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A series of six declarer-play deals, intended for V-Blue Year 2. SA version. Series 2973 is ACOL. Updated autumn 2015.

VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 9652	
	♥ 85	
	♦ AK7642	
	♣ 5	
West		East
♠ Q7		♠ JT83
♥ QJT73		♥ 962
♦ J9		♦ QT3
♣ KT87		♣ A94
	South	
	♠ AK4	
	♥ AK4	
	♦ 85	
	♣ QJ632	

This series of six deals is bought to you by our guest author, David Bird from Britain.

One of the most important parts about making a plan for a contract is to look carefully at your entry situation.

Will you be able to cross to the dummy when you need to?

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

Lead: ♥ Q

The contract of 3NT is a reasonable one, even though North's eventual raise to 3NT isn't exactly classic with a 6·4·2·1 pattern.

When we have to concede a trick to the defenders, to establish a long suit, it often makes good sense to let them win the **first** round. By doing so, we retain dummy's honors to allow us to cross to the table and score the remainder of the suit.

Here, the **only** successful line is to duck the first round of Diamonds.



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VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

North

♠ J652
♥ 853
♦ QJ7
♣ A53

West

♠ 7
♥ QT72
♦ A964
♣ QJT8



East

♠ T83
♥ J96
♦ K832
♣ 764

South

♠ AKQ94
♥ AK4
♦ T5
♣ K92

There are three main way to avoid an excess loser. You can take a finesse. You can ruff a loser in the dummy. Finally you can dump a loser.

When you make a plan for this deal, you must decide which of the three methods is appropriate.

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

Lead: ♣ Q

The bidding is routine to reach game. We open 1♠, partner raises to 2♠ and we have enough to bid 4♠.

West leads the ♣Q and we can see four possible losers, one Heart, two Diamonds and a Club. The only way of ridding ourselves of a loser is to **dump** it on a Diamond winner.

It is easy to take a discard when we have something like ♦A K Q in dummy opposite ♦6 4 in our hand. More often we have to establish a discard. What does this mean? It means that we play a suit to knock out the high card(s) that the defenders hold there.


Here we must knock out the ♦A and ♦K, so that we could discard a Heart on the third round of Diamonds.

The other point is that we must maintain entries on table, so taking the ♠J early would be poor play.



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VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North	
	♠ J3	
	♥ K54	
	♦ QT86	
	♣ AQT3	
West		East
♠ KT852		♠ Q974
♥ T7		♥ 9632
♦ 54		♦ A93
♣ K842		♣ 76
	South	
	♠ A6	
	♥ AQJ8	
	♦ KJ72	
	♣ J95	

Here you reach a fair contract, only to find that the opponents hit you in your weak spot.

To succeed you must choose which suit to play on, in the search for the extra tricks that you need.

Will your choice make any difference? Yes it will!

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

Lead: ♠ 5

With two balanced hands and 28 points between us it is all but impossible to avoid 3NT. However, the mutual Spade weakness makes this a dodgy spot.

West duly finds the Spade lead and we can count only six on top. Diamonds would provide three extras but the defenders would be there first, sure to take four Spades and the ♦A.

As ever, it is essential to make a plan. The moment we sit and think what will happen if we were to play Diamonds, it is clear that this cannot be the right thing to do. So we play on Clubs instead and give ourselves a solid 50% chance of the Club finesse.

True, if East has the ♣K we'd go two down instead of one down, but that is not important. Giving ourselves the best chance of making the contract is what counts.



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VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

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

Lead: ♥ K

We reach 4♠ after a strongly encouraging 3♠ jump from us, and a brave (but eminently correct) raise from partner.

West has an easy lead of the ♥K.

When dummy displays itself in all its glory we have to make a plan. We need to lead twice towards the ♣Q J 5, to give ourselves a chance of losing only two Club tricks, (and of developing a slow winner). This requires two entries to the table. The only available entries are the ♠Q and the ♦A. It is not, therefore, possible to draw three rounds of trumps before making the first Club play as that would remove the ♠Q.

So we have to ruff the second Heart, play two rounds of trumps, ending on table, and try a Club, won by West's King. When West plays another Heart we are home and dry. We ruff that, draw the last trump, cross to the ♦A and play another Club.

Whether East takes his ♣A (on air) or ducks is irrelevant. We have a Club trick and the contract.

Sure, had Clubs been 4-2 the enemy could have taken a Club ruff. Well, if that were the case, so be it. This way we give ourselves the best, and very nearly the only, chance.

North

♠ Q6
♥ 9732
♦ A53
♣ 7432

West

♠ 975
♥ KQJ8
♦ T82
♣ KT8



East

♠ 42
♥ AT54
♦ J974
♣ A96

South

♠ AKJT83
♥ 6
♦ KQ6
♣ QJ5


This is yet another deal where you have to make a plan, on the sight of dummy, to give yourself a chance.



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VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North	
	♠ JT652	
	♥ 9732	
	♦ Q5	
	♣ AQ	
West		East
♠ K7		♠ 4
♥ AJ86		♥ KT5
♦ T82		♦ J9743
♣ JT96		♣ K874
	South	
	♠ AQ983	
	♥ Q4	
	♦ AK6	
	♣ 532	

Sometimes you will get away with being lazy and failing to make a plan at the start of the deal.

Sometimes, particularly when playing VuBridge deals, you will not!

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

Lead: ♣ J

We open 1♠ after two Passes and partner raises to 3♠. Yes, he only has 9 points but five-card trump support is always welcome and always an asset.

With 15 good points we press on to game, and West leads the ♣J.

This deal is a good illustration of what can happen if we play on autopilot, without bothering to stop, count and make a plan.

Dummy has an Ace-Queen combination. We have seen plenty of those before and know that we should play the Queen. Woahh! If we play the Queen on this deal we will go down, losing a Club, two Hearts and a trump.

If we spend a moment looking at the 26 cards at our disposal we should not go wrong. We can see that we can discard a Club from dummy on the surplus Diamond winner in the closed hand.


The most we could lose would be a trump (if the ♠K were offside), and two Hearts.



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VB#3 Y2 David's deals.	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North		
	♠ 65		
	♥ 743		
	♦ A9862		
	♣ J52		
West		East	
♠ QJT82		♠ 973	
♥ JT8		♥ Q95	
♦ T4		♦ QJ3	
♣ Q94		♣ KT83	
	South		
	♠ AK4		
	♥ AK62		
	♦ K75		
	♣ A76		

An important part of the plan for most contracts is to make the best use of your available entries.

Test yourself in this 3NT contract.

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

Lead: ♠ Q

The bidding is easy enough, we open 2NT in second seat and partner raises that to game.

Dummy is par for the course (5 points) and West's lead is standard, the ♠Q from a sequence.

When nearly all the entries lie in the closed hand, as here, we must be especially careful that we use dummy's entries carefully. Diamonds need to be established so the Ace of that suit needs to be kept back until the right time.

Here we must duck an early round of Diamonds, so that we can use the ♦A entry when the extra Diamond tricks are ready to run. We need a 3-2 Diamond break, but that's normal luck. The two alternative plays in Diamonds (that is: lead the ♦K and duck the next Diamond or duck the first Diamond) are equivalent.

Nine tricks come from two Spades, two Hearts, four Diamonds and one Club.