



Four deals to supplement David Bird's hands for VBlue, year 2. SA Version. Updated summer 2016.

Y2 VBlue #19 Four General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ KJ83 ♥ AJ5 ♦ 863 ♣ AK4		East ♠ AQ ♥ 742 ♦ KJT97 ♣ 763
North ♠ T94 ♥ QT98 ♦ 42 ♣ T952		
South ♠ 7652 ♥ K63 ♦ AQ5 ♣ QJ8		

This set of four deals is all about defense. The four deals are strongly related; that is all we are going to tell you.

Can you read the cards accurately and defeat West's game contract on each deal?

Hand 1 sets the scene. Just what has partner led from?

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

Lead: ♥ T

Bidding.

As dealer West opens 1NT and East raises that to game.

Unsurprisingly, that ends the auction.

Play.

Partner leads the ♥10 against 3NT. This is a hard-to-read lead; we know declarer has the ♥J but the location of the ♥A and ♥Q are still in doubt. Partner would lead the ♥10 from ♥Q 10 9 8 or ♥A 10 9 8 as the *top of an interior sequence*. Such a lead is generally superior to a lead of the fourth-best card, as we shall see in later deals.

Here, though, we are not sure who has what. North may have led a Heart from ♥10 9 8 × (×) in which case our ♥K is worthless and West holds ♥A Q J. On the other hand, North may have ♥Q 10 9 × or even ♥A 10 9 ×. A quick count of points tells us that North has just 1 to 3 points, so at least we can rule out North having ♥A 10 9 × in the suit.

One thing's for sure, we must play the ♥K at trick one in any case. Even if West had all the remaining Heart honors it would cost us nothing; the King would be dead in that case.

West takes the ♥A and tries his luck in Diamonds by running the ♦8. No luck today – we take the ♦Q and return a Heart. This skewers West's ♥J and the defense takes three Hearts and two Diamonds in short order for one off.

[Note: As the cards lie it might have been best for West to duck the ♥K at trick one, but the defenders can still defeat 3NT. Say the ♥K is ducked as is a second Heart. Now a Club shift allows North-South to get a Club trick going before the ♦A Q are knocked out].



Four deals to supplement David Bird's hands for VBlue, year 2. SA Version. Updated summer 2016.

Y2 VBlue #19 Four General Hands SA

Date: 03/07/2016

Dealer: West

[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 3N

By: West

Board #: 2

Vulnerable: None

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

Lead: ♥ T

This deal has strong echoes of Hand 1.

Bidding.

West opens 1NT as dealer and East gambles a raise to 3NT.

From the Eastern perspective the Diamonds may well provide six tricks if West were to have the ♦A. Not today, maybe, but the bid is perfectly logical.

Play.


Partner leads the ♥10 and we, in third seat, cannot be sure whether North has a higher Heart honor or not. A count of points shows that North has 2 to 4 points so it is possible that North started with the ♥Q or even the ♥A.

Anyway, the ♥K is the correct card to play so we play it. West wins trick one with the ♥A and then takes the Diamond finesse, which we win with the ♦Q. At trick three we return a Heart in the hope that partner started with ♥Q 10 9 ×. West takes his ♥Q at this point but this fools no one. Partner's ♥10 lead denies the ♥J so we now know that West started with the ♥A Q J and that playing the suit again would be akin to flogging a dead horse.

When in with the ♦A we should not think of playing a third, futile, Heart. West would take his ♥J and run off all the Diamonds. Our only chance is to grab three tricks quickly and the only suit that offers any promise is Clubs.

Partner will have to have the ♣A but what else could we play for? As the cards lie, the ♣Q shift is deadly as it traps the ♣K and allows the defenders to pick up three Club tricks.

One off – hard luck, West.

<p>North</p> <p>♠ T93</p> <p>♥ T987</p> <p>♦ 42</p> <p>♣ A652</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AJ</p> <p>♥ 542</p> <p>♦ KJT975</p> <p>♣ T9</p>	
<p>West</p> <p>♠ KQ8</p> <p>♥ AQJ</p> <p>♦ 863</p> <p>♣ K743</p>			
<p>South</p> <p>♠ 76542</p> <p>♥ K63</p> <p>♦ AQ</p> <p>♣ QJ8</p>			

How can you work out who has what here?

If you get it wrong, declarer would make his contract.



Four deals to supplement David Bird's hands for VBlue, year 2. SA Version. Updated summer 2016.

Y2 VBlue #19 Four General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ KJ83 ♥ A7 ♦ 863 ♣ AK94		East ♠ AQ ♥ J42 ♦ KJT97 ♣ 763
North ♠ T94 ♥ QT985 ♦ 42 ♣ T52 South ♠ 7652 ♥ K63 ♦ AQ5 ♣ QJ8		

A slightly different case here.

What is your best defense, both early in the deal and later on?

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

Lead: ♥ T

Bidding.

As dealer West opens 1NT and East has an obvious raise to game.

That, to no one's surprise, ends the auction.

Play.

Partner leads the ♥10 against 3NT and we must take stock. Who has what in Hearts?

Well, once again, we don't know. North may have started with ♥10 9 8 × or ♥Q 10 9 8 or even ♥A 10 9 8. A count of points shows we that North has just 0 to 2, so at least we know where the ♥A must lie...

Anyway, should we put up the ♥K at trick one? The answer is **No**. A resounding **No**. With three low cards on table the King would be the correct play but the ♥J in dummy makes a big difference.

There is no need to play the ♥K here as the ♥10 is doing all the work. If declarer has the ♥A Q × then playing the ♥K would hand three tricks to West on a plate; if declarer has the ♥A × or ♥A × × then the play of the ♥K would set up dummy's ♥J as a second stopper.

So the right defense is to play low on the ♥10 (with an encouraging card – the ♥6 is the best we can do). When this forces the ♥A we know that North has the ♥Q (and that's all he can hold in the high-card department). When on lead with the ♦Q it is a simple matter to cash the ♥K and carry on with Hearts, defeating the contract by two tricks.

[Note. Can you see why the ♥10 lead is a better choice than the lead of the ♥8? Well, on this particular deal we can count North's points but suppose that we couldn't. If North led the ♥8 and all we could see was this layout:

North	
♥ 8	
Declarer	Dummy
♥ ??	♥ J 4 2
We (South)	

♥ K 6 3

*We wouldn't know what to do if dummy played small on the opening lead. It could be right to withhold the King, it could look embarrassing if partner had led from a holding of ♥A Q 9 8 x. This is one of the reasons that we lead the top card from **interior sequences**].*



Four deals to supplement David Bird's hands for VBlue, year 2. SA Version. Updated summer 2016.

Y2 VBlue #19 Four General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

<p>West</p> <p>♠ KQJ2</p> <p>♥ Q5</p> <p>♦ 8632</p> <p>♣ AK3</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AT</p> <p>♥ J74</p> <p>♦ KJT975</p> <p>♣ T9</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 983</p> <p>♥ AT982</p> <p>♦ 4</p> <p>♣ 6542</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ 7654</p> <p>♥ K63</p> <p>♦ AQ</p> <p>♣ QJ87</p>	

How do you know how to defend this deal?

Is it a guess or can you see a way to resolve your problems?

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

Lead: ♥ T

Bidding.

For the fourth successive hand West opens 1NT.

East tries his luck with a raise to game. (Who said, "again"?)

Play.

For the fourth successive hand partner leads the ♥10 against a rapidly bid 3NT and we contemplate a dummy that is slightly underweight. How should we defend this one?

Well, we know that it is wrong to play the ♥K at trick one (cf Hand 3) – best is to play an encouraging ♥6. West takes the ♥Q and this leaves us still in the dark – where is the ♥A? Unfortunately we don't know – West could easily have ♥A Q or ♥A Q ×. A count of points shows that North has 2 to 4, so it is possible that North holds the crucial Ace of Hearts.

Having taken the ♥Q West plays a Diamond at trick two and takes the finesse to our ♦Q. What now?

Playing the ♥K is dangerous – If West has the ♥A he'd gobble up the King and set up the Diamonds – it may be too late to change tack and switch to Clubs. Best is to test the waters by trying the ♣Q at trick three, to see what partner's reaction is.

[Note: *No, we do not advocate looking at partner's expression and seeing if he smiles or shakes his head. Such shenanigans would get you banned from all decent bridge Clubs faster than if you'd admitted to having bubonic plague. You must study the **cards**, not the **faces**...*]

Partner might have the ♠K (allowing us to pick up three Clubs and two Diamonds) or he might have the ♥A. On the ♣Q declarer plays the ♣A and partner plays the ♣2. This, we note, is not encouraging! On the next Diamond North throws off another low Club, confirming the message that there is nothing of interest over there in Clubs.

Message received, partner. With nowhere else to go it's back to Plan A: **return partner's suit.**

The ♥K brings joy (no Ace from declarer) and the next Heart allows North to cash out the suit. Two down.

It just isn't West's day – do try to appear sympathetic.