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These hands focus on bidding strong unbalanced hands. The play gives practice in deciding whether or not to draw trumps as the first priority.

Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1 ACOL	Contract: 4H By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 1
Dealer: North	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ AKJ65	
	♥ 62	
	♦ 875	
	♣ 853	
West		East
♠ T943		♠ Q82
♥ 74		♥ QJ9
♦ A93		♦ T642
♣ KQJT		♣ 974
	South	
	♠ 7	
	♥ AKT853	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ A62	

This series and the next (to be found elsewhere in this edition of V-Blue) are looking at how to describe good hands.

Sometimes you might jump the bidding in your own suit, sometimes you might jump in a new suit. In the next series we look at the ever-mysterious world of the reverse.

Hand 1: Here you have a hand that is far from minimum with a strong suit. How should you describe it to partner?

Following the auction you have to play the thing. Are you up to the task?

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

Lead: ♣ K

Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1♥ and see partner respond 1♠. What bid best describes our hand now?

Well, a jump to 3♥ just about fits the bill. It shows a strong six-card suit and a good hand (roughly 16 to 18 points – give or take a little). Partner, with two certain tricks, decides to push the boat out a little by raising to 4♥.

Note that he has little in Hearts but is reassured that we have a fine suit.

Play.

West leads the ♣K and we have to **Count** and **Plan**.

Our initial count shows probably one, just possibly two losers in the trump suit. (Imagine if West had the ♥Q J × ×; that would be *bad* news...) On top of that we are sure to lose the ♦A and there are two losers in the Club suit, quick losers once the ♣A has gone.

Some losers are inevitable... we can't do anything about them. Look at the ♦A, for example. The Clubs, though, are the losers we should focus on. Since we can't chuck them in the bin we look to dummy for help. We can't **trump** in dummy, but maybe we can **dump**. The ♠K is perfect for the purpose.

Should we pull trumps first as part of our plan? The danger in many deals is losing the lead before dumping a loser. In this case, though, we don't lose the lead by pulling two rounds of trumps.

So at trick one we grab the lead and at tricks two and three pull two rounds of trumps, watching carefully to see what drops. We are dreaming of the ♥Q and ♥J dropping but, while that doesn't happen, at least we get the expected 3-2 split.

When there's one trump out against us, and it's a winner, we usually leave it out there, unless we have to dislodge it for tactical reasons.

Here, no such tactical reasons exist – so we can ignore the master trump in an opponent's hand and play on our side-suits. If East or West chooses to ruff in with the ♥Q at some point, that's fine by us.

Our plan requires us to **dump** a loser on a top Spade, so that's the next order of business. At trick four, we cash dummy's ♠A K, discarding a Club on the second round. Now we force out the ♦A and lose a Club. Our third and last loser is the master trump.


Ten tricks arrive courtesy of two Spades, five Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club. Put another way, we lose one trump, one Diamond and one Club.



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Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1 ACOL	Contract: 4H By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 2
Dealer: East	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ AK652	
	♥ 52	
	♦ 87532	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ Q4		♠ T983
♥ J94		♥ Q7
♦ AJ94		♦ T6
♣ J853		♣ KQT97
	South	
	♠ J7	
	♥ AKT863	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ A62	

This hand has similarities with Hand 1.

Should you bid it in the same way?

Should you play it in a similar way?

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

Lead: ♥ 4

Bidding.

We open 1♥ after East Passes as dealer and North responds 1♠. What is our clearest rebid now? Well, as in Hand 1, a jump to 3♥ just about gets the job done. It shows a six-card suit and a good hand. We may not like some of our values but 2♥ would be too far too timid with this strength of hand. Partner, with two certain tricks and a ruffing value (the singleton Club), has plenty to raise to 4♥.

Play.

The rotters kick off with a trump lead. How did West decide on that? Well, it may be that he paid attention to the bidding and suspected that dummy might hold a shortage somewhere outside of Hearts. Also, there's nothing else remotely attractive to lead from his hand. What would you choose? A barrel full of rotten apples.

We see a near-certain trump loser, a definite Diamond loser, and two Club losers. Had West not led a trump, we could have ruffed both Club losers on table (in the *short trump hand*). However, as it is, Plan A has been thwarted.

We are on lead at trick one with the ♥K. We need to get rid of our Club loser pronto, so at tricks two and three we cash the ♣A and trump a losing Club on table. We have now effectively brought our losing trick count down to three.

We want to pull trumps now but are in dummy where no trumps reside. We establish a Diamond trick by playing to the ♦Q and ♦A. West plays back a Diamond (maybe he is hoping East can ruff?) but we are in a good position now. We play another high trump (noting the 3-2 split) and can count only three losers. In the fullness of time East-West take a Club trick and a trump trick but that is their lot.

Remember, we get rid of losers usually by **trumping** in dummy or **dumping** on dummy's winners. This hand was a trump in dummy hand, and that means that our strategy is to not pull trumps till we've done our ruffing.


Ten tricks are made via two Spades, six Hearts (five in hand and one ruff in dummy) one Diamond and one Club. Put another way, we lose a trump, a Diamond and just one Club.



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Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1	Contract: 4S
ACOL	By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 3
Dealer: South	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ QJ32	
	♥ KQT98	
	♦ A	
	♣ K82	
West		East
♠ T9		♠ 865
♥ A753		♥ 42
♦ QT2		♦ KJ97
♣ QJT6		♣ A954
	South	
	♠ AK74	
	♥ J6	
	♦ 86543	
	♣ 73	

This deal forces you to interpret partner's rebid and asks you to make a judgement call.

In the play phase once again you must **Count-Plan-Execute**.

- How are you going to get rid of losers?
- Where are those extra tricks coming from?
- Will your strategy be to **trump** losers or to **dump** losers?
- Should you pull trumps first?

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

Lead: ♣ Q

Bidding.

After our initial Pass as dealer, we are delighted to show partner our four-card Spade suit by responding 1♠ to North's 1♥.

Since we originally Passed, our bid is not technically forcing but North jumps in Spades, showing four-card support and somewhere between 15 and 17 points (give or take a little). With a marginal decision our shape prompts us to go to game.

*[Remember that the bonuses available for making games makes bidding them worthwhile. If we make **half** of the games we bid – yes, we really said that! – then we will be in profit in the long run].*

Play.

West leads the ♣Q and our loser count shows one Heart, four Diamonds and two Clubs. (The lead tells us the ♣A is in East, making mincemeat of dummy's ♠K). When we count winners, though, we can see ten (four Spades, four slow Hearts, the ♦A and a Club ruff taken at trick three). When we can see sufficient winners it is often right to draw trumps.

If it helps, look at this in a different way. By looking at dummy it is clear we are going to use it to **dump** all our Diamonds. When employing a dump strategy we usually pull trumps first so that when we run dummy's long suit the opponents can't ruff in.

We lose our two Clubs right off the bat and ruff the third round. We then pull three rounds of trumps (luckily they are 3-2) and get to work establishing Hearts. By this time the closed hand is a collection of worthless tat, apart from the all-important ♥J. That solidifies the Heart suit and enables us to set it up.

The opponents decide to be awkward and hold up until the third round of the suit, but that is of little consequence. We run the Hearts, blissfully tossing Diamonds on them. The ♦A remains as the tenth trick.


Our timing on this hand requires us to pull trumps as soon as we can in order to set up and run dummy's long suit. Keep in mind that usually a dump strategy calls for pulling trumps first, while a trump strategy is just the opposite.

Ten tricks come from five Spades (that's four on table and a ruff in hand), four Hearts and a Diamond.



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Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1 ACOL	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 4
Dealer: West	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North		
	♠ QJT9		
	♥ AJ976		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ A3		
West		East	
♠ 6		♠ 8532	
♥ QT42		♥ K53	
♦ KQT97		♦ 2	
♣ T64		♣ KQ985	
	South		
	♠ AK74		
	♥ 8		
	♦ 86543		
	♣ J72		

This may look like the previous deal (Hand 3) but there are differences.

To get your mind working along the right lines it may be helpful to imagine that partner were declarer and your hand were the dummy...

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

Lead: ♦ K

Bidding.

Partner opens 1♥ and we respond 1♠ (we aren't strong enough to bid 2♦ and 1NT would be grotesque). North now raises to 3♠, encouraging us to bid game but not forcing us to do so.

With 8 points and a singleton Heart we decide 4♠ is worth a shot, although it is a close decision.

Play.

West leads the ♦K from his near-sequence and we have to **Count** tricks and make a **Plan**. Where are ten tricks coming from?

On the last deal (Hand 3) the order of the day was to draw trumps first and then set up the Heart suit in dummy. Not today, José. That Heart suit has more holes than a Swiss cheese and it would take forever to get it going.

If we can't dump losers, can we trump them? Well, let's see... We could contrive to lose a Diamond and lose a Club and then try ruffing Clubs and Diamonds on table. Call that Plan A. The trouble with that plan is that East-West will get wise to us and have a counter – they will lead trumps. We will be allowed only two ruffs on table now ('cos two rounds of Spades will have gone).

Let's count... We'd make six trumps and three Aces. One short. Nope, not good enough. What about Plan B?

Imagine partner were playing the hand and we were dummy. Now partner would see a Heart shortage on table (the South hand) and would aim to ruff Hearts in dummy. If he could trump three Hearts in our hand that would be enough tricks (seven trump tricks and three Aces). Time, we think, to wheel out that plan.

So... in detail. Take the ♦A, play off the ♥A and ruff a Heart. Back to the ♣A and ruff a Heart (spectacularly – with a high Spade). As well as preventing any possibility of an over-ruff this enables us to return to North with a low trump and to ruff another Heart with the ♠A.


That's job done. We have made seven tricks and dummy has the ♠Q J 10 awaiting our pleasure on the table. The last trick is East's as he trumps our last Heart. We allow him that small pleasure.

To reiterate – ten tricks come from **seven** Spade tricks (the ♠Q J 10 9 and three ruffs in hand), the ♥A, the ♦A and the ♣A.



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Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1 ACOL	Contract: 4H By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 5
Dealer: North	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ 52	
	♥ JT32	
	♦ KQJ74	
	♣ 98	
West		East
♠ T9		♠ QJ86
♥ A976		♥ 8
♦ T9		♦ 8652
♣ AQT75		♣ J643
	South	
	♠ AK743	
	♥ KQ54	
	♦ A3	
	♣ K2	

Here you have a strong hand and need to choose an accurate rebid after a discouraging response from partner. What is best?

How might you play the resulting contract? Do you draw trumps? Ruff losers? What?

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

Lead: ♦ T

Bidding.

We have a fine hand here and we can show it with our rebid. We open 1♠ (a bid which covers a vast multitude of sins) and, after North's dampening 1NT response, we show our true colours with a jump rebid of 3♥.

The naming of our second suit is important. When we have nine cards in two suits it is our responsibility to tell that to partner – if we can. When North hears that we are forcing to game, even opposite a tatty 6-9 points, he takes us there in our 4-4 Heart fit.

Play.

West leads the ♦10 as he has a choice of rotten apples. A Club lead away from the ♣A would be very silly (fine in No-trumps, ridiculous in a suit contract). A Spade around into declarer's first-bid suit is unthinkable and a trump unattractive. Doubleton leads are overdone by many players but a connected holding (such as the ♦10 9) is a fair shot.

Our **Count** and **Plan** shows us too many losers, but dummy's Diamond suit makes it the perfect *dump dummy*. We can see our way through to ten tricks (two Spades, three Hearts and five Diamonds) and so our strategy is to pull trumps first. This way East-West cannot trump our winners. Perfect for this hand.

We need to be careful to preserve entries to dummy. Our only entries are the single little Diamond we have left (we take the ♦A at trick one), plus our high Hearts.

We must go after trumps immediately at trick two. We discover the bad split, but must proceed with our strategy anyway. West helps by pulling the fourth round. That makes the hand a No-trump deal but that suits us more than it does them.

As expected, we take two Spades, three Hearts and five Diamonds for a total of ten.

One final note about this hand. When we're down to the last few tricks, greed-crazed

players might try to play toward the ♣K in the closed hand, hoping East holds the ♣A, trying for an overtrick. This urge must be resisted!

As the ♣A lies over the ♣K West would be on lead and, instead of being able to cash our winning Spades, West would run his master Clubs.


That would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory!



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Y1 VBlue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 1	Contract: 4S
ACOL	By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 6
Dealer: East	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ Q5	
	♥ J62	
	♦ KQJ5	
	♣ 6543	
West		East
♠ T6		♠ J982
♥ T873		♥ A9
♦ T987		♦ 642
♣ A97		♣ QJT8
	South	
	♠ AK743	
	♥ KQ54	
	♦ A3	
	♣ K2	

This is a very similar deal to Hand 5 (odd, that!)

Your impeccable bidding gives partner a very difficult problem.

Partly because of that you reach a precarious contract, giving you problems in the play.

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

Lead: ♦ T

Bidding.

We open 1♠ after East Passes as dealer and North makes a dispiriting response of 1NT. This minimum bid shows a modest 6 to 9 points and suggests that North thinks there is little future in the hand. However, we (with our huge – and familiar! – hand) have other ideas and rebid a game-forcing 3♥. This leaves partner with a difficult decision to make. What should he do?

North knows we have a seven card fit in each major but 3NT is not a good option with such tatty Clubs. (In passing, note what would happen to 3NT by North on the ♠Q lead).

North decides, therefore to put us in the 5-2 Spade fit rather than the 4-3 Heart fit. A 4-3 fit (known as a "Moysian" fit) can be fine in a part-score but in game it can be tough to play. All the opponents have to do is **force** us (that is: make us ruff something) and they may take control of trumps.

Play.

West leads the ♦10. This turns out to be an undynamic lead for the defence but West cannot be blamed for leading from a solid sequence. In any case – what is better for his side?

Our losers include a possible Spade, a definite Heart and two possible Clubs. The dummy begs us to throw losers on the Diamonds, thus we should adopt the strategy of pulling trumps early.

After trick four (after the ♠Q and the ♠A K) we see that there is a winning trump out against us and we know it's in the East hand. If we knock it out and the ♠A is over our ♠K, we will go down. It is usually the best policy to ignore master trumps and go after our winners – just allow the opposition to ruff in when they will.

So at trick five we go to dummy with a Diamond and trick six finds us throwing a Club loser on dummy's Diamond winner. At trick seven East trumps our good Diamond, but that doesn't

rattle us at all. We throw our last Club on this and are down to only Hearts and trumps.

If Hearts were 3-3 we would take the rest bar one but they break 4-2. So we have a slow Heart loser as well as the ♥A but the contract rolls home.

Ten tricks come from five Spades (East ruffs a Diamond so all our Spades get promoted to winning rank), two Hearts and three Diamonds.

In terms of losers we just lose a trump and two Hearts (our Club losers get dumped in the bin).