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These hands focus on bidding strong unbalanced hands, especially using reverses and high-level reverses. The play gives practice in deciding whether or not to draw trumps as the first priority. Part 2 of 2. ACOL version, updated Summer

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

	North	
	♠ K9754	
	♥ KQ65	
	♦ J9	
	♣ 93	
West		East
♠ QT		♠ J862
♥ 8732		♥ T
♦ 8753		♦ A2
♣ A86		♣ KJT754
	South	
	♠ A3	
	♥ AJ94	
	♦ KQT64	
	♣ Q2	

This series and the previous one (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 and sometimes you make a reverse. This last idea remains a mystery to many players – a mystery we hope to unravel and explain as we go along.

Hand 1 contains a *reverse*. Essentially a reverse is any bid that requests preference at the three-level.

Partner gets the message and takes the bidding to game. Can you make it, though?

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

Lead: ♥ 2

Introduction.

For some reason, players become confused by reverses. We reckon that they just aren't that hard. Here's what identifies them.

A reverse is any bid that asks for preference at the three-level. If the opener actually bids at the three-level he said to be making a **high-level reverse**.

Thus the sequence...

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2♦	

is a reverse. If responder (holding a poor hand) wants to duck out of the auction and put opener back to his first suit he has to bid 3♣ – he has to give preference at the three-level. This is a *low-level reverse*.

The sequence...

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
3♣	

is also a reverse (as it too requests preference at the three-level). However, by actually bidding at the three-level opener has made a **high-level reverse**.

What does it take to make a reverse?

1. An intermediate or better hand. If we are going to force our partner to "prefer" at the three-level, we'd better have some extras. The guidelines suggest 16+ points.
2. The first-named suit is almost always longer than the second.
3. With reference to point 2... don't bid suits unnaturally just to show strength. With five Spades and five Hearts we would always open 1♠, regardless of strength. Some players think it clever to open 1♥ and reverse into Spades with a strong hand. Trust us – it isn't.

Bidding.

Back to the plot, here on Hand 1. We open 1♦ and rebid 2♥ over partner's 1♠ response. This (by requesting preference at the three-level) is a reverse, forcing for one round, showing at least 16 points.

Once we do this partner knows enough about our hand to bid 4♥. 3♥ would be a poor bid on his hand.

Play.

Our initial **Count** of winners and losers shows a Vu-Bridge oddity. A game contract with only three losers and ten winners. Since we've got all our trumps, we only have to pull trumps, establish the Diamonds and Bob's our uncle. However... all is not sweetness and light.

At trick two, we see we've got a 4-1 trump split. Rats. If we pull all the trumps to start with we'd have none left, and East-West would run Clubs when they get in with their ♦A. We need Plan B.

We should not pull a third round of trumps at all, we should go for the side-suit. (If you want a rule of thumb: *When in doubt, play on the side-suit*). East takes his ♦A on the second round and the defence cash two Clubs.

We ruff in on the third round of Clubs, and now the rest are ours. We pull their trumps, run our Diamonds and cash our two Spade winners which we saved for afters. Our timing plan on this hand has to be changed when we see the bad trump split. We are able to turn on a sixpence.

Let's return to the bidding for just one more thought. What if opener didn't have the 16+ points required to make a reverse? There would be little point in bidding Hearts, a suit responder denied, so South's rebid would be – yep, 2♦.



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

North
 ♠ KQ764
 ♥ KQT5
 ♦ 9
 ♣ 943

West
 ♠ 92
 ♥ 9872
 ♦ K85
 ♣ AK86



East
 ♠ JT85
 ♥ 3
 ♦ Q732
 ♣ JT75

South
 ♠ A3
 ♥ AJ64
 ♦ AJT64
 ♣ Q2

This hand is similar but not identical to Hand 1.

Should you bid it the same way?

Should you use the same tactics in the play?

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

Lead: ♣ A

Bidding.

We've another lovely hand (16 points and a 5-4-2-2 shape) so we can show our shape and point count by *reversing*, bidding Hearts as a rebid after opening 1♦.

This shows partner:

1. We have an intermediate or better hand;
2. We have more Diamonds than Hearts.

Notice we are bidding a suit North has bypassed...another tip-off that we are reversing.

Knowing that we have a good hand North has no problem in raising to 4♥. 3♥ would be wet on his cards.

Play.

West leads the ♣A against 4♥ and we settle down to **Count** and **Plan**.

We can see four losing Diamonds and two losing Clubs in our hand. Umm, not good. Obviously we can reduce some of the Diamond losers by trumping them on table – but how many? Let's try counting winners instead... we've got three Spades, four Hearts and one Diamond for eight available winners. We need two more tricks.

When we find ourselves in this situation (a trick or two short) we should look for a way to use our trumps independently for ruffing rather than just top tricks. We could pick up our extra tricks by ruffing one Club and one Spade in hand. That adds up to ten.

What if we planned instead to ruff some Diamonds in the dummy? *Be careful!* We have to keep the trumps intact in one hand or the other so we have enough to pull trumps later in the piece. If we trumped in dummy also then we'd lose a trump trick at the end. As a point of general technique, when playing 4-4 trump fits, try not to ruff in both hands. It only weakens the trump holding.

At trick three, we are **forced** with a third round of Clubs – we have to trump in our hand. Okay, that's part of the plan.

It is **not** a good idea to pull trumps at this point. Why not? Because we cannot count sufficient winners (unless Spades were to break 3-3. Are we that lucky?) If our strategy is to use our trumps independently we must delay extracting the opponents' Hearts. Instead, at trick four, we attack Spades by playing off the ♠A and the ♠Q.

At trick six we are ready to gain our tenth trick by ruffing a low Spade in hand. We must be careful to ruff with a high trump to unblock our trumps. At trick seven, we are ready to start pulling trumps. As they break 4-1 we need to pull four rounds before attempting to cash the boss Spade.

By ruffing a Spade in hand we exhaust East of the suit. That means that the baby Spade in dummy gets promoted to winning rank and we score an overtrick.

Good technique wins the day.



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<p>2016 Blue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 2 ACOL Date: 24/03/2016 Dealer: South Play this hand online!</p>	<p>Contract: 4S By: South Board #: 3 Vulnerable: None</p>
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<p>West</p> <p>♠ J8 ♥ QJT ♦ A53 ♣ QT842</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ T42 ♥ A98653 ♦ T2 ♣ 73</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ K53 ♥ K74 ♦ QJ864 ♣ J9</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ AQ976 ♥ 2 ♦ K97 ♣ AK65</p>	

One of the main principles of bidding is that a new suit bid at the three-level is **forcing**.

After a two-level response such a bid commits the partnership to game.

As well as this being a powerful idea it also creates interesting offshoots for further bidding – as you will see.

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

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

We open 1♠ as dealer on a lovely 5·4·3·1 hand containing 16 points. North responds 2♦ (promising us at least 10 points, remember) so we know we have a game somewhere.

Where is that game? Spades? No-trumps? Diamonds even? All are possible depending on partner's hand, and it is entirely possible that a slam is in the offing facing the right cards.

So we rebid 3♣ to show a strong hand. This is a **high-level reverse** and it commits the partnership to game.

North now jumps to 4♠. Are we being encouraged to bid a slam?

The answer is **No**. With a capital N. Partner is applying the "*principle of fast arrival*", precluding any further action on our part. Having been told to shut up we do precisely that.

[This is an important point of bidding theory and needs clarification. Although it may be counter-intuitive, after 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♣ a bid of 3♣ on the North cards would be a stronger call than a leap to 4♠. When we are committed to game the cheapest bid (allowing room to explore slam prospects) is usually stronger than a dismissive leap to game].

Play.

West leads the ♥Q against our Spade game and we settle down to contemplate the dummy and to make a Plan. Note that dummy is as advertised – an abject minimum for a two-level response. Partner's 4♠ bid said that he had no interest whatever in a slam and you can now see why.

The lead tells us that dummy's ♥K is worthless. Rats. Our **Count** and **Plan** shows, with the standard 3-2 trump split, no Spade losers, one Heart loser, one Diamond loser and two Club losers. That's one too many.

However, we should count our winners. We can just about see ten of those if suits break (five Spades, four Diamonds and the ♣A K). In fact, that's eleven winners. This suggests we should be drawing trumps.

In fact, we should be using the North hand as a dump dummy by setting up Diamonds for discards. At trick two we ruff the second round of Hearts and pull two rounds of trumps. We start with the ♣A Q in hand, because we want to keep the ♠K in dummy as an entry to the Diamonds.

At trick five we start establishing our Diamonds. West holds off till the second Diamond trick to take his ♦A, then leads another Diamond for his partner to ruff. Very nice defence (we wish they would save it for somebody else, though).

However, that's their last trick and we claim the rest. We end up losing only one Heart, the ♦A and the Diamond ruff. We make five Spades, three Diamonds and two top Clubs.


This hand was a nice challenge, in that we had to save one trump in dummy as an entry to the winning Diamonds.



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

	North	
	♠ K53	
	♥ AK754	
	♦ QJ8	
	♣ 83	
West		East
♠		♠ T8642
♥ QJT98		♥ 63
♦ T642		♦ A53
♣ KJT7		♣ 942
	South	
	♠ AQJ97	
	♥ 2	
	♦ K97	
	♣ AQ65	

This is an easy hand to bid (well, relatively speaking).

For a change, the play looks like being a cakewalk when dummy appears.

What could go wrong?

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

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

The bidding starts in a similar manner to Hand 3.

We open 1♠ as dealer on a pleasing 5·4·3·1 hand containing 16 points. North responds 2♥ so we know we have a game somewhere.

A 3♣ rebid by us, a **high-level reverse**, is a game-force. Interestingly enough, partner now then supports our Spades at the three-level rather than jumping to game.

If you recall, last hand we said that a jump to game was a big red stop sign. A bid of 3♠, by contrast, is showing interest in slam.

[This by the way, is called "The principle of slow arrival"... the better our hand the slower we creep up the bidding ladder. This only applies when one of us has forced to game, mind].

Now, it is worth pointing out that we would be interested (very interested) in higher things if partner's response had been 2♦ rather than 2♥. Having a singleton in partner's suit, though, is bad news and we have only 16 points (remember, we are minimum to make a 3♣ bid). This calls for caution so we bid 4♠.

Note that Pass was never on the menu – that would be a first-class double-cross.

Play.

West leads the ♥Q against 4♠ (what else could he lead?) and we begin our **Count** and **Plan**.

We can see one Diamond loser and three Club losers. The Clubs don't represent a problem, as we can either **trump** one in dummy, or **dump** one on dummy's winning Heart. So the Plan is to pull the trumps, establish the Diamonds, dump the Club and arrive home at a brisk trot.

At trick two, we are pulled up short when West shows out of trumps. We have the oh-so-rare 5-0 trump split. We need a Plan B.

What happens if we don't pull all the trumps?
The Bad Guys could continue Hearts, forcing us to ruff in hand and leaving the enemy in control of the trumps.

What will happen if we do pull all the trumps?
Somewhat surprisingly, nothing bad. We'd be playing the hand in No-trumps, but that's not such a bad thing; we have stoppers in every suit. Let's consider: We hadn't planned on trumping any losers, had we? One of our options was to ruff a Club in dummy, but we chose dumping it on dummy's winning Heart.

So we continue with our original plan: We draw all the trumps (negotiating the **marked finesse** against East's ♠10 8 × × ×), set up two Diamond winners, discard a Club loser on dummy's top Heart and give up two Clubs at the end.


Et voilà! All goes according to plan. We make five Spades, two Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club.



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2015 Y1 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 2	Contract: 5D
ACOL	By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 5
Dealer: North	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

	North	
	♠ 4	
	♥ KQ976	
	♦ KQ832	
	♣ T5	
West		East
♠ KJ9		♠ T632
♥ J53		♥ AT84
♦ 95		♦ 4
♣ K9842		♣ Q763
	South	
	♠ AQ875	
	♥ 2	
	♦ AJT76	
	♣ AJ	

Game contracts are usually bid and made in the majors or in No-trumps.

5♣ and 5♦ are rare beasts simply because making eleven tricks is often too difficult (and 3NT usually proves easier).

If you want to play game in a minor, you need a singleton, a void or a note from your mother.

As far as the play goes, well... can you make use of your abundance of trumps?

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♠
P	2♥	P	3♦
P	5♦	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ 4

Bidding.

This time we have a strong (well, strongish) 5-5-2-1 hand. With a two-suiter in Spades and Diamonds (or with Hearts and Clubs) it is almost always right to open the major so we open 1♠. Partner responds 2♥ so we make a game-forcing, **high-level reverse** of 3♦.

No doubt partner expects us to hold 5-4 in Spades and Diamonds but 5-5 is not such a bad thing. In fact, it's a bonus.

Anyway, this bid appears to give partner a problem. He knows we only play game in a minor when we have a singleton, void or note from our mother and, with ten cards in the two red suits, No-trumps has little appeal. He recognises that we've got at least nine cards in two suits in the closed hand, and this all suggests an aversion to No-trumps.

With five trumps partner decides to take a shot at 5♦ (which, by the way, is a terminal bid. We are not being invited to bid 6♦. The *principle of fast arrival* again).

Play.

West leads the ♣4 against 5♦, which isn't a bad choice. After all, we have bid the other three suits so West tries the unbid suit. He certainly doesn't want to lead a Spade. The only other choice would have been to lead a trump but that is too passive – this West likes to make attacking leads. Good for him.

Our **Count** and **Plan** shows we have unavoidable losers in Hearts and Clubs, plus a pile of Spades that have to go somewhere. Bless North for providing the perfect dummy. We are going to **dump** a Spade on an established Heart winner, and trump the rest.

Timing (as always) is a consideration. When we are looking at trumping in the dummy, we want to make sure there are plenty of trumps to do it with. With such an abundance of riches we can afford to pull two rounds. If we get our expected split, all will be well.

At trick two we jump on the trumps, and luck would have it, we get a 2-1 split (actually, it is well within the odds that they break for us). At trick four, we set up a Heart winner. The opponents wisely take their Club trick at trick five and then we're back in.

The rest of the hand is routine. We ruff the Spades in dummy and the Hearts in the closed hand. A veritable orgy of ruffing.

Note that 3NT would have been hopeless.



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2016 Blue #15 Rebidding strong, unbalanced hands Part 2	Contract: 3N
ACOL	By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 6
Dealer: East	Vulnerable: None
Play this hand online!	

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

Lead: ♣ T

Bidding.

We are sitting with a 5-4-3-1 10-point hand and see partner open 1♠ after three Passes. No problem – we have (just) enough to respond 2♥. Partner now makes a game-forcing, **high-level reverse** of 3♦.

Whatever we choose to bid next Pass is not on the menu. 3♦ commits us to game come hell or high water.

Now, we aren't happy with either of his suits (North is longing for us to show support for his Spades. Sorry, partner) so can't give preference.

Since we have the fourth suit (Clubs) well stopped, we're willing to try No-trumps. We hold our breath a little, though, because we know the dummy may well be distributional and entries may be a problem. Still, 3NT it has to be.

Play.

West leads the ♣10 against 3NT, top of a sequence in the unbid suit. It's time to count winners and we need to see how many *top tricks* we have.

We can count just one Spade, one Diamond and four Clubs. So only six on top. However, can we even get to the four Club tricks? What suit are we going to set up? This is going to be touch and go...

We take trick one with the ♣A and immediately set about our long suit, Diamonds. Now, normally we'd like to play up to dummy's ♦A J 10 × × but we cannot (easily) reach the South hand. So we start by leading the ♦J from table, prepared to lose to both the ♦Q and ♦K. This aims to set up three Diamond tricks and may give us an entry with the ♦9.

East wins the ♦Q and takes the opportunity to fire a Heart through our holding (maybe his partner has the ♥A Q?) and West takes the ♥A. Nervous of playing another Heart, West breaks our communications by playing another Club. Now dummy has no Hearts and no Clubs and

North

♠ AQ875
♥ 2
♦ AJT76
♣ AJ

West

♠ T6
♥ AT74
♦ 53
♣ T9843



East

♠ KJ932
♥ J53
♦ KQ4
♣ 72

South

♠ 4
♥ KQ986
♦ 982
♣ KQ65

The bidding is not too difficult to bid (we think!).

The play, though, is decidedly awkward.

Good luck with this one.

no easy way of getting to the closed hand. This is getting messy...

Still, we have to carry on by sticking to our plan. We play another low Diamond, allowing East to take the ♦K. East plays another Heart but we gobble that up with the ♥K, cash the top Clubs and run the Diamonds. The ♠A is the ninth trick.

The defenders missed their way a couple of times but that's because this type of hand is a bear garden. Luckily we came out on top...

Nine tricks eventually emerge via one Spade, one Heart, three Diamonds and four Clubs.