



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North	
♠ A5	
♥ AK964	
♦ 752	
♣ 863	
West	East
♠ QT72	♠ K963
♥ QT3	♥ J85
♦ T964	♦ QJ
♣ Q5	♣ JT97
South	
♠ J84	
♥ 72	
♦ AK83	
♣ AK42	

Here are eight general practice hands. There is no particular theme to them although the first four deals feature declarer play and the last four feature defense.

Hand 1. You are at the wheel in a game. What is your best chance of making this contract?

In fact, what is your *only* chance of making this contract?

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

Lead: ♠ 2

You reach 3NT on this deal and contemplate dummy after West leads the ♠2. What are your thoughts?

Firstly, you should note that the missing eight Spades are very likely to be splitting 4-4. This has nothing to do with odds, probability or statistics. West has led the ♠2 and this proclaims a four-card suit. True, you cannot compel the opposition to tell the truth (West may be one of those cunning types who would lead the Two from a five-card suit) but the indications are there and you should bear in mind that defenders have to signal to each other. In practice, defenders are more concerned about giving false information to each other than fooling you.

Anyway, that's a diversion. Your first play is to try your luck by ducking the Spade on table. Every now and again West will have the ♠K Q and you'll be allowed a cheap trick with the ♠J. Not today, though. East takes the ♠K and – of course – fires one back to remove dummy's ♠A. Note that he chooses the ♠3 to do this – again suggesting that he has three remaining.

Now what?

Your **Count** shows there to be just seven top tricks (one Spade, two Hearts, two Diamonds and two Clubs). Not enough. Your only chance is a 3-3 Heart break and the only way to play for that is to **duck** a Heart at trick two.

West wins that (you don't care what with) and cashes his Spades. If he did start with five you can only shrug your shoulders and congratulate him on his cunning deception. As it is, they are 4-4 (as you deduced) so the enemy swiftly run out of ammunition.

A Diamond switch holds no terrors. You take the ♦K and try your luck in Hearts. When that suit breaks in friendly (and fortunate) fashion you are home and dry. You can cash the rest of the Hearts and have the balance.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

North	
♠ 863	
♥ A53	
♦ 73	
♣ AK764	
West	East
♠ 2	♠ J954
♥ KQJ96	♥ T4
♦ T642	♦ KQ985
♣ J85	♣ QT
South	
♠ AKQT7	
♥ 872	
♦ AJ	
♣ 932	

Again you find yourself in game.

Here, you have to time the hand precisely to bring it home. One false step and you will go down.

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

Lead: ♥ K

You reach the reasonable contract of 4♠ and West attacks that with a Heart lead.

There are only nine obvious winners available (five Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and two Clubs). You can see four losers (two Hearts, a Diamond and a Club) so have to find a way of getting rid of (at least) one of them. With losers we either **dump** them or **trump** them – here, though, there can be no trumping. After all, what can we trump and where?

With no trumping to be done we may as well draw trumps. So – having grabbed the ♥A at trick one – we draw trumps. This process comes to a rapid halt as we see that they break 4-1, albeit outside. To pick the trump suit up without loss we have to cross to table with a top Club and then finesse the ♠10.

With all trumps safely pulled we have to find another trick – and that can only come from the long Clubs. In similar vein to Hand 1 we need to **duck** a Club to keep communications intact.


East takes the Club lead and West cashes two Heart winners but that is all the defenders can manage. We take the Diamond switch and revert to Clubs, dumping the losing ♦J on the long Club.

That's one fewer loser and one more winner. Ten tricks made – as required.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

		North		
		♠ K52		
		♥ J3		
		♦ AK2		
		♣ QT843		
West				East
♠ 743				♠ 86
♥ T842				♥ A976
♦ QJT9				♦ 865
♣ K5				♣ AJ97
		South		
		♠ AQJT9		
		♥ KQ5		
		♦ 743		
		♣ 62		

How do you handle this deal in another game contract?

Is it just a case of "draw trumps first and then look around"?

If not, why not?

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

Lead: ♦ Q

You reach the fair contract of 4♠ and West leads the ♦Q.

You can see nine tricks (five Spades, two slow Hearts and two Diamonds) so have to decide how and where to go for a tenth trick. If you count losers you'll see that there are four – one Heart, one Diamond and two Clubs.

You have no chance of getting Clubs going – before you get them set up the opponents will have established a Diamond winner for themselves, the opening lead having given them a *tempo*.

What is the solution? Well, it's certainly not to be found in drawing trumps. You have to **dump** a Diamond loser and you have to do that fast. To this end you have to set up a Heart winner as a discard for dummy's little Diamond. That's not all – having binned the low Diamond from the table you still need to ruff your last Diamond on table.

So... win the Diamond lead and play the ♥J. East innocently ducks (maybe this is a finesse?) but puts the ♥A up on the second round. A Diamond return takes out the ♦A and sets up a Diamond trick for West. You have to come to hand with a trump, now you can cash the top Heart, dumping the last Diamond, and ruff a Diamond on table.

As a point of technique you should ruff this Diamond *high* (with the ♠K) to avoid any possibility of an over-ruff. You have solid Spades in hand and can afford to be flash. If you've got it, flaunt it!

At this point the hand is over. True, you have two losing Clubs in hand but that is all. Contract made.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

West ♠ JT92 ♥ 94 ♦ 7653 ♣ AJT		East ♠ K853 ♥ AT ♦ 842 ♣ K753
North ♠ Q764 ♥ 8632 ♦ KJ ♣ 984		
South ♠ A ♥ KQJ75 ♦ AQT9 ♣ Q62		

Here you have to take advantage of the opportunity that has been presented to you.

Can you take it?

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

Lead: ♠ J

You arrive in 4♥ after a brief sequence of 1♥ – 2♥ – 4♥ and West (naturally enough) leads the ♠J.

With hindsight, of course, West would have led a low Club to East's ♠K and a Club return would have netted the first three Club tricks with the ♥A to come. Yeah, right. Here on Planet Earth no one plays like that – a low Club lead from ♠A J 10 could be very stupid on other layouts of the cards.

You take the ♠A, perform, and have to decide how to proceed. A trump? No, certainly not! Should you try that line East would win and would switch to a Club, allowing East-West to take three tricks there. No, you must dump your Clubs as soon as you can – and that's now.

So the play is win the ♠A, cash the ♦K, overtake the ♦J and cash the ♦A to dump a Club. That makes only three apparent losers (two Clubs and the ♥A). So is it time to draw trumps?

Nope! Not yet. If you do there is a risk of a Diamond ruff. Whichever defender takes the ♥A might be able to lead the last Diamond and see his partner ruff with a trump higher than dummy's ♥8. Here, on this layout, East could win the Ace of trumps, cash two Club tricks ending in West and ruff the Diamond return for one down. Oops!

The solution is to play off the last, winning, Diamond and chuck another Club away. True, that is sure to get ruffed but it crucially reduces the number of losers by one.


There was a hand with a not dissimilar theme in the series on *Negative Doubles* you may recall. Try looking at Hand 5 in the first series. Declarer also had to throw a loser on a winner, knowing it would be ruffed. It's a common play.

Anyway, having done this discarding the defenders are helpless. They make two trump tricks and must come to a Club trick but that is all – contract made.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

North	
♠ K85	
♥	
♦ T87632	
♣ 9542	
West	East
♠ Q42	♠ AT3
♥ 75432	♥ AKQ86
♦ KQ	♦ 95
♣ JT7	♣ AQ6
	
South	
♠ J976	
♥ JT9	
♦ AJ4	
♣ K83	

These next four deals have you in a defender's chair.

Here you are on lead to a game contract. What do you lead?

Having surmounted that obstacle there is still plenty to do to avoid handing the contract on a plate to your opponent.

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

Lead: ♥ J

Now you are in a defender's seat for four deals. Here the opposition sail into 4♥ and your first task is to select an opening lead.

You do have an awkward choice so should select a passive trump lead rather than risk opening up one of the other suits (opening up a can of worms more like!)

Now the whole deal revolves around the play in Spades. If either defender were to lead the suit declarer would be in easy street as he is 100% certain of making two Spade tricks (can you see *why*, though?) This type of layout is common and it's important to realise that leading it is fatal to your side.

If declarer has to tackle the suit himself, though, he will lose two tricks in Spades to go with two losers in the minors. From declarer's perspective the best play in Spades, incidentally, is to lead low to the ♠Q and then low to the ♠10. This will produce two tricks whenever you (South) have the ♠K or North has the ♠J. On this layout that doesn't work. Unlucky.

Now, how do you force declarer to do his own dirty work? Well, you get off to a good start with a trump lead which gives declarer nothing that he didn't have anyway. East draws trumps and leads a Diamond. What is your best defence? Take the ♦A and immediately return a Diamond, that's what. Opening up Spades would be a bad mistake. What's the hurry? True, you don't know what the Spade layout is but why would you **need** to lead them?

Declarer takes the Diamond return and tries his luck in Clubs by running the ♣J. You take the ♣K and return...? A Club. It's still wrong to open up Spades – just give the lead back to declarer and sit tight.

East cashes his two Club tricks and has been backed into a corner. He has little choice now but to play a Spade to the ♠Q and learn his fate. North bashes that with the ♠K and leads a Spade back, setting up the fourth defensive trick for your ♠J.


This is a desperately unlucky hand for East but you have to take advantage of these deals where the cards lie well for you. And how do you take such an advantage? By playing with *total passivity* – treating possession of the lead as though it were a hot potato and getting rid of it at every opportunity.

This is an instructive deal. Many defenders would rush to lead Spades – thinking it clever to be the first to break open a suit. Put simply – it isn't.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

North		East	
♠ 42		♠ AKQJ8	
♥ 7642		♥ 853	
♦ Q863		♦ A5	
♣ QT8		♣ K62	
West		East	
♠ T963		♠ AKQJ8	
♥ AKQ		♥ 853	
♦ JT9		♦ A5	
♣ J93		♣ K62	
South			
♠ 75			
♥ JT9			
♦ K742			
♣ A754			

Another defensive problem for you.

An easy opening lead (!?) but after that might you go astray...?

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

Lead: ♥ J

This deal has a similar theme to Hand 5 – that of **not** opening up a suit.

You are on lead to 4♠ and have an easy selection of the ♥J. When you have a sequence it should really jump out of your hand. Leading broken suits – especially in a trump contract – can often cost your side a trick. On the sight of dummy you may think that you have done the wrong thing with the ♥A K Q leering at you. Not a bit of it! Anyway, what would you rather have led? A Club lead and a Diamond lead will both set tricks up for East. A Heart lead gives declarer nothing that wasn't his by right.

Declarer takes the Heart lead and draws trumps in two rounds. He now cashes the Hearts and tries the ♦J from the table. Note that your partner plays low on this. You may have heard players quote the famous bridge maxim, “*Cover an honour with an honour*”. Well, maybe, but (almost) never when they are sequential as they are in this case with the ♦J 10 9. Anyway, the Diamond is run to your ♦K and you are on lead. Well?

Many players would crack under the pressure at this point and would lead the ♠A. This would be weak defence – Aces are meant to kill Kings (or Queens) and not to pick up Twos and Threes.

Keep the ♠A firmly in your hand – and don't think of **underleading** it either. No, correct defence is to play back a Diamond, adhering to the principle of giving declarer what is rightfully his and nothing extra. Think of it as *Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's*. Note that partner has no reason at all to play his ♦Q on this trick (well defended, North!) and East glumly plays his ♦A on thin air.

Declarer has to divine the Club layout now. With dark forebodings he crosses to dummy and plays a Club to his ♠K. Right if North has the ♠A – wrong here. Now the Clubs have been broached you can lead them back. Declarer has to decide whether to try dummy's ♣9 or ♣J (either could be right but neither is) but cannot make the hand now. Down one.

Declarer is unlucky. His play would have worked had you misdefended (by opening up Clubs) or if the Clubs had been lying favourably. Either the ♣A with North or the ♣Q with you would have sufficed. Today just isn't East's day...



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 6S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

North	
♠ 542	
♥ Q84	
♦ 9865	
♣ K85	
West	East
♠ AQT83	♠ KJ976
♥ A972	♥ KT5
♦ 2	♦ KQT
♣ JT9	♣ AQ
South	
♠	
♥ J63	
♦ AJ743	
♣ 76432	

Your opponents bash their way in unsophisticated fashion into a slam.

Can you find a way of defeating it?

We warn you - there is an early challenge for you!

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	P
1♠	P	4NT	P
5♥	P	6♠	P
P	P		

Lead: ♦ 8

East-West bid a slam after a slightly thin opening bid from West and an uncouth leap into Ace-asking territory from East.

North (your partner) has no guidance about his opening lead and decides on a Diamond. Now, we here at VuBridge adhere to modern methods whereby we lead a low card (the fourth-highest) from a suit headed by an honour and second highest from a poor suit.

Here, then, North chooses to lead the ♦8 as it's the second highest from rubbish. Declarer gravely thanks his partner and calls for the ♦K. How should you defend?

It isn't easy to *Read the Lead*. Unfortunately, all it tells you is that North has no Diamond picture. Looking at the ♦K Q 10 on table and the ♦A J in hand this information is just a little superfluous... Anyway, we can't afford not to take the ♦A but what are we going to lead back at trick 2? This is the crux of the deal.

A Diamond lead back into the jaws of the ♦K 10 is out of the question. Fine if partner has a singleton but how likely is that?

A trump would be best (treating possession of the lead as a hot potato – getting rid of it as quickly as possible). Unfortunately, natural causes prevent that.

So it's a choice of a Heart into dummy's ♥K 10 5 or a Club into dummy's ♣A Q. Leading from a Jack is dangerous and here would give declarer the contract. You don't see it? Well, the suit is **frozen**, meaning that whoever leads it loses out by doing so – there is a theme running through Hands 5, 6 and 7. Play it through and see. You lead a low Heart to the ♥Q and ♥K. Declarer, with little choice, draws trumps and runs the ♥10. That's no Heart loser and four Heart tricks. Oops.

The answer is to lead a Club at trick two. If partner has the ♣K then that's too bad – the finesse was working anyway. It gives nothing to declarer that wasn't his in the first place. As the cards lie, West takes the ♣Q in dummy, draws

trumps and cashes winners but cannot avoid losing a Heart at the end.

Whoever leads Hearts first loses out by doing so.



This is a set of general deals for V-Blue, issue 8.

VB#8 Y2 General Hands ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: North	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

<p>West</p> <p>♠ AJ5</p> <p>♥ AK98</p> <p>♦ 532</p> <p>♣ JT5</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ 632</p> <p>♥ T</p> <p>♦ QJT98</p> <p>♣ AKQ6</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 94</p> <p>♥ J7532</p> <p>♦ K76</p> <p>♣ 974</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ KQT87</p> <p>♥ Q64</p> <p>♦ A4</p> <p>♣ 832</p>		

Elsewhere in this edition of V-Blue we warned you that this hand would reappear.

And here it is...

If you haven't played the two series on the *Negative Double* yet we urge you to do so. Otherwise you might miss the "point" of this hand.

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

Lead: ♠ 9

Well, you may recognise this deal. It's Hand 5 from series 2 on *Negative Doubles*. The "twist" is that the hand has been twisted 90° clockwise so that you are in the defending seat.

East-West reach 3NT after declarer – on your left – has shown a four-card Heart suit and you have bid Spades. Partner, dutiful to the last, leads the ♠9 and you contemplate dummy. The first thing you need to do is to *Read the Lead*. The ♠9 can only be from precisely ♠9 × or (just about) a singleton ♠9. That places declarer with ♠A J × (×). So how should you defend?

Well, you have to hope that partner has the ♦K and another Spade. Nothing else is any good for you. With that in mind the card that you mustn't play is the "automatic" one of the ♠Q. Why? Well, any declarer who is not wet behind the ears will duck this, keeping the ♠A J poised over the ♠K 10. Now you will struggle to get your Spades going.

Instead, you make the odd-looking play of a small Spade at trick one! Declarer can't afford to duck and has to take the ♠J. His only source of tricks is in Diamonds and he attacks those immediately. Partner – bless his cotton socks! – goes in with the ♦K to continue the Spade attack, driving out the ♠A. And this defence cooks declarer's goose; 3NT is no longer makeable.

You come on lead with the ♦A and cash your Spades while a frustrated declarer chucks winners away from dummy. After that West has the rest but it's still one down.