




6 deals for V-Blue #9. ACOL version

VB#9 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	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
-	1NT	P	3♥
P	4♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ T

This is a typical suit contract. In 4♥ you start with five potential losers (assuming that the trumps do not break 4-0). You can see that you can ruff a Spade in dummy. One possible method of avoiding one of the Diamond losers is to finesse the ♦Q at Trick 1. 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. You can draw two rounds of trumps with the ♥A and ♥Q and lead the ♣K. When this is allowed to win, you can play a Club to the ♣Q and ♣A.

By good fortune it is East who wins the Club trick. You capture his Spade return, cross to dummy with the ♥K and discard a Diamond on the ♣J. Then you can 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. You need to plan the play to see if you have to take the finesse immediately.



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Date: 07/10/2015

Dealer: South

[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 6H

By: South

Board #: 2

Vulnerable: N / S

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

Lead: ♦ J

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

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

The plan must be to finesse the ♠Q (hoping that East holds the ♠K). If you survive this step, you can 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 you mistakenly ruff high on the third round of Clubs, East would be able to overruff on the fourth round.

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

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 harbour.

Good luck!



6 deals for V-Blue #9. ACOL version

VB#9 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL

Date: 07/10/2015

Dealer: South


[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 3N

By: South

Board #: 3

Vulnerable: All

		North		
		♠ 87		
		♥ Q32		
		♦ AK7543		
		♣ 43		
West				East
♠ KQJT5				♠ 9642
♥ K96				♥ T85
♦ J6				♦ Q9
♣ J52				♣ KQ96
		South		
		♠ A3		
		♥ AJ74		
		♦ T82		
		♣ AT87		

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

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

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

To achieve this, you 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 you were to lead the ♦2 on the first round of the suit you cannot make the contract! Try it out and see.



6 deals for V-Blue #9. ACOL version

VB#9 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

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

On this deal you arrive in the second-best contract. (Yes, I know that you would have bid 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
-	-	-	1♣
P	1♦	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ Q

You arrive in 3NT having opened the bidding with 1♣ and made a warped rebid of 1NT. West leads his longest suit - a Spade - and you 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 you shouldn't play bridge just by rules. You 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 you cannot afford to play on Clubs, seeking the extra tricks that you needed. That's because you have only one Spade stopper remaining after the opening lead and you need to knock out two Club stoppers. The defence would have the *tempo* to set up three Spades and two Clubs.

The second point is that you have a chance of scoring an extra Diamond trick by leading **towards** the honour that you 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 your right) has the ♦Q he can do nothing to thwart you. If he takes the ♦Q and returns a Spade you can win, unblock the ♦J, cross to the other top Heart and take the ♦A K. Finally, you can take the last two Heart tricks.

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




6 deals for V-Blue #9. ACOL version

VB#9 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

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

Lead: ♠ 7

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

North			
♠ T542			
♥ KQT			
♦ T8			
♣ JT93			
West		East	
♠ KJ973		♠ Q6	
♥ 9872		♥ J43	
♦ J6		♦ Q9754	
♣ A5		♣ 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.

You can see three of these cards in your 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 honour if he held the ♠K Q J. You play low from dummy and East plays the ♠Q. Will you win this trick or not?

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

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

The Rule of 11 is not as useful as some teachers claim, but it does have its day!



6 deals for V-Blue #9. ACOL version

VB#9 David Bird's 6 deals ACOL

Date: 07/10/2015

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

You reach 3NT and West leads the ♥6. How should you play the contract?

North ♠ AKQ7 ♥ K42 ♦ QJ53 ♣ K4		East ♠ JT852 ♥ J83 ♦ K96 ♣ 96	
West ♠ 94 ♥ Q9765 ♦ A8 ♣ A853			
South ♠ 63 ♥ AT ♦ T742 ♣ 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, you must win the opening lead with dummy's ♥K. You 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 you to make a plan before playing the first card from dummy. Sometimes this excellent advice pays dividends...!