



Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 4S
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

<b>West</b> ♠ 84 ♥ KJ852 ♦ 42 ♣ AT64		<b>East</b> ♠ T6 ♥ A974 ♦ K986 ♣ QJ9
<b>North</b> ♠ AQ73 ♥ ♦ AQJT53 ♣ 853		
<b>South</b> ♠ KJ952 ♥ QT63 ♦ 7 ♣ K72		

**This is a mixed series for V-Blue Year 2. You be will the declarer on some, and play as the defender on others. They are in no particular order, so just enjoy them as they come.**

On this first deal, we will revisit a theme that we have covered before from the VB Year 2 Series - will you be able to recognize it, but more importantly, will you be able to execute it?

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

Lead: ♥ 5

North-South here have an invitational sequence to get to the normal contract of 4♠. West, on an aggressive pursuit (which is fair enough, since North often will have a good Diamond suit for this bidding), leads the ♥5.

With three potential Club losers and a potential Diamond loser, this deal revolves around how to deal with the Diamond suit.

A second danger looms on this deal - assuming the first Heart is ruffed in dummy, if three rounds of trumps are drawn (say the trumps split 3-1), then not only will you be exposed to two Heart losers, but dummy's Diamond suit is lingering on the edge of the cliff (dummy is entryless).

Because of the precarious position of your ♠K, the best way to deal with the Diamond suit here is to cash the ♦A, and lead out the ♦Q for a **ruffing finesse**. If East were to follow with a low Diamond on the ♦Q, you could simply discard a Club allowing West to win the ♦K (if he has it) as West is the 'safe hand' who cannot attack Clubs profitably.

So, after ruffing the first trick in dummy, you should begin by cashing the ♦A followed by the ♦Q.

If East covers the Queen with the ♦K, you ruff, draw trumps ending in dummy, and enjoy the rest of the Diamonds.

Assuming East plays low, you will let go of a Club. If West wins the ♦K, then you will be in control of the hand.

If the ♦Q wins the trick, continue with the ♦J in a similar fashion. Even if East plays low again, discard another Club and allow West ruff the trick. The defence can collect a ruff and the ♠A, but the defence cannot prevent you from going to dummy with the ♠A, ruffing out a Diamond with your ♠K, draw a second round of trumps ending in dummy, and subsequently enjoy the established Diamond tricks.

The moral of this hand is to not take the "normal" Diamond finesse, but to play for a

*ruffing* finesse so this keeps your ♣K protected from a lead through it.



Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

<p>West</p> <p>♠ J5</p> <p>♥ A5</p> <p>♦ QT973</p> <p>♣ AKQ5</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AK6</p> <p>♥ Q63</p> <p>♦ A82</p> <p>♣ J762</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ Q43</p> <p>♥ J98742</p> <p>♦ J5</p> <p>♣ 93</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ T9872</p> <p>♥ KT</p> <p>♦ K64</p> <p>♣ T84</p>		

Psychology is a factor that plays a big role in Bridge.

Some call it "Table Feel". Do you have what it takes to not give the show away?

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

Lead: ♠ T

East-West get to a normal looking 3NT and you lead the ♠10 from your sequence. Declarer plays dummy's ♠J to partner's ♠Q and his Ace.

Looking at the full deal, we can see that declarer has two Spade tricks, one Heart trick, one Diamond trick, and four Club tricks. Declarer's attention will be in the Diamond suit and, with a right guess in the suit, it is possible to establish three additional Diamonds - unless we can persuade declarer otherwise.

At trick 2, declarer lays down the ♦A followed by another Diamond.

Bonus points if you followed *smoothly* to the second round of Diamonds with a low card! Declarer may be convinced that you hold the ♦J and finesse you for the Jack instead of the King.

If, however, you take some to think on the second round of Diamonds (which may be difficult **not** to), then our game could be up - declarer will think that the only reason why you might be thinking is if you are deciding whether to play the ♦K or not. When you do eventually play a low card, declarer will likely play you for the ♦K and call for dummy's ♦Q.

There is a big clue on how we are fairly certain that the ♦J is with partner - if declarer had ♦A J x, wouldn't he have crossed to dummy to take a Diamond finesse?

Psychology can play quite a big role in Bridge - familiarise yourself with these defensive positions, and you will start to become a difficult opponent to play against!


*(Note: Just to set things straight, the Bridge Laws state that you must not purposely stop and think if you do not have any [logical] reason to do so. So... if you had ♦J 6 4 on this deal, you could not hesitate before playing a low card, trying to convince declarer that you have the ♦K. With the ♦J you have nothing to think about - and dithering with intent is a no-no!)*





Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

North		East	
♠ 6		♠ J72	
♥ JT962		♥ 84	
♦ K75		♦ QT8642	
♣ A872		♣ T3	
West		East	
♠ A853		♠ J72	
♥ A3		♥ 84	
♦ 9		♦ QT8642	
♣ KQJ954		♣ T3	
South			
♠ KQT94			
♥ KQ75			
♦ AJ3			
♣ 6			

Sometimes you can use the information of what your opponents played to deduce what your opponents *do not have*, otherwise an opponent would have played it.

Sounds like a mind game - try it out on this deal.

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

Lead: ♣ K

A 1♠ opening by you is overcalled with 2♣ by West. North does not have enough points to bid 2♥ (as that would promise five-plus Hearts and 10-plus points), and Passing is a little wet, therefore a compromise of a Negative Double is made. The negative Double here shows the other major (Hearts) and, because it was made at the two-level, it promises 8-plus points.

This is good news for you as you *jump* to 3♥ to invite partner to a game - and partner, perhaps feeling a little lucky, raises us to game.

West leads the ♣K and you can clearly see two losers in the major suits (the missing two Aces). There is also a potential loser in Diamonds, and that might seem all but you will need to decide which hand to "view the losers" in. If that's North, then there are three potential Club losers, and if South, there is one or two potential losers in Spades.

The easiest way to combat this hand is to try to establish the South's hand - therefore, the Spade suit should be set up.

Upon winning the ♣A at trick one, you should take advantage of the lead being in dummy and play a Spade.

This is where the clever part comes in. East, who can see the singleton Spade in dummy, will play low. You may be wondering which Spade to play - the King or the ten. Once East follows with a low Spade, you should definitely insert the ♠10, hoping to finesse against East's ♠J. We know that East would have risen with the ♠A if he had it, so there's no harm in finessing with the ♠10.

What if West is able to win our ♠10 with the ♠J? No problem, you can later take a *ruffing finesse* by leading out the ♠K, playing West for the ♠A.

The information that you were able to use here was East's play on dummy's singleton Spade. If he had the ♠A he would surely have played it, so he doesn't have it.

As for the current deal here, the ♠10 will force out West's ♠A and continue with another Club. You ruff, and all that's left for you to do is to draw trumps. Once that's done, play the ♠K Q and if the ♠J does not show (it does here), ruff a Spade in dummy to establish your Spades.



Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 4H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

West	North	East	South
3♦	X	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ A

West opens the bidding with a pre-emptive 3♦ to which North makes a take-out Double. How should you respond to the Double as South?

Definitely not 3♥! Because you are forced to bid, 3♥ is a bid that shows weakness, something along the lines of 0-7 points. Actually, if your eight points were different, such as:

West	North	East
♠ T3	♠ KQ95	♠ Q x x
♥ T	♥ A654	♥ J x x x
♦ AKJT973	♦ 5	♦ K x
♣ 972	♣ KJ83	♣ Q x x x
	South	
	♠ AJ6	
	♥ K9832	
	♦ 8642	
	♣ 5	

On this deal, you will be faced with a typical problem dealing with an opponent's pre-empt.

Will you solve it, or will you let it defeat you?

Then that would be a 3♥ bid as well, given that the hand has no redeeming features at all.

Given our current hand, not only do we have a five-card Heart suit, but we also have a singleton. Not to mention our *Diamond length* is a positive factor - because it means we are pretty sure that partner either has a void or a singleton Diamond.

With that said, we definitely owe partner a jump to 4♥. If we bid 3♥, partner should never raise us to 4♥ with his current hand - we could easily have the same hand but with 2 points only. Remember, back on responding to take-out doubles, if we have (good) values, it is up to **us** to tell partner about it.

Anyway, let's get onto the play. West leads the ♦A followed by a Club switch. Provided that you remember to draw two rounds of trumps followed by ruffing two Diamonds in dummy, then your contract will sail home on its own. You will lose a Club, a Diamond, and a Diamond over-ruff (a trump trick, in other words). Dummy's fourth Spade can provide a discard for one of your Diamonds.



Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

<p>West</p> <p>♠ T862</p> <p>♥ KQ9</p> <p>♦ A92</p> <p>♣ KQ7</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AQ4</p> <p>♥ 64</p> <p>♦ KQJ864</p> <p>♣ JT</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 95</p> <p>♥ AJT83</p> <p>♦ T3</p> <p>♣ 9843</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ KJ73</p> <p>♥ 752</p> <p>♦ 75</p> <p>♣ A652</p>	

Sometimes the defence can work out the right play if they can carefully diagnose what declarer is up to.

Can you?

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

Lead: ♥ J

Partner leads the ♥J against West's 3NT. From your point of view, the lead could be from ♥J 10 9, ♥K J 10, or ♥A J 10. Regardless of which it is, you should follow with the ♥2 to *discourage* partner's lead. This informs partner that you have no useful cards in the Heart suit to help back-up his suit.

Declarer wins the first trick, crosses to dummy with a Diamond, and advances the ♠J. What's going on? Why didn't declarer continue with Diamonds?

The reason must be that declarer has the ♦A. If partner had ducked with the ♦A, then surely declarer would have continued the attack in Diamonds.

Therefore, with the ♦A, we can count declarer's tricks: One Spade, one Heart, and six Diamonds, for a total of eight top tricks. Declarer's play of the ♠J now must be that he's trying to sneak through a Club for his ninth trick!

To counter this, you must rise with your ♣A and return a Heart (partner's suit), hoping that partner has led away from ♥A J 10.

As it is, partner does indeed have that hoped-for holding in Hearts, so this defence is necessary to defeat 3NT.

It may have been tempting to follow with a low Club, thinking declarer may finesse into partner's (potential) ♣Q, but a count of declarer's tricks will let you know what's up, and the reason why declarer's playing on the Clubs.





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VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

West	North	East	South
-	-	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Lead: ♥ 7

Against East's 3NT contract, you lead the ♥7, fourth best from your longest and strongest suit. The sight of dummy is mixed with good and bad news.

The good news is that the ♥9 is doubleton, meaning that if partner has any honour card in Hearts, the ♥9 can be squashed on the second round.

The bad news is dummy's Club suit. What makes it even worse is that you can see your ♣K is under the suit, meaning that it can and will be *finessed* by declarer!

Your Heart lead goes to partner's Jack and declarer's King, and not surprisingly, declarer leads out a Club from his hand - the ♣10 to be exact.

With an eagle's eye, you must be sharp and *cover* declarer's ♣10! As you are short in Clubs, you can hope that partner is long in Clubs, and by covering declarer's ♣10, you hope to establish a Club trick (stopper) for partner.

If you don't cover and play the ♣4, declarer will play the ♣3 from dummy and win the trick. On the next Club, your ♣K will pop and declarer will have four Club tricks to run. Five Club tricks, ♠A K, ♥A K, and the ♦A for a total of ten tricks.

If you **do** cover, declarer may err and win the ♣A, cash the ♣Q J to find out about the 4-2 Club break, and take a (losing) Spade finesse. If this is the case, declarer can only win at most three Clubs, one Diamond, two Hearts, and two Spades.

Yes, declarer can still prevail by *ducking* your ♣K (!) to keep communication with dummy, thus collecting four Club tricks - but not all declarers play perfectly. The sight of the ♣K may be euphoria for declarer, and that may cause him to go wrong and take dummy's ♣A, killing his communication with dummy. It would simply be a mistake on declarer's part by not counting his tricks.

The ♣10 on this deal was definitely an honour card - without covering the ♣10, declarer would be able to wrap up five Club tricks in no time.

West	North	East
♠ 873	♠ T64	♠ AKJ
♥ 94	♥ J5	♥ AK32
♦ 872	♦ KT96	♦ AJ54
♣ AQJ63	♣ 9875	♣ T2

South
♠ Q952
♥ QT876
♦ Q3
♣ K4

Are Tens considered to be honour cards?

Well, it depends on the specific hand but, in general, not much can go wrong if you treat a Ten as an honour card.

How is this relevant to this given deal? We suggest you should play on and find out.





Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 6H
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

<p>West</p> <p>♠ 8652</p> <p>♥ 832</p> <p>♦ K84</p> <p>♣ AT7</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ T93</p> <p>♥ 64</p> <p>♦ Q632</p> <p>♣ J943</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ KQ4</p> <p>♥ Q9</p> <p>♦ AJT75</p> <p>♣ K65</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ AJ7</p> <p>♥ AKJT75</p> <p>♦ 9</p> <p>♣ Q82</p>		

Bidding can be an exact science - some people like to play a bunch of system bids that will allow them to show an exact hand down to a stray Jack!

Sometimes, though, old-fashioned unscientific bidding has its advantages - it gives little to no information away to the opponents.

On this deal, do not worry about the bidding too much, just put your focus onto the play.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥
P	2♦	P	3♥
P	6♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ 6

The bidding on this deal wasn't very scientific. A 1♥ opening by you fetches a 2♦ response by partner to which you jump to 3♥ to show extra values and a decent six-card Heart suit. Without much to go on, partner takes a flier into 6♥! Well, 6♥ does look like a nice contract doesn't it?

Resisting the temptation to lead the ♠A, West leads the ♠6 and the only problem that you see is the Club suit, as it is prone to two losers.

Since the major suits won't be generating any additional tricks, you will have to look to the Diamond suit to establish your twelfth trick.

The way to establish dummy's Diamonds without losing a trick is to ruff *three* Diamonds in your hand. Yes, this means that you need every entry you can get to reach over to dummy.

You should therefore win the opening in your hand with the ♠A, and immediately play a Diamond to dummy's Ace. A Diamond ruff will follow and you next play a trump to dummy's ♥9 (yes, that is an entry!).

Ruff a second Diamond, and play a trump to dummy's Queen. Assuming no one has showed in either red suit, ruff a third Diamond (establishing dummy's ♦J now) and draw the opponent's last trump.

All that's left to do afterwards is to establish a Club trick, and your contract is good as gold. Your twelve tricks consists of a Club, **two** Diamonds, six trumps, and three Spades.

It looks like partner's faith in your dummy play was justified!



Eight "General Hands" for Issue 16 of V-Blue (Year 2); ACOL version

VB#16 Y2 General deals ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

<p>West</p> <p>♠ Q952</p> <p>♥ QT876</p> <p>♦ K4</p> <p>♣ Q3</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ T64</p> <p>♥ J5</p> <p>♦ 9875</p> <p>♣ KT96</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 873</p> <p>♥ 94</p> <p>♦ AQT63</p> <p>♣ 872</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ AKJ</p> <p>♥ AK32</p> <p>♦ J2</p> <p>♣ AJ54</p>		

Count, count, count - yes, it can be annoying to do this counting business, but when you do it can pay off big time.

This deal is one of those times - so get your counting hats on!

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ 7

The bidding here is simple and natural - you open a strong 2NT (indicating a balanced hand with 20-22 points) in fourth seat and partner raises you to 3NT, expecting (hoping) the Diamond suit will be of use to us.

West leads the ♥7 and off the bat we can count six top tricks. The Diamonds can be established via a finesse and that's what you aim to do.

You win the first trick and lead out the ♦J. West covers this with the ♦K and you play the ... what do you play?

You must *duck* West's ♦K!

We counted six top tricks, right? That means we only need **three** additional tricks in Diamonds - that is, we only need four Diamond tricks, not five.

If the Diamonds are 3-3, then it is correct that we will be giving up an overtrick, but if they are 4-2 (which occurs more often than a 3-3 break), then you will need to keep your ♦2 as an entry card to dummy to cash your four Diamond tricks. By covering West's ♦K with dummy's ♦A, then after cashing the ♦Q and ♦10, the Diamonds will not be established and with an entryless dummy, you will have to abandon the suit.

Did this deal look familiar to you?

It is almost a replica of Hand 6 within this series where you were on *defence*. Only the minor suits have been switched around, and rather than a A Q J x x suit in dummy, we changed it to A Q 10 x x with the declarer having J x. It is exactly the same scenario, with (almost) the same suit combination.

Remember to count your tricks - it can go a long way!