




Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 2H
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ AT3		
	♥ J98		
	♦ KQJ4		
	♣ AT4		
West		East	
♠ Q742		♠ KJ96	
♥ AQ		♥ KT	
♦ AT		♦ 9852	
♣ Q8763		♣ KJ9	
	South		
	♠ 85		
	♥ 765432		
	♦ 763		
	♣ 52		

Here are eight general practice hands on the themes that we have been looking at in VuBridge.

They are in no particular order, just enjoy them as they come...

Here, on Hand 1, you start with a wonderful collection (!).

Do you need to adjust your glasses? Is this really your hand? Sometimes you pick up a bridge hand and wonder why you even bothered to get up today...

Every hand is an adventure – it's tough, but try your best to make something out of nothing.

And we mean *nothing*.

West	North	East	South
-	1NT	P	2♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ 6

*On this deal, you hold a once-in-a-lifetime hand where you have no card higher than an Eight. Any hand with no card higher than a Nine is known as a **Yarborough**.*

Bidding.

North opens, as dealer, with a strong 1NT (15 to 17 points) and this is Passed to us. We might have fallen asleep by now with such an awful hand; why would we be doing anything except Pass?

Now here's where we should think of our partnership responsibilities (despite how difficult that might be!) Holding a collection such as this South trash, do you think our hand will be more beneficial in a 1NT contract or in a 2♥ contract?

Once you asked yourself that question, it should become fairly obvious that if we were to be playing in 2♥ we would have at least some trump cards that are worth **tricks**. In No-trumps, our hand is as good as dead. Pathetically useless.

As a result, we should bid 2♥ (a **weakness take-out**) which says to partner, "*I have at least five Hearts, and I think we will do much better in 2♥ than in 1NT. I may hold some values, but I may hold none – regardless, please Pass, partner*".

North, who is well-disciplined in these matters, duly Passes and that ends the auction. Whether it should have done is another matter – East-West have 25 points between them but who should be bidding what? Anyway, that is their problem, not ours. Our problem is to make as many tricks as possible in 2♥.

Play.

Against our 2♥ contract West leads the ♣6, a low card from an honor (actually, fourth-highest). The way to tackle this hand as declarer should become evident the moment we count our possible winners and potential *losers*.

We have a sure loser in Spades, one in Clubs, one quick loser in Diamonds (the ♦A), which leaves us with a maximum of two Heart losers

that we can afford to lose before the contract is down. Not that we should mind too much if 2♥ fails but it would be good to make it.

So, after winning the ♠6 in dummy with the ♣A, we must immediately start to **draw trumps**. We do not have any high Hearts with which to pull the opponent's trumps, it is true, but we do not want the opponents to win trump tricks individually with each of their high Hearts.

By playing a Heart at trick two we draw two cards in Hearts from the opponents on the same trick and that's very much in our interest. If each opponent has two Hearts (which is what we are hoping for) then the most number of Heart losers we will have is two (provided that we draw them as fast as we can). The Heart honors will "crash" together on the same tricks.

The opponents win the first trump lead and return a Club to the ♣K and another Club. We trump that and continue the plan by playing another Heart. To the delightful sound of grinding teeth to both left and right, the ♥A and ♥K appear on the same trick. Lovely!

We now have four Heart tricks (don't forget that we have used a baby trump to ruff a Club) and two Aces. It is not a problem now to drive out the ♦A to set up two Diamond winners. In all we make four Hearts, two Diamonds and two Aces.

Although we did not have the best hand in the world (!) it turns out that we had important decisions to make in the bidding as well as the play.


Every hand is an adventure – remember that!



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ KQJ93		
	♥ K74		
	♦ J85		
	♣ Q9		
West		East	
♠ 7		♠ A8654	
♥ QJT9		♥ 63	
♦ QT96		♦ 743	
♣ T864		♣ KJ2	
	South		
	♠ T2		
	♥ A852		
	♦ AK2		
	♣ A753		

The bidding on this deal contains a theme that we have covered before, so here's a chance to remind yourself.

Once the bidding is over you have to focus on the play. Here, you will need to take care or otherwise your good bidding will be wasted.

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

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

We open 1NT after East has Passed as dealer and partner responds with a jump to 3♠. This shows exactly five Spades and a game-going hand (10 points or more).

Our duty is to tell partner whether there is a Spade fit or not. With three (or more) card support for partner, we would oblige by raising to 4♠. With a doubleton Spade, as here, we instead choose 3NT as we have no fit in Spades.

Play.

West leads the ♥Q against 3NT and we already face our first problem. Do we win it in dummy, or do we win it in the closed hand?

Answering that question is a little more complicated than that as it really depends on the rest of the hand. By counting our *top tricks*, we see two Hearts, two Diamonds, and one Club for a total of five top tricks.

We need to set up four additional tricks and a glance at dummy makes it fairly obvious that the source of those "extras" is Spades. To enjoy four Spade tricks we have to force out the ♠A and that needs doing right away.

That should then direct us back to the original question, whether to win the opening lead in dummy or in the closed hand. Since we do not hold the ♠A, we may be locked out of dummy were we to win the first trick with the ♥K. How? Well, as we play on Spades, the opponents may *withhold* the ♠A on the first and even second round of Spades.

As a result we should win the opening Heart lead in the South hand. That's not quite all. The right way to tackle this Spade suit is by *playing the honor(s) from the short side first*. In this case, we should remember to lead out the ♠10 on the first round of Spades.

East can take his ♠A at any point that he wishes, but with the ♥K providing secure access to the table, we have little difficulty in


collecting four Spades, two Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club for a total of nine sweet tricks.



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 973	
	♥ K763	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ AK3	
West		East
♠ KT4		♠ A8652
♥ 92		♥ A4
♦ T842		♦ 9753
♣ QJT7		♣ 94
	South	
	♠ QJ	
	♥ QJT85	
	♦ A6	
	♣ 8652	

The bidding on this deal should cause you few problems.

The play, however, is of a different order. You will need to watch for potential danger(s) and try to counter them.

Hint: *Count your losers!*

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

Lead: ♣ Q

Bidding.

Partner opens 1NT (15 to 17) after West Passes as dealer and we have to find a response.

With five Hearts it might be right to play in 4♥, it might be right to play in 3NT – much depends on partner's Heart holding. Our most descriptive bid is 3♥, telling partner we have a five-card suit and game-going values (10 or more points, essentially).

Partner has to choose the resting spot and, with four-card trump support, naturally chooses 4♥ over 3NT.

Play.

West leads the ♣Q, the top of a sequence, and we settle down to **Count** and **Plan** after dummy is displayed.

On this deal, we need to recognize the danger of attempting to draw trumps at trick two. The danger is the player with the ♥A might win the Ace of trumps and lead a Spade, and we may end up losing two top Spades, one top Heart, and a slow Club trick for down one.

In point of fact, the defense could have beaten us by leading a Spade at trick one, but West (not having second sight) can hardly be blamed for his choice of opening lead.

The solution on this deal is to **dump** a loser quickly. After winning the Club opening lead on table we must immediately switch our attention to Diamonds and play three rounds of the suit to discard a losing **Spade** from the closed hand.

This discard reduces our Spade losers to one and, in conjunction with a Heart loser and a Club loser, we will lose at most three tricks. Only after this emergency procedure is it safe to extract the opponents' trumps.

This deal is all about appreciating the danger that we are in. How? By **counting** (it's a familiar theme, no?) Here we count losers and see that we have one too many.


So we need to appreciate the need and the method for ridding ourselves of an excess loser ASAP after the unfortunate opponents have failed to hit us in our weak spot.



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ Q7	
	♥ A853	
	♦ QJ54	
	♣ AK5	
West		East
♠ 95		♠ T32
♥ KQJ9		♥ T2
♦ A82		♦ KT3
♣ 9843		♣ JT762
	South	
	♠ AKJ864	
	♥ 764	
	♦ 976	
	♣ Q	

On this deal, you start off with a small bidding problem over partner's opening bid of 1NT.

The play is instructive – play too quickly and you will ignore the valuable lessons of Hand 3.

West	North	East	South
P	1NT	P	4♣
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ K

Bidding.

Over partner's 1NT opening, showing 15 to 17 points, we have to try and gauge the contract. With a powerful six-card suit and 10 points it should be obvious that...

(a) we should be in game and...

(b) we should play this hand in Spades. (Remember, North has to have at least two Spades to open 1NT).

So we jump to 4♣ with this hand as we know that's where we belong.

Play.

West leads the ♥K which puts us to the test. Why? Well, count our *losers* (this deal has a similar theme to Hand 3). After taking the ♥A, we are faced with four quick losers (two Hearts and the ♦A K). Once we diagnose the need to reduce those losers immediately we should look to another suit (here, Clubs) to treat the problem at hand. *We need to discard our losers as quickly as we can.*

Yes, this means that after winning the ♥A, we **must not** touch trumps just yet. Because of the *blockage* in the Club suit, we must cash the ♣Q at trick two. Remember, this follows the rule of "*Play the honors from the short side*".

At trick three, we play a low trump to dummy's ♠Q, gaining access to cash those two extra Clubs immediately. This way we dispose of the two Heart losers. Once that's been taken care of we can *then* draw the final trumps from the opponents. Six Spades, three Clubs, and one Heart gives us a total of ten tricks.

Now, with the contract secure, we can try to establish an extra trick by playing towards dummy's Diamond honors twice. As the ♦A and ♦K are *split* between the opponents' hands, we can successfully negotiate a hard-earned overtrick.


The order of play is important on this hand. It needs (as ever) careful **planning**.



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ T742	
	♥ KJ	
	♦ KJT9	
	♣ 862	
West		East
♠ K63		♠ AJ5
♥ 93		♥ 8752
♦ 75		♦ AQ4
♣ AQT943		♣ KJ7
	South	
	♠ Q98	
	♥ AQT64	
	♦ 8632	
	♣ 5	

On these last four deals we are going to switch you into a defender's seat.

You may need to do a little **counting** – yes, even in defense.

That's not too testing, is it?

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

Lead: ♥ 6

Bidding.

East opens 1NT with his balanced 15 points and West raises that straight to game in No-trumps.

Clubs? What Clubs? Minors are second-class citizens at this game. 5♣ is too much like hard work on most deals whereas 3NT is often easier. West hopes to make six Club tricks in 3NT and that makes the No-trump game a decent shot.

Play.

We, of course, lead the ♥6 against 3NT, fourth-best from our longest and strongest suit.

Partner surprises us by taking the trick with the ♥K (what an obliging partner we have!) and delights us by returning the ♥J, the other crucial Heart honor that fills in the holes in our suit.

We might get so excited about the prospect of having five Heart tricks to cash that we could take our eye off the ball. By **counting** out the Heart suit, though, we should be able to work out that it is safe to *overtake* partner's ♥J with the ♥Q.

We started off with five Hearts and dummy had two. If partner started off with ♥K J ×, it wouldn't matter whether we play a high or a low Heart. But what if partner had ♥K J doubleton?

That would give declarer four cards in Hearts but that's no problem at all – provided that we overtake partner's ♥J with the ♥Q. We can see that if we *duck* the ♥J, partner might have no more Hearts to return (as, indeed, is the case on this deal).

By overtaking the ♥J, we can take the ♥A and ♥10, to draw declarer's remaining Hearts, and we can follow it by cashing the thirteenth Heart, the ♥4.


Partners are great when they provide us with the cards that we need, but that's no excuse to relax too early – else we might find ourselves with egg on our faces!



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ KJ4		
	♥ 632		
	♦ 742		
	♣ JT32		
West		East	
♠ 72		♠ Q865	
♥ KQT95		♥ J8	
♦ Q65		♦ AKT9	
♣ K86		♣ AQ5	
	South		
	♠ AT93		
	♥ A74		
	♦ J83		
	♣ 974		

This deal will require defensive co-operation between you and your partner.

As long as you stick to the general principles of defense all will be hunky-dory.

Bridge is not a game about brilliancies – it's about limiting your errors; so as long as you follow the "rules", you will make fewer mistakes.

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

Lead: ♠ 3

Bidding.

East opens 1NT with his balanced 16 points and West has a small problem. Hearts may prove better than No-trumps from his perspective so he makes a *forcing* bid of 3♥, offering East the choice of 3NT or 4♥. With negligible Heart support East opts for the No-trump game.

Play.

We lead the ♠3 (fourth-best from the longest and strongest suit) and partner, being in third hand, plays the ♠K winning the trick. Note that some mean-spirited players think it right to play the ♠J from that North hand. **No, no** and thrice **no**. It is his duty to play *high* – and high means *high*.

Having won the ♠K, what should partner now lead? Well, a Spade would be a good idea, don't you think? It's a question of *returning partner's suit*. However, *which card* should North lead from his ♠J 4?

When returning partner's suit with a doubleton remaining, you should lead back the top card to tell partner that you have only two cards left. That's the "helpful information" part. As an added bonus it also sometimes prepares the way for an *unblock* of the suit.

Consider the Spade layout on this deal. When partner returns the ♠J, declarer is left without recourse. If declarer covered the Jack with the Queen we could behead Her Majesty with the Ace and, with the ♠10 9 set up, we'd have five instant defensive tricks – once we include the ♥A.

If declarer ducks the ♠J, he would succumb to a similar fate. Partner's ♠J would hold the trick and another Spade lead from the Northern quarter would kill East's hopes. We would have the ♠A 10 poised over declarer's remaining ♠Q 8. What could declarer do? Nothing, nothing at all. Heads he loses, tails you win.

Now... can you see what would happen had partner returned the ♠4 instead of the ♠J at his second turn?

On the (ghastly!) ♠4 return at trick two, declarer would play a low Spade and we would win the trick with the ♠9 ... but now what? In order to capture declarer's ♠Q, we need the lead back in partner's hand, but – as is clear from a glance at the full hand – North has no way of regaining the lead.

On this deal, we need to co-operate with partner in defense in order to find the right line to defeat the 3NT contract. Partner's ♠K at trick one was the first hurdle to surmount, then the second hurdle was for partner to return the ♠J.

Let's congratulate partner for that sturdy defense. Actually, let's congratulate ourselves as well since we were the one who found the winning lead in the first place, right...?


Best, though, is to call it a joint effort. After all, good defense is effective co-operation.



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ Q98		
	♥ AQT64		
	♦ J		
	♣ 8632		
West		East	
♠ AJ5		♠ K63	
♥ 8752		♥ 93	
♦ K87		♦ AQT943	
♣ AK4		♣ 75	
	South		
	♠ T742		
	♥ KJ		
	♦ 652		
	♣ QJT9		

On this deal, we will be defending yet another 3NT contract, but rather than make you the play on lead we have switched you to the other side, as the *third hand*.

How should you defend this 3NT contract after partner makes his opening lead?

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

Lead: ♥ 6

Bidding.

West opens 1NT with his balanced 15 points and East takes a reasonable shot at 3NT, hoping his long Diamonds will provide sufficient tricks.

Play.

Partner leads the ♥6 and we can see at once the danger of that long Diamond suit. As soon as declarer has the lead he will be cashing Diamonds, Diamonds, Diamonds...

We, sitting in third seat, must remember to play the King ("*Third hand high*"). Even though we can now see (with hindsight) that both the ♥K and ♥J would win the trick (since partner has both Heart honors), at the table we wouldn't have been able to know that.

We must follow our usual rules – for one thing we may end up fooling partner. (If we play the ♥J, partner's first impression would be to think that we **do not** have a higher Heart honor than the ♥J).

Upon winning the ♥K, what should we return at trick two?

Partner's suit, Hearts, of course!

It might be tempting to shift to the ♣Q but we must resist that temptation with all of our might. Partner has led his longest and strongest suit and we have two honors to support that suit – therefore, partner surely would be very happy to see that we have both the ♥K and the ♥J.

Astute readers here will recognize this hand as being a slight rearrangement of Hand 5, twisted through 180° and with a transposition of the suits.

It is partner's turn here to *count the Hearts* as he needs to be on his toes to *overtake* our ♥J return with his ♥Q in order to cash the remaining Hearts.

Had North left us on lead at trick two with the ♥J we'd have been stuck. We'd have had to lead a black card (a Diamond would have been

especially futile) and declarer would have scooped in at least ten tricks, chortling as he did so. Ouch.



www.vubridge.com

Eight assorted deals. SA Version. Updated winter 2015

VB#5 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North

♠ A74
♥ AT93
♦ J83
♣ 974

West

♠ J8
♥ Q865
♦ AKT9
♣ AQ5



East

♠ KQT95
♥ 72
♦ Q65
♣ K86

South

♠ 632
♥ KJ4
♦ 742
♣ JT32

This deal has similarities with Hand 7; you are again be sitting in the third seat, planning your defense against the opponents' 3NT contract.

Take precautions and follow the rules and you will be just fine.

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

Lead: ♥ 3

Bidding.

West opens 1NT with his balanced 16 points and East has to decide what to do.

Spades may prove better than No-trumps from his perspective so he makes a *forcing* bid of 3♠ offering West the choice of 3NT or 4♠. With little in the way of Spade support West opts for the No-trump game.

Play.

Partner (North) leads the ♥3 (presumably the fourth-best from his longest and strongest suit) and dummy is about what you might expect from the auction (10 points and a five-card Spade suit).

We have a small problem to start with – what card do we play from ♥K J 4? Well, following the guidance of *third hand high* we must put up the ♥K. It would be a dereliction of duty – cowardice in the face of the enemy – to play the ♥J instead. You may think that it would be canny play to hold the ♥K back for later. It isn't.

Take a close look at this deal. If we were so tight-fisted as to keep the ♥K and make do with the ♥J declarer would be off to a flying start by winning the ♥Q. Then he'd set up his Spades and the defense would have insufficient ammunition with which to shoot the contract down.

Having (correctly) played the ♥K, what do we return? Any suit other than a Heart – go to the back of the class and sit on the naughty step. The general rule is *to return partner's suit*. However, there are still two cards to choose from – the ♥J and the ♥4. Which one? *Does it matter?* Yes, it is crucial.

When holding a doubleton it is the right play to lead the higher card. The rationale for this is that it tells an alert partner what is going on the suit (partner can work out what is left in declarer's hand) as well as *untangling* the suit.

It is the untangling part that is the focus of this deal. If we return the ♥4 declarer would play a low Heart and partner would score the ♥9. Now what? If partner cashes the ♥A he sets up

West's ♥Q. If he doesn't lead Hearts again then declarer is untroubled.

However, were we (correctly) to lead the ♥J it would be a knife through declarer's Heart. What could he do? Whether he plays low or plays the ♥Q you (as a pair) can easily cash four Heart tricks and must make the ♠A for one off.

Yes, this is Hand 6 all over again, but rotated 180° and with the major suits transposed.