




Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Y1 VBlue #9 General Hands SA           | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: East         |
| Dealer: North                          | Board #: 1       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|         |   |         |       |
|---------|---|---------|-------|
| North   |   | East    |       |
| ♠ T42   |  | ♠ Q5    | South |
| ♥ QJ    |   | ♥ A62   |       |
| ♦ QJ85  |   | ♦ AK972 |       |
| ♣ T986  |   | ♣ K42   |       |
| West    |   |         |       |
| ♠ AKJ87 |   |         |       |
| ♥ 975   |   |         |       |
| ♦ 63    |   |         |       |
| ♣ QJ5   |   |         |       |

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, we start off with an interesting defensive problem.

Most of the time defense requires partnership co-operation.

However, there are times when a defender can see the right line of defense and needs to seize the moment to take control.

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

Lead: ♥ 4

### Bidding.

North Passes as dealer and East opens 1NT, an impeccable choice with 16 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape. West tries the effect of a game-forcing 3♠, trying to locate some support there, but East cannot raise Spades with only a doubleton. The opener closes the auction with 3NT.

### Play.

We lead the obvious ♥4 (fourth-best of our longest suit). North contributes the ♥J, which is allowed to hold the trick.

*[Just in case you've forgotten, the reason why North played the ♥J and not the ♥Q is because of the rule that third hand should play the lower of equal honors.]*

*The rationale for this rule becomes evident when you observe what happens if declarer wins the Ace in both cases. If North plays the ♥Q and East the ♥A then, as South, you wouldn't know where the ♥J lay. If North, however, plays the ♥J and East the ♥A then you can logically work out that North must have the ♥Q because declarer would have won the trick with the ♥Q if he had it!*

*As a result of this logic whenever North plays the ♥Q, then you can deduce that declarer must hold the ♥J.*

Back to the show... North returns the ♥Q at trick two and, somewhat to our surprise, declarer plays low again. East likes to hold on to his Aces, doesn't he? Before we become too excited by the sight of both ♥Q and ♥J appearing from the Northern quarter we should think carefully before making a fatal mistake.

It should be crystal clear that declarer has the ♥A (since if partner had the ♥A Q J he would have played the ♥A on the first trick). A little counting of the Heart suit suggests that Hearts are 5-3-2-3 around the table revealing that partner does not have any Hearts beyond his ♥Q J.

But that's not a problem, provided we are up

with the game. With our ♥K 10 8 3 remaining we can safely *overtake* partner's ♥Q with the ♥K enabling us to return the ♥10 (or any Heart, come to that). This way we are able to force out the ♥A whilst keeping the ♣A intact.

Look what would happen were we to follow with a low Heart on partner's ♥Q. Partner would be on lead and would have to shift suits – presumably to a Club. We could win the ♣A and revert to Hearts but our long suit would have no access card. They would slowly moulder away for the rest of the deal. Meanwhile, East would be able to make five Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and two Clubs without breaking sweat.

As the cards lie on this deal East has only eight top tricks, so needs to set up a Club trick for his ninth. Having taken the ♥A at trick three he immediately leads a low Club. We rush in with the ♣A to cash the master Hearts.

Note what would happen if we do *not* take the ♣A on the first round of the suit. East would run for home with five Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds and one Club. We usually rail against players who grab tricks by playing Aces "on air" but there are times and places for such trick-snatchings. Having five tricks against 3NT is one of them.


Defense is generally a co-operative effort but there are times when a single player has to make all the running. North has done his bit by returning our suit – we must seize the opportunity to take over and do the important work ourselves. That "work" is clearing the Hearts and then taking the ♣A to gain access to them.





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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#9 Y1 General Hands SA               | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: South        |
| Dealer: East                           | Board #: 2       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|         |  |   |        |  |
|---------|--|---|--------|--|
|         |  | North   |        |  |
|         |  | ♠ J6  |        |  |
|         |  | ♥ KQ4   |        |  |
|         |  | ♦ 642   |        |  |
|         |  | ♣ KJ532   |        |  |
| West    |  |  | East   |  |
| ♠ QT5   |  |   | ♠ K732 |  |
| ♥ AT762 |  |   | ♥ J9   |  |
| ♦ QT8   |  |   | ♦ K97  |  |
| ♣ T8    |  |   | ♣ 9764 |  |
|         |  | South   |        |  |
|         |  | ♠ A984  |        |  |
|         |  | ♥ 853   |        |  |
|         |  | ♦ AJ53  |        |  |
|         |  | ♣ AQ  |        |  |

This deal covers a little bit of everything, from the bidding to the play.

You need to be on full alert though – as the play requires attention in two suits.

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

Lead: ♥ 6

### Bidding.

We open 1NT in second seat with 15 points and a 4·4·3·2 shape and partner raises straight to 3NT.

### Play.

West leads the ♥6 (fourth highest, we may assume) and we can immediately count seven *top tricks* (one Spade, one Diamond and five Clubs, assuming that they break reasonably).

This lead generates a Heart trick immediately but a problem exists due to the blockage in Clubs, so it would be helpful if the ♥A lay with West. If not (and the defense play two rounds of Hearts to remove dummy's honors) then we would have to overtake the ♠Q with the ♠K (praying for a 3-3 break). If West does have the ♥A then we have two Heart tricks and a late Heart entry to the table.

After we call for dummy's ♥Q we breathe a sigh of relief as East follows with a low Heart. We then unblock the top two Clubs and now play a low Heart to dummy's ♥K, scoring a second Heart trick while getting over to dummy to cash the long Clubs.

West has no effective defense whether he takes the ♥A or not. He chooses not to here, making us wonder for a moment if East has done the dirty and withheld it at trick one...

We have been focusing on *entries*, *blocking suits*, and *overtaking* in V-Blue and this deal follows some of those themes. The **entry** in dummy comes from the Heart suit, which also happened to be the suit in which we needed an additional trick.





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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#9 Y1 General Hands SA               | Contract: 3S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: South        |
| Dealer: South                          | Board #: 3       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

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

Lead: ♥ A

### Bidding.

We open 1♠ and partner raises to 3♠ to show an invitational hand with Spade support. Should we bid on to game? **No!** With such a minimum hand (and a balanced one at that), we should not even think of accepting the invitation.

### Play.

As West leads the ♥A, ♥K, and a Heart for East to ruff, we are not regretting the decision one little bit to Pass out 3♠. Even our humble part-score contract may fail.

East switches to the ♦Q after receiving the Heart ruff, and we need the ♣A **onside** (with East) to make the contract.

(To be clear: We draw trumps, ruff a Diamond in dummy and lead a Club *towards* the King. East is then in a no-win position regardless of which Club he plays).

If West held the ♣A we would lose two Club tricks and 3♠ would fail. *C'est la vie*. As it is, we score **six** Spades (five trumps and a ruff in dummy), two Diamonds and the ♣K.

North

♠ AK82  
♥ 652  
♦ A9  
♣ 9653

West  
♠ 96  
♥ AKT93  
♦ 872  
♣ JT2



East  
♠ T3  
♥ 74  
♦ QJT63  
♣ AQ74

South  
♠ QJ754  
♥ QJ8  
♦ K54  
♣ K8


On this deal, partner makes a **limit raise**.

Do you think your two hands are worth a game or not?



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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#9 Y1 General Hands SA               | Contract: 4H     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: South        |
| Dealer: West                           | Board #: 4       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|         |   |        |
|---------|---|--------|
|         | North   |        |
|         | ♠ KQ5   |        |
|         | ♥ KJ3   |        |
|         | ♦ A94   |        |
|         | ♣ QT94  |        |
| West    |  | East   |
| ♠ JT982 |   | ♠ A74  |
| ♥ 94    |   | ♥ 752  |
| ♦ QT8   |   | ♦ J652 |
| ♣ K82   |   | ♣ A73  |
|         | South   |        |
|         | ♠ 63  |        |
|         | ♥ AQT86   |        |
|         | ♦ K73   |        |
|         | ♣ J65   |        |

Sometimes a tough defense is needed to beat you.

When an opponent fails to find the right play you must take full advantage of his lapse.

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

Lead: ♠ J

### Bidding.

Partner opens 1NT in second seat (15 points and a 4·3·3·3 pattern) and our best response is 3♥ to check if there is a fit there. Partner, holding three-card Heart support, duly raises us to game.

### Play.

West leads the ♠J and we can immediately count three top losers (one Spade and two Clubs) and one slow loser in Diamonds.

The only way to rectify that is to set up the Club suit for a winner (on which we can throw a losing Diamond) and, in order to do this, we will need to give up the lead twice.

If the opponents switch to Diamonds at trick two, to begin forcing out our Diamond winners, we'd ultimately find ourselves a trick short of our contract. The opponents would be able to set up a Diamond winner before we set up our Club winner. It's a question of **tempo**.

Luckily, not everyone is perfect and, after East wins the ♠A at trick one, he continues with a Spade to dummy's King. Can you blame him? Wouldn't you?

We quickly draw three rounds of trumps and play on Clubs by leading the ♣J. To our surprise, the ♣J holds the trick. Another Club is won by East, who (finally!) switches to a Diamond. We now need to be careful; knowing in which hand to win this Diamond trick is important.

Since the only entry to dummy is the ♦A we must take the ♦K to save dummy's Ace for later access to the winning Club. We knock out the ♣K and the hand is over. West tries to cash a Spade but we ruff, cross to the ♦A and dump our last loser on the boss Club.

Careful play on this deal reaps us a big reward as we collect the game bonus.







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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#9 Y1 General Hands SA               | Contract: 4S     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: South        |
| Dealer: North                          | Board #: 5       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|  |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ 7</p> <p>♥ JT984</p> <p>♦ AJ76</p> <p>♣ JT4</p>   |   | <p>East</p> <p>♠ J5</p> <p>♥ 7632</p> <p>♦ 942</p> <p>♣ AQ95</p> |   |   |
| <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>North</p> <p>♠ 6432</p> <p>♥ AK5</p> <p>♦ 853</p> <p>♣ 832</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>South</p> <p>♠ AKQT98</p> <p>♥ Q</p> <p>♦ KQT</p> <p>♣ K76</p> </td> </tr> </table> |   |  | <p>North</p> <p>♠ 6432</p> <p>♥ AK5</p> <p>♦ 853</p> <p>♣ 832</p> | <p>South</p> <p>♠ AKQT98</p> <p>♥ Q</p> <p>♦ KQT</p> <p>♣ K76</p> |
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ 6432</p> <p>♥ AK5</p> <p>♦ 853</p> <p>♣ 832</p>  | <p>South</p> <p>♠ AKQT98</p> <p>♥ Q</p> <p>♦ KQT</p> <p>♣ K76</p> |  |   |   |

On this deal there is an irritating lack of communication in the trump suit.

What can you do to get to your tricks?

Are you able to plan ahead?

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

Lead: ♥ J

### Bidding.

We open 1♠ after two Passes and partner makes a simple raise to 2♠. Even though that is a weak bid (6-9 points or thereabouts) we are strong enough to justify bidding game.

### Play.

West leads the ♥J and immediately we can see five possible losers in the minor suits. By contrast, we can also count ten winners (six Spades, three Hearts and one Diamond). Unfortunately we can't get at them because of the **blockage** in Hearts.

In fact, this opening Heart lead is not that helpful. With dummy having no entries (what would we give for the ♠J over there?) we cannot afford to win the opening lead with the ♥Q. If we were to do so we'd never be able to make use of dummy's ♥A K. No matter how trumps split, dummy's ♠6 is not high enough to provide us with access to the table.

*[As an aside, note the difference a subtle alteration to the spot cards would make. Suppose we had ♠A K Q 10 9 6 and dummy had ♠8 4 3 2. Now we would be able to reach the stranded ♥A K with the ♠8].*

The solution to the actual deal starts off by playing the ♥A from dummy at trick one. Yes, this does sacrifice our ♥Q but at least we can cash the ♥K for a discard.

Finding a discard on the ♥K can be a bit tricky – do we discard a Diamond or a Club?

The ♦10 may play a part here as we have the extra chance of finding an opponent with a doubleton ♦J, so it is more beneficial to discard a (certain) losing Club. Not only that, at trick three we must play a Club *towards* the closed hand while we can still do so.

If the ♠A lies with East (as it does), then we have ten tricks more or less *on top*.

If the ♠A lies with West we could still fall back on Plan B. We'd need to hope someone had a doubleton ♦J ×.





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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| VB#9 Y1 General Hands SA               | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: East         |
| Dealer: East                           | Board #: 6       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ J92</p> <p>♥ A85</p> <p>♦ KQ65</p> <p>♣ Q73</p>  |  | <p>East</p> <p>♠ AKQ</p> <p>♥ KQ4</p> <p>♦ J742</p> <p>♣ J84</p> |
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ T86543</p> <p>♥ T9</p> <p>♦ 3</p> <p>♣ KT65</p> |  |  |
| <p>South</p> <p>♠ 7</p> <p>♥ J7632</p> <p>♦ AT98</p> <p>♣ A92</p> |  |  |

A lot of defense revolves around **not** giving declarer something he doesn't deserve.

Often the right play is to sit in your chair and wait patiently for what is rightfully yours.

This deal is a case in point.

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

Lead: ♥ 3

### Bidding.

East-West take the fast route to game by bidding 1NT – 3NT. East has 16 points and is 4-3-3-3, West has 12 points and is also 4-3-3-3. It's hard to find fault with this one...

### Play.

We lead our trusty fourth highest Heart (the ♥3). Partner's contribution is the ♥9 and declarer takes the ♥Q.

East now leads a Diamond towards dummy's ♦K Q. Should we take the ♦A?

Certainly not! Aces were meant to kill Kings (or Queens or – at a pinch – Jacks). It is poor play to place them on Twos.

**Where's the fire?** as we say. In other words: What's the hurry to grab the ♦A? What would we do with the lead once we have it? It's fine to grab tricks if we have five obvious tricks staring at us in the face but here we don't. In these circumstances we should keep our powder dry and allow declarer his due.

East comes to hand with a Spade and repeats the dose – leading another Diamond towards the ♦K. Should we take the ♦A?

No! Certainly not. **Don't play your Aces on air.**

When North shows out on the second Diamond we can work out that declarer has the ♦J × remaining and we have the ♦A 10 poised over the top. Declarer is entitled to two Diamond tricks but not three – and three is what he'd get if we mistakenly put our ♦A on a low card.

East was hoping for a 3-2 Diamond break (a reasonable hope) or that we'd obligingly play the ♦A on a small card. By waiting for an honor to capture with our Ace we are able dash those hopes.

With nothing better to do East plays another Diamond, allowing us to have the ♦A 10. Now what? A low Club? The ♣A? No, no, no.

We should just calmly continue with Hearts and let declarer do his own dirty work. Whoever

leads Clubs first loses out by doing so. If we lead a Club (high or low) East-West can make a trick in the suit. If East-West lead the suit (from either hand) then they cannot make a trick at all – provided that neither we nor our partner plays an honor on thin air.

Eventually East runs out of steam, tricks, inspiration and hope and 3NT drifts one off.



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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Y1 VBlue #9 General Hands SA           | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: South        |
| Dealer: South                          | Board #: 7       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ 9843</p> <p>♥ Q2</p> <p>♦ J96</p> <p>♣ KT87</p>  |  | <p>East</p> <p>♠ T76</p> <p>♥ JT65</p> <p>♦ T52</p> <p>♣ AJ3</p> |
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ QJ2</p> <p>♥ A93</p> <p>♦ KQ74</p> <p>♣ 652</p> |  |  |
| <p>South</p> <p>♠ AK5</p> <p>♥ K874</p> <p>♦ A83</p> <p>♣ Q94</p> |  |  |

On this deal you will need to keep track of two suits – the opponents' and one of your own.

Are you up to the task?

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

Lead: ♣ 7

### Bidding.

We open 1NT with 16 points and a 4·3·3·3 shape and North is happy to raise to 3NT. We have plenty of points between us (28, in fact) but two 4·3·3·3 hands rarely play that well together.

### Play.

West leads the ♣ 7 and we can count eight top tricks (three Spades, two Hearts and three Diamonds). The Club lead to East's ♣ A and ♣ J return, however, enables the defenders to take the first four Club tricks.

*[In passing, on the ♣ J return at trick two it might not seem like it matters, but we should **not** cover it with our Queen. It's almost impossible for East to hold the ♣ K (he would have won the first trick with it) so the ♣ K is marked with West.*

*We don't yet know how many Clubs West started off with but, if he started off with five of them, we can actually **block** the Club suit by refraining from parting with our Queen.*

*To be clear, if West started off with five Clubs, it means East started with a doubleton Club and if we let the ♣ J hold the trick, East won't have any more Clubs to return. If we cover the Jack with our Queen, West can capture it with his King and next cash the ♠ 10 to run the rest of the Club suit].*

Back to the show. West started off with four Clubs and, naturally enough, cashes all of them. What should we discard on the fourth Club?

We can discard a Heart or even a Spade from dummy on the fourth round of Clubs (a Heart is best), but whatever we do, we must not discard an apparently useless Diamond. In order to take nine tricks we must hope that Diamonds split 3-3. If they **do** break dummy's ♦ 7 would eventually turn out to be a winner.

This hand requires a small amount of counting – firstly, when East follows to the third round of Clubs we can immediately deduce that Clubs are 4-3 and that the opponents can only cash

four of them. Secondly, we need to count the Diamonds.

We cash all of our Spade and Heart winners (hoping for a defensive mistake) before tackling Diamonds. When we finally tackle the key suit we find it fortunately divided and the "thirteener" – the ♦7 in this case – takes the final trick.



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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Y1 VBlue #9 General Hands SA           | Contract: 3N     |
| Date: 24/03/2016                       | By: West         |
| Dealer: West                           | Board #: 8       |
| <a href="#">Play this hand online!</a> | Vulnerable: None |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ A93</p> <p>♥ AK8</p> <p>♦ QT754</p> <p>♣ K9</p>  |   | <p>East</p> <p>♠ 82</p> <p>♥ Q96</p> <p>♦ KJ93</p> <p>♣ AJ74</p> |
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ KT764</p> <p>♥ 753</p> <p>♦ A8</p> <p>♣ 852</p> | <p>South</p> <p>♠ QJ5</p> <p>♥ JT42</p> <p>♦ 62</p> <p>♣ QT63</p> |  |

Partnership co-operation is an essential part of the game, especially in defense.

How can you keep partner in the loop here?

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

Lead: ♠ 6

### Bidding.

East-West bid rapidly 1NT – 3NT.

West, the opener, has 16 points and is 5·3·3·2, East has 11 points and is 4·4·3·2. Sensible, unrevealing bidding.

### Play.

North, your partner, leads his fourth best Spade, the ♠6. Dummy plays low and we should play the...?

We must play the ♠J. When we are in third seat with equal cards we must play the lower of two touching honors.

You might not think it makes an ounce of difference as the Queen and Jack have the same value but – oh! – it matters all right. In fact, it is crucial.

Now, for a moment, look at things from North's perspective. If North sees us play the Queen and declarer the Ace he wouldn't know the whereabouts of the ♠J (for all he knows, declarer could have ♠A J ×). He would suspect that he could not lead Spades again without giving West a cheap trick in the suit – and that would be a fatal misjudgement on this hand. North should not blame himself – the fault would be ours.

Now let's revert to the South seat. If we correctly play the ♠J and declarer the Ace, partner can deduce that we **must** have the Queen. Why? Because if declarer had that card he would have won the trick with it. (Why would declarer take the ♠J with the ♠A had he held ♠A Q ×? Simply put: he wouldn't).

So remember – when playing as third hand with equal cards, play the **lower of touching honors**. (Hand 1 has a similar theme).

Back to the play – declarer takes our ♠J with the ♠A and leads a low Diamond. Partner, knowing that we hold the ♠Q, takes his ♦A immediately and continues Spades to take the contract one off before it gets started.

Partner is quite entitled to play the ♦A "on air" here – he can see that our side has five tricks to

take.