




Eight assorted deals, mainly declarer-play problems. SA version. Updated summer 2016.

Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ KQJ54		
	♥ J		
	♦ 86		
	♣ QJ752		
West		East	
♠ 9762		♠ 8	
♥ T985		♥ KQ642	
♦ AQT		♦ 9743	
♣ 98		♣ A64	
	South		
	♠ AT3		
	♥ A73		
	♦ KJ52		
	♣ KT3		

This series of eight deals is our general series of hands, a random mixture of deals. This series focuses largely on declarer-play problems.

Remember to follow the basic principles and to count your tricks before you play a card from the dummy at trick one.

Enjoy them as they come.

Hand 1 is easy enough... (we think!)

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

Lead: ♥ T

### Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1NT as South and now we use a *transfer sequence*.

North responds 2♥ to show five or more Spades and then bids 3♣ after we bid the obligatory 2♠. This shows at least 5-4 in Spades and Clubs and forces the bidding to game.

Well, with an eight-card Spade fit it must be right to play the hand in Spades. With a minimum hand we apply the **principle of fast arrival** and jump to 4♠.

[Note: Different players might bid the South cards differently after 3♣, preferring 3♠ to 4♠. That is a matter of **style**. What is clear, however, is that South must indicate his liking for Spades and not retreat to a selfish 3NT].

### Play.

This, in point of fact, is a very straightforward deal. West kicks off with the ♥10 as the opening lead. Not that it matters much on this deal but we can probably place our right-hand opponent with the ♥K Q. Anyway, how do we go about playing the hand? The secret, as ever, is to take our time before playing a card from dummy. Did we ever mention **Count – Plan – Execute**?

Let's do the count. In terms of **winners** we have five Spade tricks, one Heart trick, an unknown number of Diamond tricks (that depends where the opponents' high cards are), and four Club tricks once the ♣A has been dislodged. That gives us a total of ten tricks.

**Losers?** Well, there are no Spade losers, no Heart losers, one or two Diamond losers and one Club loser.

Since we are in 4♠ we have sufficient winners for the contract and it indicates that we should draw trumps. So we take the ♥A at trick one, play off the ♣A 10 (following the long-established principle of playing the *high cards from the short side first*) and note the 4-1 split.

We continue to pull trumps until they are all gone (two more rounds) and then switch attention to Clubs – the side-suit.

Again, we use the principle of playing the high cards from shortage by leading low to our ♠K 10 3 to force the ♣A. The defenders take two Diamond tricks (it may look at one point as though we could manouver a Diamond trick but the cards do not lie well for us) and then they concede the last three tricks.

Ten tricks come from five Spades, four Clubs and the ♥A.

### **Postscript.**

So, what's the problem? Well, there isn't one but many players, faced with this type of hand, make the disastrous play of leading a Heart at trick two and ruffing it in in the dummy. This is the wrong play (***don't trump in the long trump hand!***), and here it's fatal.

After the fatuous ruff in dummy we'd no longer be able to make 4♠ as West would have the same number of trumps as we do. If we drew trumps then the opponents could play off all of their Hearts when on lead with the ♣A. If we didn't draw trumps West would score a Club ruff. Oops!



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

North

♠ AJT8  
♥ AJT  
♦ 984  
♣ A42

West

♠ 642  
♥ 98753  
♦ KT  
♣ T98



East

♠ 9753  
♥  
♦ AQ3  
♣ KQJ763

South

♠ KQ  
♥ KQ642  
♦ J7652  
♣ 5

On this deal you will simply have to take your tricks in the right order.

Seems simple enough, doesn't it...?

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣	1♥
P	4♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ T

### Bidding.

As dealer, East opens 1♣. We have enough to overcall 1♥ and North, not bothering to look for an alternative strain when he knows of a good Heart fit, takes that to the Heart game.

### Play.

West leads his partner's suit (always a good idea!) and we take stock of the dummy. Thanking partner for his contributions we settle down to **Count** and **Plan**.

**Winners?** We can see four Spade tricks, five Heart tricks and the ♣A (ten in all) so this looks to be very easy indeed.

**Losers?** Just the three Diamond losers. (We can **dump** two of our long Diamonds on dummy's Spades).

With sufficient winners in sight we should aim to draw trumps. With that idea in mind we take the ♣A and play off the ♥A, learning straight away of the bad news – trumps are 5-0. Still, a brief reappraisal tells us that the North-South hands have enough high trumps to draw all of West's; the deal just needs some care and attention in terms of *entries*.

We play off the ♥A J 10 (we can't afford to overtake any of these) and then come to hand with the ♠Q. Now we pull the last two trumps with the ♥K Q before reverting to Spades. We must remember to overtake the ♠K with the ♠A to be in dummy to cash the remaining ♠J 10. Now we happily concede the last three Diamond tricks to the opponents.


### Postscript.

Note, again, that ruffing a Club in hand at trick two (the egregious play of **ruffing in the long hand**) would be fatal. Now West would have more trumps than we do. Not good!



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

	North		
	♠ 54		
	♥ A5		
	♦ J642		
	♣ KQT92		
West		East	
♠ KQT98		♠ 762	
♥ T9		♥ QJ842	
♦ QT93		♦ 75	
♣ 76		♣ A43	
	South		
	♠ AJ3		
	♥ K763		
	♦ AK8		
	♣ J85		

This time you will be playing in No-trumps...

As so often happens you need to make an accurate plan as an early mistake will lead to defeat.

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

Lead: ♠ K

### Bidding.

As dealer we open 1NT and partner has ample to raise us to 3NT.

Sure, he's 5-4-2-2; What alternative to 3NT does he have, though, with a hand based on minor-suit cards?

### Play.

West starts off with the ♠K and we take a time-out to **Count** and **Plan**. Analyzing the lead we realize that West must have the ♠K Q 10 (and others, no doubt). How should we play the hand?

This is a common position (that is: holding the A J × when the King is led on our left); it is so well-known that it was common knowledge way back when in the days of whist. The correct play goes under the name of **The Bath Coup**, named after the city of Bath in England where, supposedly, it was first "discovered" in the eighteenth century in games of whist.

It is, in fact, a fancy name for an easy play – all it means is that we duck the first trick, creating a *tenace position* in our hand. What could West do at trick two? If he led another Spade he'd give us two Spade tricks; if he shifted to something else (best defense) then we'd still have a Spade stopper. Heads we win, tails West loses.

Here, West shifts to a Heart at trick two (nothing else is any better). We take this in hand (we must preserve the ♥A on table as a later entry for the long Clubs) and set about the Clubs. East holds up the ♣A for as long as he can, but takes it eventually and leads back a Spade. No matter; we have nine tricks (one Spade, two Hearts, two Diamonds and four Clubs).

### Postscript.

What would happen if we were to take the ♠A at trick one? The answer is that we would be one down. East would take the ♣A sometime or other and would fire a Spade through the


remaining ♠J 3, allowing East-West to take four Spades and a Club.



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

	North		
	♠ T4		
	♥ A5		
	♦ J642		
	♣ KQT92		
West		East	
♠ KQ987		♠ 652	
♥ T9		♥ KJ842	
♦ QT93		♦ 75	
♣ 76		♣ A43	
	South		
	♠ AJ3		
	♥ Q763		
	♦ AK8		
	♣ J85		

As so often in VuBridge we like to present you with a deal that is very much like the previous one. "Very much like" does not, however, mean "identical to".

What is the (devious) twist here?

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

Lead: ♠ K

### Bidding.

After three Passes we open 1NT and partner raises us to 3NT.

Sure, he's 5-4-2-2; What else could he bid? Cut the guy some slack.

### Play.

West starts off with the ♠K and we pause awhile to **Count** and **Plan**. This deal is eerily familiar – is this not a clone of Hand 3?

Well, not quite. We should realize that West must have the ♠K Q 9 (and others, no doubt). This is a slightly unorthodox lead from West – more normal with a suit of ♠K Q 9 × × is to lead fourth-highest but that isn't our problem at the moment, our problem is to play the hand correctly.

On the previous deal the right play was to apply *The Bath Coup*, by ducking the opening lead of the ♠K. Well, is tonight a bath night or not? How should we play the hand?

The answer is that possession of the ♠10 on the table makes all the difference. If we duck the opening lead a Heart shift may be very damaging for us. If East were to take the ♥K and return a Heart we would lose the entry to all those Clubs. Also (crucially) there is no point in ducking – we have two Spade tricks by taking the ♠A as the combination of the ♠10 on the table and the ♠J 3 in hand is sufficient to force a second Spade trick.

So... we take the ♠A and set about the Club suit. East meanly ducks his ♣A until the third round and then plays back a Spade. This, however, gives us our ninth trick (two Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds and four Clubs). We might make an overtrick in the ending but nine tricks are always welcome...

### Postscript.


Holding up with A J × opposite low cards when the King is led is often the winning move. However, possession of the Ten makes all the

difference as the lead guarantees us a second  
trick.



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: N / S

	North		
	♠ J965		
	♥ Q5		
	♦ J963		
	♣ AK8		
West		East	
♠ K42		♠ 3	
♥ JT98		♥ K7643	
♦ 82		♦ A754	
♣ QJ32		♣ T95	
	South		
	♠ AQT87		
	♥ A2		
	♦ KQT		
	♣ 764		

On some deals you just make the ordinary, everyday play. Sometimes, however, that play is the wrong one.

What should you do on this deal?

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

Lead: ♥ J

### Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1♠ and partner raises us to 3♠.

Well, with 15 points we feel that we have enough to go on the game.

### Play.

West leads the ♥ J and we settle down to **Count and Plan**.

We may as well try the ♥ Q from dummy at trick one (it's a shot to nothing), but this is covered by the ♥ K, so we know we have a Heart loser.

**Winners?** Four (maybe five) Spade winners, one Heart winner, three Diamond winners, two Club winners. That makes ten winners (maybe eleven).

**Losers?** A possible Spade (just where is the elusive ♠ K?), one Heart, one Diamond and a slow Club. So that's three losers (maybe four).

Tempting, is it not, to win the ♥ A, cross to a top Club and try the Spade finesse? That, however, is the wrong play. That would lose on this layout as West would cash a Heart winner and then play the ♣ Q. Oops! – that's four losers (the defenders would have the *tempo* to set up a Club trick to go with a trick in the other three suits).

Such nonsense should not be contemplated when the contract is (nearly) 100% secure. Instead we should win the ♥ A and play the ♠ A and another trump. The defenders can win the ♠ K, cash a Heart and shift to a Club but we are in complete control. The ♦ A is forced out and the losing Club dumped on the long Diamond.

### Postscript.

Note that we would not have been able to go down on this hand had we held:

♠ K Q 10 8 7  
♥ A 2  
♦ K Q 10



♣ 7 6 3


Here we would win the ♥A at trick one and calmly play the ♠K (or any trump for that matter) at trick two. It's the fact that we have the ♠A Q that puts temptation in our path...



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: E / W

	North		
	♠ T9764		
	♥ 872		
	♦ J4		
	♣ AQ5		
West		East	
♠ 82		♠ 3	
♥ 6543		♥ KQJ	
♦ AT2		♦ 97653	
♣ J863		♣ KT94	
	South		
	♠ AKQJ5		
	♥ AT9		
	♦ KQ8		
	♣ 72		

Here you are playing in a game contract and dummy appears to be a goldmine with extra trumps and very useful high cards.

However, you mustn't take your eye off the ball – if you do, it will hit you square between the eyes.

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

Lead: ♣ 3

### Bidding.

We open 1♠, after East Passes as dealer, and see partner raise to 2♣.

With 19 points we have enough to try 4♣, although these 5-3-3-2 hands have more than their fair share of losers.

### Play.

West leads the ♣3 and partner puts down a very nice dummy. Five trumps! The ♠A Q! Such riches for a mere 2♣ response.

Anyway, the point at issue is to find the right play in 4♣; it's time to **Count** and **Plan**. What should we do? Take the Club finesse? Play the ♣A? Duck the Club completely?

Well, let's stick to the basics, shall we? What winners and losers can we see?

*Winners?* There are five Spade tricks, one Heart trick, two Diamond tricks and the ♣A. That makes nine. It wouldn't be difficult to manufacture a Club ruff in hand for a tenth trick (with a 5-5 fit we aren't ruffing in the long hand – each hand is of equal length in trumps). So there are ten tricks.

What about *losers*? There are two Hearts and the ♦A and a possible Club (we haven't resolved what to do in Clubs yet). So three, maybe four losers.

Now, suppose that we were to play the ♣Q at trick one and East were to take the ♣K. A Heart shift would see us down for sure. Before we got the Diamonds set up East-West would have two Hearts, the ♦A and the ♣K.

Suppose, instead, that we took the ♣A. Now we could draw trumps and knock out the ♦A. The difference here is that we could dump a Heart loser from dummy before the opponents had a chance of knocking out the ♥A. Let's count again. Five Spades, the ♥A, two Diamonds and the ♣A. This time, though, we could ruff a Heart on table as dummy would be down to a doubleton Heart.

So we take the sure-fire line. We ignore the siren calls of the Club finesse and grab the Ace. Two rounds of trumps extract the poison from the opposition. A Diamond to the Jack wins, a Diamond to the Queen forces the Ace. We are ahead in the race now. A Club goes to East's King (showing us the Club finesse was wrong all along) and a Heart shift comes far too late. We take the ♥A, dump a Heart loser on the ♦K and are happy to concede a Heart.

**Postscript.**


Taking the Club finesse is a snare and an illusion. In fact, if dummy had displayed the ♣A 6 5 instead of the ♣A Q 5 we could not possibly have gone down in 4♠. There was just too much in the dummy...



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ A93	
	♥ AK86	
	♦ J5	
	♣ 7642	
West		East
♠ QJT		♠ 62
♥ 94		♥ JT72
♦ AQT4		♦ K862
♣ QJT9		♣ 853
	South	
	♠ K8754	
	♥ Q53	
	♦ 973	
	♣ AK	

On some hands you need to be patient in setting up an extra trick or two. This, naturally enough, is one such deal.

Don't be in a hurry to grab your tricks too quickly or failure may well be the outcome.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
P	2♣	P	2NT
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ Q

### Bidding.

As dealer we open 1♠ and then rebid 2NT over a 2♣ response.

Partner gives us no leeway, he jumps straight to 4♠.

### Play.

West leads the ♣Q and we see immediately that partner hasn't exactly held back in the auction. Mind you, our opening bid (12 points and a tatty Spade suit) is not exactly cast-iron and made in Birmingham either. Sadly we notice that the ♦J is a waste of pasteboard and that partner's Clubs are of no use to us at all. Still, *that's the way the cookie crumbles* some days.

Nonetheless, we thank partner gravely and settle down to **Count** and **Plan**.

*Winners?* In Spades there are only two immediate winners but there may be four tricks if trumps are 3-2; in Hearts there are three winners (there is a possibility of four winners with a 3-3 split); in Diamonds there are no winners; in Clubs there are two winners.

*Losers?* At least one Spade – and that is if trumps break in friendly fashion. No Hearts, two Diamonds, possibly three, no Clubs.

The first point that ought to be clear is that trumps are going to have to break 3-2. If Spades split 4-1 then we'd have two trumps to lose as well as the two inevitable Diamond losers. If the Spades are breaking badly we could only wave goodbye to the contract.

Even with a favorable trump break there are only nine tricks (four Spades, three Hearts, two Clubs). So we need a tenth trick and that can come either from a Diamond ruff on table (again – in the short trump hand) or from a lucky Heart break.

**[Note: Ruffing Clubs in hand is *felo de se*; we will beat this drum again: it is poor play to ruff in**

*the long trump hand*].

To ruff a Diamond on table needs preparation; we have to concede two losers in the suit in order to prepare the groundwork. So... we win the Club lead and immediately play a Diamond. West wins his ♦Q and plugs away in Clubs. We win and play another Diamond. West wins and tries to cash a Club winner. Not today, my friend. We ruff that, cash two top Spades (getting the 3-2 split that we need) and now ruff the losing Diamond on table.

With that done we simply play out some winners, allowing West to take his boss trump when it suits him.

4♠ makes for the loss of a trump and two Diamonds. On the credit side of the balance-sheet we make **five** Spades (four in hand and a Diamond ruff on table), three Hearts, and two Clubs.

#### **Postscript.**


“Nothing we could do”, says West, sorrowfully. No? Perhaps you might think otherwise.



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Y2 VBlue #20 Eight General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 03/07/2016	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 8
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: All

	North		
	♠ 62		
	♥ JT72		
	♦ K862		
	♣ 853		
West		East	
♠ A93		♠ K8754	
♥ AK86		♥ Q53	
♦ J5		♦ 973	
♣ 7642		♣ AK	
	South		
	♠ QJT		
	♥ 94		
	♦ AQT4		
	♣ QJT9		

Defense is harder than declarer play in general. How would you go about defending this hand?

Yes, the deal may look a little familiar to you. Odd how that happens in VuBridge, isn't it?

West	North	East	South
-	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	2NT	P
4♠	P	P	P

Lead: ♠ Q

*If you haven't realized it yet, this is Hand 7, albeit rotated 90°.*

### Bidding.

As dealer East opens 1♠ and then rebids 2NT over West's 2♣ response.

West jumps to 4♠.

### Play.

We are on lead to East's 4♠. With the possibility that dummy is going to supply declarer with a ruffing value (as well as some long Clubs) we decide that the best defense is to eschew our attractive Club sequence and to lead trumps instead. We lead the ♠Q instead of the ♣Q and await dummy with interest.

As we had expected, there are three trumps on the table together with a ruffing value (in Diamonds). The Club suit is surprisingly weak, though. Should we have led one? It's too late now...

Declarer wins the trump lead and immediately plays a Diamond, confirming his intentions of playing for a ruff in dummy. We take the ♦Q, therefore, and plug away in trumps, trying to prevent this.

Realizing the sheer futility of playing another Diamond (we would take the ♦A, draw dummy's last trump and cash a winning Diamond), declarer tries his luck in Hearts. With a 3-3 break he could **dump** his Diamond loser rather than **trump** it.

This is not East's lucky day as Hearts are 4-2. However, we still have to defend well. It would be fatal to trump the third round of Hearts with our master trump (East would then be able to trump a Diamond in dummy). Instead we wait patiently. East has little choice but to revert to Plan A (a Diamond ruff in dummy) and he leads the ♦J from the table.

Here, we partner makes a remarkable blunder by playing the ♦K. Why? Perhaps he remembered the adage "*Always cover an honor*"

*with an honor*". Umm. "Always" is a bit strong here... we have to temper these sayings with common sense.

Luckily, we are able to save North from himself by overtaking with the ♦A, cashing the master trump (removing dummy's last Spade) and then taking the boss ♦10. That's four defensive tricks and defeat for East.

**Postscript.**

Against a trump lead and subsequent tough defense declarer cannot make 4♠. Despite North's ill thought out play we were able to correct matters and beat the game. Well defended!