




Four deals to supplement David Bird's hands for VBlue, year 2. SA Version. Updated winter 2015/6

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#11 Y2 Four General Hands SA         | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 03/07/2016                       | By: East         |
| Dealer: North                          | Board #: 1       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|         |   |         |  |
|---------|---|---------|--|
|         | North   |         |  |
|         | ♠ AT97  |         |  |
|         | ♥ QJ5   |         |  |
|         | ♦ 852   |         |  |
|         | ♣ 864   |         |  |
| West    |  | East    |  |
| ♠ 642   |   | ♠ KJ    |  |
| ♥ 83    |   | ♥ A96   |  |
| ♦ AKQT7 |   | ♦ J63   |  |
| ♣ JT3   |   | ♣ AQ975 |  |
|         | South   |         |  |
|         | ♠ Q853  |         |  |
|         | ♥ KT742   |         |  |
|         | ♦ 94  |         |  |
|         | ♣ K2  |         |  |

**This is our General Series of four deals.**

**These four hands contains a theme.**

**You will find out what that theme is in due course – all we are willing to say is that you will be defending all four hands...**

Hand 1 sets the tone.

What do you lead to an enemy's contract?

What do you know at the end of trick one?

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

Lead: ♥ 4

*Here is a commonplace deal with a position in Hearts that we have noted before in VuBridge.*

### Bidding.

North Passes as dealer and East-West bid rapidly to game via 1NT – 3NT.

This will be a recurring theme in these four deals.

### Play.

We are on lead to 3NT with a decent five-card Heart suit, so duly lead our fourth-highest Heart. So far, no problem. Partner produces the ♥J, which forces the ♥A. We can be sure that partner has the ♥Q as East wouldn't waste his ♥A on the lowly ♥J had he started with the ♥A Q.

*[Note: Declarer couldn't afford to duck a round or two of Hearts. From declarer's perspective it makes no sense to break North-South's communications in Hearts as he must take the Club finesse into our hand (so running North out of Hearts is simply pointless). Also, East is scared that a Spade shift from North might beat 3NT before East got going. Imagine that the ♥J were allowed to hold and North switched to a low Spade. East might go off in 3NT even if the Club finesse were working].*

So, needing the ♣K to be with North to make his contract, East takes the ♥A at trick one, crosses to table with a Diamond and runs the ♣J. As South we take this trick with the King and continue with Hearts, safe in the knowledge that North has the ♥Q.

One cloud may darken our horizon. Suppose North started life with just two Hearts, the ♥Q J alone. Now a low Heart at trick four would **block** the Hearts as North would take the ♥Q and would have no Heart to play back to our ♥K 10 7.

Well, if that were the layout then there is nothing that could be done. East would have ♥A 9 6 5 and there would be no way of untangling the suit for the defenders. We might cash the ♥K (dropping the ♥Q) and follow with the ♥10 but East would have the master ♥9 now and

enough tricks for his contract.


The only chance of beating 3NT is that North has three (or even four) Hearts – with that in mind we should continue with a low Heart to partner's Queen at trick four.

As the cards lie we have four Hearts, the ♣K and still have the ♠A to come. Two down.



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|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| VB#11 Y2 Four General Hands SA         | Contract: 3N      |
| Date: 03/07/2016                       | By: East          |
| Dealer: East                           | Board #: 2        |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: N / S |

|         |   |         |
|---------|---|---------|
|         | North   |         |
|         | ♠ AT97  |         |
|         | ♥ Q65   |         |
|         | ♦ 852   |         |
|         | ♣ 864   |         |
| West    |  | East    |
| ♠ 642   |   | ♠ KJ    |
| ♥ 83    |   | ♥ AJ9   |
| ♦ AKQT7 |   | ♦ J63   |
| ♣ JT3   |   | ♣ AQ975 |
|         | South   |         |
|         | ♠ Q853  |         |
|         | ♥ KT742   |         |
|         | ♦ 94  |         |
|         | ♣ K2  |         |

This deal has similarities with Hand 1.

However, the difference is crucial.

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

Lead: ♥ 4

### Bidding.

East opens 1NT as dealer and East-West bid rapidly to game via 1NT – 3NT.

### Play.

As in Hand 1 East-West reach 3NT in rapid fashion and we are on lead with a five-card Heart suit. Naturally, we lead our fourth highest Heart and partner produces the ♥Q, taken by the ♥A.

Hoping for some luck declarer crosses to table (via a Diamond) at trick two and runs the ♣J. As South we take this trick with our King and have to find the best continuation.

Now, on this deal, declarer is known to hold the ♥J (partner's play of the ♥Q at trick one denies that card). So playing another Heart (especially a low Heart) is just going to give East a cheap trick. We might play the ♥K at this point but that would only be right if East started with ♥A J alone (the ♥K would drop the now-bare Jack). This, however, is against the odds. East is most likely to have started with ♥A J ×.

If declarer started with four Hearts his ♥J cannot be captured but if he has exactly three cards in the suit a Heart lead from North will pick up four more tricks for North-South. So the crux of the hand is to put North on lead.

The only suit that offers any hope of getting North in on lead is Spades – so we should lead a Spade at trick four. Careful, though! It is easy to discombobulate partner. If we were to lead the ♠3 (a reflex play, maybe) we would give North a nasty problem.

Look at it from his point of view – we lead a Spade to his ♠A and East plays the ♠J. Should North return a Spade (hoping East has the ♠Q J and that we have the ♠K), or should he return a Heart? This would not be easy for him. There are many cases where we can see that our initial lead has been a dud and need to shift our line of attack. From North's perspective this might be one of those deals.

The answer is to make sure that we are clear with our leads. A low card means, in general "I

like this suit – please lead it back”. A high spot card, on the other hand, means, I”I have no interest in this suit – I am just getting off lead”. (If you would like a mnemonic it’s **Low for Like** and **High for Hate**). Here, we want partner to win the Spade switch and to revert to Hearts.


To paint the picture in the brightest colors we should switch to the ♠8. Now North will think we have nothing in Spades and will assuredly switch back to Hearts – and that suits us just fine.

We take a Club, a Spade and four Hearts – two down.



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|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| VB#11 Y2 Four General Hands SA         | Contract: 3N      |
| Date: 03/07/2016                       | By: East          |
| Dealer: South                          | Board #: 3        |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: N / S |

|         |   |         |  |
|---------|---|---------|--|
|         | North   |         |  |
|         | ♠ KT972   |         |  |
|         | ♥ QJ  |         |  |
|         | ♦ 852   |         |  |
|         | ♣ 864   |         |  |
| West    |  | East    |  |
| ♠ 64    |   | ♠ AJ    |  |
| ♥ 853   |   | ♥ A96   |  |
| ♦ AKQT7 |   | ♦ J63   |  |
| ♣ JT3   |   | ♣ AQ975 |  |
|         | South   |         |  |
|         | ♠ Q853  |         |  |
|         | ♥ KT742   |         |  |
|         | ♦ 94  |         |  |
|         | ♣ K2  |         |  |

This deal is identical to Hand 1, isn't it?

Not exactly, no.

And the ever-so-subtle difference is crucial.

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

Lead: ♥ 4

*This deal may look identical to Hand 1. Well our hand is exactly the same, as is the bidding. Dummy, though, is slightly different with West having three Hearts rather than two. Is that significant? Oh yes!*

### Bidding.

After three Passes East opens 1NT and West raises that to 3NT.

### Play.

We are on lead to 3NT with a five-card Heart suit, so lead our fourth-highest Heart. So far, no problem. Partner produces the ♥J, which forces the ♥A. We can be sure that our partner has the ♥Q as East wouldn't waste his ♥A on the lowly ♥J had he started with ♥A Q.

Once again, declarer cannot afford to duck a round or two of Hearts. From East's perspective it makes no sense to break North-South's communications in Hearts as he must take the Club finesse into our hand (so running North out of Hearts is simply pointless). Also, East is scared of a Spade shift from North at trick two. Now 3NT would fail even if the Hearts were 4-3 and we held the ♣K.

So, hoping for some luck (either the the ♣K to be with North or Hearts 4-3), East takes the ♥A, crosses to a Diamond and runs the ♣J. We take this trick with the King and continue with Hearts, safe in the knowledge that North has the ♥Q... or is life as simple as that?

Suppose North started life with just two Hearts, the ♥Q J alone (as is the actual layout). Now a low Heart at trick four would block the Hearts as North would take the ♥Q and would have no Heart to play back to our ♥K 10 7.

In this case, with dummy having three Hearts, East would also have three Hearts and so the suit could be unblocked if we take our ♥K. This would drop partner's ♥Q and clear the path for us to take the remaining Heart winners.

However, what if North started with ♥Q J x? Now the play of the ♥K would block the suit,

unless North were astute enough to pitch the ♥Q on our ♥K. The play of the ♥K tests partner's mettle.


The best chance of beating 3NT is to lead the ♥K. This works if partner has ♥Q J alone or ♥Q J × and the wit to unblock them. On this layout North needs no cerebration – he drops the ♥Q because he has no choice and we run the Hearts off.

3NT down one.



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|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| VB#11 Y2 Four General Hands SA         | Contract: 3N    |
| Date: 03/07/2016                       | By: West        |
| Dealer: West                           | Board #: 4      |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: All |

|         |   |         |
|---------|---|---------|
|         | North   |         |
|         | ♠ Q853  |         |
|         | ♥ KT742   |         |
|         | ♦ 94  |         |
|         | ♣ K2  |         |
| West    |  | East    |
| ♠ AJ2   |   | ♠ 64    |
| ♥ A9    |   | ♥ 853   |
| ♦ J63   |   | ♦ AKQT7 |
| ♣ AQ975 |   | ♣ JT3   |
|         | South   |         |
|         | ♠ KT97  |         |
|         | ♥ QJ6   |         |
|         | ♦ 852   |         |
|         | ♣ 864   |         |

Here, for a change, you are in third seat – as partner of the opening leader.

How might you influence the defense?

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

Lead: ♥ 4

### Bidding.

West opens 1NT as dealer and East raises that immediately to the No-trump game.

### Play.

On this deal we are in third seat, awaiting partner's lead to 3NT. North leads a low Heart and (having noted that dummy is a fair match for the previous three dummies in this set), we contribute the ♥J. We will beat this drum again: from equal cards we play the lowest – so here we should play the ♥J and not the ♥Q.

West takes his ♥A, crosses to a high Diamond and runs the ♣J. North wins the ♣K and lays down the ♥K. Dummy follows and we...

Well, following low would be *thoughtless*, *unkind* and plenty of other adjectives, many of which reside in a dictionary of slang.

What is going on? Partner knows that we have the ♥Q. Further we know that he knows that we have the ♥Q... (hold on, this is getting confusing). Why does partner not just continue with a low Heart?

Well, partner is worried that we might have ♥Q J alone and that a low Heart continuation would tangle the suit up. He's entirely right – if that's what we had, it would.

So he's cashing the ♥K from ♥K 10 × × ×, trusting that we will throw away the ♥Q if we have three cards.

Once we see the play (and have played through Hand 3), it should all become clear. We must step out of partner's way and allow North the room to take the rest of his Heart suit.

By us dropping the ♥Q under the King, partner is able to cash out the Hearts. One down.