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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals Part 2 SA | Contract: 4H<br>By: East |
| Date: 16/06/2014                                     | Board #: 1               |
| Dealer: North  | Vulnerable: None         |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>               |                          |

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

Lead: ♣ K

East-West bid quickly to 4♥ and you have a textbook lead of the ♣K.

|        |   |         |
|--------|---|---------|
| North  |   |         |
| ♠ 7532 |   |         |
| ♥ 75   |   |         |
| ♦ AJ92 |   |         |
| ♣ 652  |   |         |
| West   |  | East    |
| ♠ Q64  |   | ♠ AKJ   |
| ♥ JT4  |   | ♥ KQ982 |
| ♦ KQ53 |   | ♦ 84    |
| ♣ 874  |   | ♣ AJ3   |
| South  |   |         |
| ♠ T98  |   |         |
| ♥ A63  |   |         |
| ♦ T76  |   |         |
| ♣ KQT9 |   |         |

Dummy is more or less as advertised and you try to work out what partner might have. This isn't easy (it rarely is after the auction has consisted only of suit bids) because you don't know what prompted East to bid game. He may have a good hand (19 points, say), he may have bid 4♥ because of exceptional distribution. Who knows?

However, if East has bid game purely on *power* then he has about 19 points, leaving North with about 4 points. So there's not much over there with partner.

Rather to your surprise the ♣K is allowed to hold trick 1. Does this mean that partner has the ♣A? If so, you must lead the ♣9 next. Wait a second, though... partner's Club at trick 1 was the ♣2 - and this is highly discouraging. With the ♣A partner would have played a higher Club (and with ♣A 2 would have played the ♣A and led back a Club). So something, somewhere does not add up.

You realize that declarer is holding up the ♣A - if he has the ♣J as well you are walking into a trap. (This particular trap, by the way, is known as the *Bath Coup*. Just thought you'd like to know...)

Another Club lead will give declarer a cheap trick and good defense is all about **not** giving presents to the enemy. Not even at Christmas. So at trick 2 you must switch suits and the ♠10 is the obvious card - maybe partner is well at home there? After all, North could easily hold the ♠K J rather than the ♦A J.

As the cards lie the Spade lead achieves nothing for the defense but, crucially, loses nothing either. Declarer has three Spade tricks anyway and you have given nothing away. East's only hope for a tenth trick is that you have the ♦A (in which case he can set up two Diamond tricks and **dump** a loser) but it just isn't his lucky day.

East starts by drawing trumps - you take the ♥A and plug away in Spades. Declarer leads up to the Diamonds but partner produces the ♦A and

**This is the second series of deals on defensive signals. The first series can be found elsewhere in this edition of V-Blue.**

**The basic principle here is that a high card by third hand encourages partner to continue the led suit. A low card, though, suggests no interest in that suit (and may suggest that there are better prospects elsewhere).**

Hand 1: Once you learn attitude signals, you and your partner will stop giving away "cheap" tricks. When your defense is "tight" declarer will fail in a lot more contracts.

Like this one.

returns a Club. In a hopeless position now declarer reels off his trumps hoping that you will do something foolish. Curiously, this results in partner taking the setting trick with the ♦J rather than you with the ♣Q. No matter - bridge is a partnership game. 4♥ is still one down.



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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals Part 2 SA | Contract: 4H      |
| Date: 16/06/2014                                     | By: East          |
| Dealer: East   | Board #: 2        |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>               | Vulnerable: N / S |

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

Lead: ♣ A

You are South, defending 4♥ on this deal after an auction that tells you little about who has what. (That's the beauty of bidding 1♥ – 3♥ – 4♥, the opponents often have little idea of how to defend). Here, though, you have an easy lead of the ♣A (*God dealt you an Ace-King combination so you wouldn't have a problem with your opening lead*).

Dummy displays pretty much what he announced in the bidding (10 points, albeit with five trumps) and the first trick proceeds ♣A – ♣5 – ♣9 – ♣Q. How do you defend now?

Well, you may be worried about playing another Club because you fear it will be ruffed. After all, declarer (an undoubtedly honest citizen) surely has no Clubs left after his play of the ♣Q...? Yet again, we have the sad duty to inform you that the most upright citizens away from the card table are simply not to be trusted once at the green baize. Trust your partner, not your opponents. Ever.

Here, the ♣9 is highly significant – it is a high Club and it says “Yes, come on, I like this suit”. Why would partner encourage a Club continuation when holding ♣9 × × ×? He wouldn't – so this ♣Q is nothing short of a swindle.

You must continue with the ♣K and another Club and fully expect partner to ruff. When he does you need one more trick to crack 4♥ and that arrives rapidly when partner puts the ♦A on the table.

One off.

North  
 ♠ Q87532  
 ♥ T  
 ♦ A765  
 ♣ 93

West  
 ♠ AT  
 ♥ K6532  
 ♦ Q83  
 ♣ JT5



East  
 ♠ K  
 ♥ AQJ874  
 ♦ K42  
 ♣ Q86

South  
 ♠ J964  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ JT9  
 ♣ AK742


What do you make of the play to trick one on this deal?



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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals Part 2 SA | Contract: 4H      |
| Date: 16/06/2014                                     | By: East          |
| Dealer: East   | Board #: 3        |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>               | Vulnerable: N / S |

|         |   |          |
|---------|---|----------|
|         | North   |          |
|         | ♠ Q8532   |          |
|         | ♥ T   |          |
|         | ♦ A765  |          |
|         | ♣ 963   |          |
| West    |  | East     |
| ♠ AT    |   | ♠ K7     |
| ♥ K6532 |   | ♥ AQJ874 |
| ♦ Q83   |   | ♦ K42    |
| ♣ JT5   |   | ♣ Q8     |
|         | South   |          |
|         | ♠ J964  |          |
|         | ♥ 9   |          |
|         | ♦ JT9   |          |
|         | ♣ AK742   |          |

Another VuBridge trick - a deal that appears to be exactly the same as the last one.

However... we do say "appears".

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

Lead: ♣ A

In similar vein to Hand 2 you are defending 4♥ on this deal after an auction that tells you little about the opponents' hands. Once more you have a routine lead of the ♣A and dummy looks as though it has been teleported in from Hand 2.

This time, however, the first trick proceeds in a different manner: ♣A – ♣5 – ♣3 – ♣8. How do you defend now?

Well, you may want to cash the ♣K before the rats get at it but that would be an error. It's hard to think of how declarer could dispose of a Club loser in hand or of Club losers from table, so there is probably no hurry to cash the ♣K.

What is the Club layout? Partner would encourage Clubs with either the ♣Q or with a doubleton Club so the evidence suggests that he has three low Clubs. If that were the case then cashing the ♣K is dangerous as it would set up dummy's ♣J for a discard.

Best is to switch – and the obvious switch is to the ♦J, through dummy's ♦Q. Partner follows to this trick with the ♦7, a suspiciously high card (or – from your perspective – a deliciously high card), which suggests that he has interest in Diamonds.

Declarer takes his ♦K, draws trumps and plays the ♣Q. Nope – you have him. You grab the ♣K and another Diamond lead pierces dummy's ♦Q allowing the defense to pick up two Diamond tricks. The ♣J is a winner for East but he cannot make use of it.

One down.



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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals SA | Contract: 3N    |
| Date: 16/06/2014                              | By: East        |
| Dealer: East                                  | Board #: 4      |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>        | Vulnerable: All |

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

Lead: ♣ J

East plays in 3NT after the simplest of bidding sequences and you have an easy lead of the ♣J. East wins this in hand with the ♣A but that doesn't tell you where the ♣K is – East could easily be just foolin' with ♣A K ×

Declarer crosses to the ♠A and runs the ♦Q to your ♦K. Now what? Well, in this layout, with North holding the ♣K, you must continue with Clubs so that the defenders can pick up three Club tricks, a Diamond and a Heart.

But (and this is the \$64000 question) how do you know that North has the ♣K? If East has it then another Club lead would be flogging a dead horse.

Well, what Club did North play at trick one? If it was the ♣4 then that would tell you not to bother with Clubs and to try something else. What North did do, though, was to play the ♣8 – and that must show encouragement in the suit. In No-trumps what else could that be but the ♣K?

Armed with this knowledge you should carry on with Clubs and pick up three tricks in the suit.

The ♥A takes the fifth defensive trick and 3NT fails.

North  
 ♠ 952  
 ♥ A874  
 ♦ 62  
 ♣ K874

West  
 ♠ A4  
 ♥ K62  
 ♦ QJ873  
 ♣ Q62



East  
 ♠ KQJ8  
 ♥ Q95  
 ♦ AT94  
 ♣ A5

South  
 ♠ T763  
 ♥ JT3  
 ♦ K5  
 ♣ JT93

What do you make of the play at trick one here?

Who has what?



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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals SA | Contract: 3N    |
| Date: 16/06/2014                              | By: East        |
| Dealer: East                                  | Board #: 5      |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>        | Vulnerable: All |

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

Lead: ♣ J

East plays in 3NT after the simplest of bidding sequences and you have an easy lead of the ♣J. On the sight of the dummy it's déjà vu all over again – isn't this a clone of Hand 4? Once again East wins the ♣J in hand with the ♣A but once again that doesn't tell you where the ♣K is – East could easily have ♣A K ×

Declarer crosses to the ♠A and runs the ♦Q to your ♦K. Now what? Well, in this layout, with East holding the ♣K, you must discontinue Clubs and make a smart switch to Hearts, picking up four tricks in that suit.

But how do you know that North doesn't have the ♣K? As the cards actually are, another Club lead would be flogging a dead horse. Well, what Club did North play at trick one? That's the all-important clue. It was the ♣4 (with the ♣3 and ♣2 clearly visible) so that was North's lowest Club. Surely that is telling you not to bother with Clubs and to try something else...?

What could that something else be? East would hardly leave himself wide open in Spades so the only hope is Hearts. The ♥J switch works a treat on this layout with North-South able to take the next four tricks.

One off again.

North  
 ♠ J952  
 ♥ AQ87  
 ♦ 62  
 ♣ 874

West  
 ♠ A4  
 ♥ K62  
 ♦ QJ873  
 ♣ Q62



East  
 ♠ KQ8  
 ♥ 954  
 ♦ AT94  
 ♣ AK5

South  
 ♠ T763  
 ♥ JT3  
 ♦ K5  
 ♣ JT93

The same hand, the same bidding, the same dummy.

This is getting spooky...

Should it be the same defense? If not, why not?



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Third hand tells declarer whether or not to continue the suit

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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| VB#13 Y2 Encouraging, discouraging signals SA<br>Date: 16/06/2014<br>Dealer: West<br><a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Contract: 3N<br>By: West<br>Board #: 6<br>Vulnerable: E / W |
|---|---|

Lead: ♥ K

West plays in 3NT again and North leads the ♥K (normal enough with “near” sequences). Now, what should you do as South? Have a little snooze as you don’t have anything to do with this deal? After all, all you are holding is a heap of trash.

Oh no! You have to play the starring role in this play. On the ♥K you must throw the ♥J away! This may look wasteful but it is important to tell North that his Hearts are good enough to continue. (North is marked with the ♥K Q 10 and others).

Why throw the ♥J? Two reasons. Firstly, if West ducks the ♥K (as he is sure to do in practice), North may funk leading another Heart, fearing that West has the ♥A J left. (This play, ducking the King lead when holding ♥A J ×, goes under the name of the **Bath Coup**). There was a similar theme, you may recall in Hand 1.

Secondly, suppose North were to continue with a low Heart at trick two. Declarer might duck that leaving you on lead with nary a Heart to play. Embarrassing. After the ♥J has been thrown, however, things are plain sailing; North sets up Hearts and waits patiently for his ♣A to gain entry. One off.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| North<br>♠ 982<br>♥ KQT94<br>♦ 97<br>♣ A64 |  | East<br>♠ A6<br>♥ 763<br>♦ QJ6<br>♣ QJ975  |
| West<br>♠ QT75<br>♥ A85<br>♦ AK3<br>♣ KT8  |  | South<br>♠ KJ43<br>♥ J2<br>♦ T8542<br>♣ 32 |

An easy hand to finish with. You are holding garbage, and we all know that when you hold garbage your role is simply to follow suit.

Right?