

## Declarer Play Las Vegas Style

If you have ever been to Vegas, to Atlantic City, or to any casino, you see people gathered around the roulette wheel, placing bets on a particular number, a group of numbers, black or red, odd or even, 1-18, 19-36. What ever bet you place, if all of the numbers, colors, or other combinations are bet on equally, if you are in Europe, where there is only one green number, the house will make a profit of 2.7%. In American casinos there are two green numbers, which raises the house percentage to 5.4%. That small percentage is sufficient to pay the employees who run the wheel, and other expenses of running a casino, and even in Europe reap a substantial profit from the wheel. In twenty spins, the House claims over 100% of the money that is on the table at any given time.

Often declarer play can take a lesson from the casinos.. Small odds in your favor can reap big profits.

Take the following hand from a recent column in the Richmond paper. Start off with the following information. When you are finessing for a particular card, and have no information from the bidding or the play, the chances of the card that you need to find being in the right place are fifty-fifty. The chance of dropping a singleton or doubleton queen, when you hold seven cards in a suit are about 18.5%. So if you have this following holding, and have not peeked into the opponents' hands (of course you haven't), you would take the finesse if you need the trick to make the contract.

**A K J**

**5 4 3 2**

That was what the declarer faced, playing seven diamonds, on the following hand. Or at least what he thought he faced. But after some thought he decided that he could do better.

<p>A 10 5 4 3 2 K J 6 5 J 7 5  K Q 6 4 A K J A Q 10 9 8 7 ————</p>	<p>West led the King of clubs and declarer took stock. Winners - 6 diamonds, two hearts, three spades, and a ruff in the dummy. 12 tricks. Where could he get trick 13. The wheels in his brain started to turn, and came up roulette. He banged down the ace and king of hearts, hoping that the queen would fall - it should about one time in six, but was disappointed when it did not. But he had a backup plan. One finesse is as good as another, and the only spade that he was missing was the Jack. He had already drawn trump. So he played a spade to the ten, and when West held the Jack, it won, and he was able to run the spades, discard hearts from dummy, and trump a heart in the dummy, making SEVEN. This was not an issue of deciding which finesse was more likely to win; it was an opportunity to have a house edge of 18.5% on the players that did not try this line of play.</p>
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### POKER

Again, think Vegas, think poker tournaments, think bluffing, think making the opponents work.

You are not vulnerable, they are. Partner opens one spade, and RHO doubles. You hold:

7 6 5 4 2
————
5 4 3
9 8 7 6 3

Who knows what will or will not make. Surely they can make four or five of something, maybe even slam in diamonds or hearts. Bid four spades. Now, before they can get their act together. LHO has little opportunity to show his strength. Whatever happens after that is a guess. Zero points, so what. And partner should expect this hand, and leave them in whatever they bid. If they bid five hearts and he bids five spades, he might push them to a makable slam, Maybe they were already too high, and your side could not make anything.

Bridge and poker do have some things in common. So do bridge and roulette.