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A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version. Updated spring 2016.

Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	P	1♥
P	3♥	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠ T

It is nearly always better to combine two chances of making the contract rather than relying on just one.

Here the contract is 4♥ against the opening lead of the ♠10.

The defenders score two Spade tricks and East shifts to a trump. We need to avoid losing more than just to the ♦A. Take the Club finesse maybe? Well, we may be able to park our Club loser on the ♦K.

After drawing trumps, we lead a Diamond towards dummy's ♦K, hoping West has the ♦A. By playing Diamonds before Clubs, we are able to combine our chances in the minor suits.

As the cards lie, West could take his ♦A but the losing Club would get thrown on the winning ♦K. As it happens, West declines to play his Ace, so we don't lose a Diamond.

Heads we win, tails they lose.

North

♠ QJ
♥ KJ74
♦ K9654
♣ AQ

West
♠ T984
♥ 8
♦ AJT2
♣ 9765



East
♠ AK7
♥ 65
♦ Q83
♣ K8432

South

♠ 6532
♥ AQT932
♦ 7
♣ JT

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

Hand 1: The moment you see a possible way to make a contract, it can be tempting to rush off in that direction without looking for second chance, or a better chance.

Make sure you do not make such a mistake on this deal!



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Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

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

Lead: ♥ 2

West leads the ♥2 against our 4♠ contract.

We have at most two Club losers and one Heart loser. That is a total of only three losers, which we can afford. We should therefore rise with the ♥A and draw trumps.

Just look what will happen if we were to play a low Heart from dummy, hoping to win a cheap trick with the ♥Q. East would win with the ♥K and switch to his doubleton Club. West would score two Club tricks and give East a Club ruff. Ouch! The defenders would have scored the first four tricks.

"What happens if you win the first trick and draw trumps, partner?" we may then hear from across the table.

There is only one answer to this... we would have made the contract!

North
♠ Q9743
♥ A7
♦ K93
♣ T64

West
♠ T5
♥ J982
♦ J5
♣ AQ853



East
♠ 86
♥ KT54
♦ T8762
♣ 72

South
♠ AKJ2
♥ Q63
♦ AQ4
♣ KJ9

It is always disappointing when your contract goes down.

The disappointment is heightened when you could have made the contract and realize that indeed you should have done!



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Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

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


Lead: ♣ J

We are in 6NT against the ♣J lead.

Naturally, we must **Count** our top tricks. Here there are eleven (four Spades, three Hearts, one Diamond and three Clubs). Extra tricks can only come from Diamonds, and the point of this deal is to play that suit to best advantage.

By taking the percentage play of finessing the ♦9, we will succeed twice as often as we would by finessing the ♦J.

Sometimes the wrong play would have worked and that can be annoying. Still, we will do well in the long run by always taking the play that is more likely to succeed.

	North	
	♠ KT6	
	♥ K32	
	♦ AJ95	
	♣ Q72	
West		East
♠ 843		♠ 972
♥ T85		♥ J974
♦ QT3		♦ K86
♣ JT96		♣ 543
	South	
	♠ AQJ5	
	♥ AQ6	
	♦ 742	
	♣ AK8	

Sometimes contracts depend on a complete guess.


Yes, but one guess may be a better chance than another!



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Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ 943	
	♥ AKQ72	
	♦ 97	
	♣ 964	
West		East
♠ Q85		♠ JT62
♥ 96		♥ JT54
♦ Q852		♦ KT6
♣ KT83		♣ J7
	South	
	♠ AK7	
	♥ 83	
	♦ AJ43	
	♣ AQ52	

One of the purposes of making a plan - for both No-trump and suit contracts - is to determine how many tricks you need from a particular suit.

If you need four Diamond tricks, for example, you may have to play that suit in a particular way. If instead you need only three Diamond tricks, a *safety play* may give you a better chance of making the contract (always the prime target).

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1♦
P	1♥	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ 3

Against our contract of 3NT West leads a low Club (which is the worst lead for the defense, the way the cards lie).

Since we have two Club tricks, we have a total of eight *top tricks* and need only one extra trick from the Heart suit. We can afford to make the *safety play* of ducking the first round of Hearts.

This would cost us an overtrick if Hearts happened to break 3-3, which is against the odds. Much more important than that is the fact that by ducking the first round of Hearts we can make the contract when Hearts break 4-2.

This proves to be the case and our safety play in Hearts therefore gives us the contract.



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Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S


West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♣
P	2♣	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠ 6

West leads the ♠6 against our contract of 3NT.

We duck the first round and win the second round of Spades and see that we will need five Club tricks to bring the total to nine. We can pick up a 3-0 Club break only when East holds the three missing cards. It is therefore right to play to the ♣A on the first round, rather than cashing the ♣K.

One other matter needs to be addressed. The ♣A is our only entry to dummy. To score three Heart tricks, we must play the ♥A and ♥K from our hand (unblocking the suit) before crossing to the ♣A. We can then score the ♥Q and proceed with a Club finesse after West shows out on the first round.

	North	
	♠ 972	
	♥ Q74	
	♦ 93	
	♣ A6542	
West		East
♠ KT863		♠ QJ4
♥ J982		♥ T653
♦ T754		♦ AQ8
♣		♣ QT3
	South	
	♠ A5	
	♥ AK	
	♦ KJ62	
	♣ KJ987	


Sometimes a contract looks so straightforward that it is easy to play carelessly. Easy... yes, but expensive.



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Y2 VBlue #13 David's Deals SA	Contract: 6H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ A72	
	♥ KJ6	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ A973	
West		East
♠ T83		♠ QJ954
♥ 873		♥ 5
♦ QJT7		♦ 985
♣ JT5		♣ K842
	South	
	♠ K6	
	♥ AQT942	
	♦ 632	
	♣ Q6	

It is always exciting to play a slam.

Of course, it's even more exciting to make a slam!

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♥
P	2♣	P	2♥
P	6♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ Q

North bashes his way into a small slam in Hearts and West leads the ♦Q.

We start by counting eleven winners together with a Diamond and a Club loser. After drawing trumps, we should lead a low card towards the ♣Q. If East holds the ♣K there is nothing he can do. If he plays it on the first round of Clubs, we'd have two Club winners and could discard our Diamond loser on the ♣A.

East does better to play a low Club, really, just in case we have ♣Q 10 and would have to guess which card to play.

When East does go in with the ♣K, we win the Diamond return and cross to the ♣Q. We then return to dummy with the ♠A to discard a Diamond on the ♣A.

Twelve tricks come from two Spades, six Hearts, two Diamonds and two Clubs.