eventually discard your Diamond loser on the fourth round of Spades, so you just need to pick up the trump suit without losing a trick.

All will be easy if trumps break 3-2. If they break 4-1 instead, you can make the contract only when West holds a singleton ♥J or ♥10. To discover if this is the case, you should play the ♥K on the first round. When the ♥10 drops from West, you cross to the ♥A, confirming that West's ♥10 was a singleton. You then finesse the ♥9, draw the last trump and run four rounds of Spades, discarding your Diamond loser.

Suppose you made the mistake of cashing the ♥A on the first round, the ♥10 dropping from West. You would have to guess whether to finesse. If you finessed the ♥9, you would go down when West had started with ♥J 10 or ♥J 10 x. If you guessed to cross to the ♥K next, you would have no convenient entry to dummy to take the necessary finesse of the ♥9. (If you led the ♠3 to the ♠J to finesse in Hearts, you would block the Spade suit).

North

♠ QJ96

♥ A52

♦ A95

♣ T63

West

♠ 854

♥ T

♦ 7632

♣ AKQ75

East

♠ T72

♥ J874

♦ KQT8

♣ 92

South

♠ AK3

♥ KQ963

♦ J4

♣ J84


Bridge players hate having to make a guess. See if you can spare yourself such aggravation on this deal.



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VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 6S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♣
P	2♦	P	2♠
P	3♥	P	3♠
P	4♦	P	4NT
P	5♦	P	6♠
P	P	P	

North		East	
♠ T2		♠ 985	
♥ T8532		♥ Q4	
♦ A832		♦ T974	
♣ 95		♣ K843	
West		East	
♠ 4		♠ 985	
♥ KJ76		♥ Q4	
♦ J65		♦ T974	
♣ QJT76		♣ K843	
South			
♠ AKQJ763			
♥ A9			
♦ KQ			
♣ A2			

Lead: ♣ Q

West leads the ♣Q against your contract of 6♠. You have a potential loser in both Hearts and Clubs. One of these losers can be discarded on the ♦A.

You win the Club lead with the ♣A and draw one round of trumps with the ♠A. You are planning to cross to dummy with the precious ♠10. Before you do this, you must unblock the two Diamond honours in your hand.

You play the ♦K and ♦Q. Then you cross to the ♠10 and play the ♦A, choosing to throw your Club loser. Finally you return to your hand with a Club ruff to draw East's last trump. You can then claim the contract. Excellent!


Most play hands should be in fairly high contracts, as I see it.

Who wants to exert themselves in a 2♦ contract? Not me, anyway.



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VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ QJ4	
	♥ Q762	
	♦ AKQ5	
	♣ J6	
West		East
♠ T853		♠ 962
♥ AJ		♥ T93
♦ T7		♦ J862
♣ AKT75		♣ Q92
	South	
	♠ AK7	
	♥ K854	
	♦ 943	
	♣ 843	

Sometimes when you are planning the play, you realise that the cards will have to lie in a certain way for the contract to be made.

You must then play the hand on the assumption that the cards do indeed lie that way.

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

Lead: ♣ A

West opens 1♣ and leads the ♣A against your eventual contract of 4♥. He continues with two more rounds of Clubs and you ruff the third round low in the dummy, the ♣Q appearing from East.


You can afford to lose only one trump trick. This will be possible if a defender holds a doubleton Ace of trumps. This will surely be West because he opened the bidding and there are only 15 points missing. Also, East has already shown up with the ♣Q,

You cross to your hand (with a Spade) so that you can make the first trump lead through West's ♥A. Dummy's ♥Q wins and you duck the next round of trumps (playing low from the South hand). West ruefully produces the ♥A and the remaining tricks are yours.



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VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

North		East	
♠ A63		♠ KT97	
♥ 952		♥ 7643	
♦ 865		♦ 32	
♣ A963		♣ T75	
West		East	
♠ 8		♠ KT97	
♥ JT8		♥ 7643	
♦ QJT974		♦ 32	
♣ KQJ		♣ T75	
South			
♠ QJ542			
♥ AKQ			
♦ AK			
♣ 842			

If you can give yourself the maximum chance on most of the deals that you play, you will end up as a winner. On many hands the second-best play will work, because a suit breaks favourably.

Sometimes, as on this deal, you need to play the contract accurately to succeed against a less friendly lie of the cards.

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

Lead: ♣ K

You bid to 4♠ after West has made a cheeky non-vulnerable overcall of 2♦ and West leads the ♣K. You win with the ♣A and must look for the best play in the trump suit, hoping to restrict your losses there to just one trick.

You should lead **towards** the ♠Q J, hoping that East holds the ♠K. What is more, you must not cash the ♠A first. If East happens to hold four trumps including the ♠K, you will need to lead trumps a second time towards your hand.

You lead to the ♠Q and this wins the trick. You return to the ♠A, West showing out, and are then in dummy to lead towards the ♠J. You escape for one trump loser and make the contract.

Both the inferior plays (cashing the ♠A on the first round, or crossing to South hand to lead the ♠Q) will result in defeat when the cards lie as in the actual layout. When trumps break 3-2 any play will succeed. (If West held four trumps including the King, no play would succeed).



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VB#23 Year 2 David Bird hands ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

North		East	
♠ A63		♠ 42	
♥ A87		♥ KQJ52	
♦ K654		♦ AQ	
♣ KQ6		♣ 9853	
West		South	
♠ T85		♠ KQJ97	
♥ T94		♥ 63	
♦ JT72		♦ 983	
♣ T72		♣ AJ4	

Some declarers seem to be able to see into the defenders' hands, as if by magic.

Take the declarer's cards on this last deal and see if you can wave your magic wand appropriately.

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

Lead: ♥ T

East opens 1♥, you overcall 1♠ and partner raises you to game. As the cards lie 3NT would have been an easier contract but partner cannot be blamed for supporting your suit.

West leads the ♥10 against your 4♠ contract. You win with dummy's ♥A and draw trumps in three rounds. You need to avoid the loss of three Diamond tricks and East's opening bid surely marks him with the ♦A. Leading towards the ♦K is doomed to failure. What else can you try?

Maybe East holds only two Diamonds? In that case his ♦A will fall on the second round and dummy's ♦K will be good. It may not seem particularly likely, but some chance is better than none.

You duck the first round of Diamonds. When East wins with the ♦Q and plays two top Hearts, you ruff the third round. You duck another Diamond and East's ♦A appears. Hurray! The contract is yours.