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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

VB#12 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ QT76		
	♥ J8653		
	♦ Q8		
	♣ J5		
West		East	
♠ A53		♠ K92	
♥ K4		♥ AQ7	
♦ T92		♦ J64	
♣ KT874		♣ AQ62	
	South		
	♠ J84		
	♥ T92		
	♦ AK753		
	♣ 93		

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...

Hands 1 and 2 see you in a defender's chair.

On this deal you have to find a lead to 3NT.

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

Lead: ♦ 5

Bidding.

East-West reach 3NT in rapid fashion (East opens 1NT and West raises that to 3NT).

Play.

We have to find an opening lead. Well, with a good five-card suit there is little reason to look elsewhere and we should choose a Diamond. However, *which Diamond?*

Some players are tempted by the ♦A K combination and would lead a top one but – against No-trumps – that is the wrong play. We should lead the fourth-highest (the ♦5 in this case) in order to keep communications with partner.

(It may be worth pointing out that we would certainly lead the ♦A against a suit contract. It is poor play to underlead an Ace against a trump contract as we may never make a trick with it later. No-trumps is a very different animal, though).

Here, the fourth-highest Diamond works wonders. North obligingly (and unexpectedly) produces the ♦Q and a Diamond return allows us to cash the first five tricks for one off. Sometimes bridge is a very easy game.


Note the effect of a top Diamond lead. The suit would become tangled up (**blocked**, if you prefer) and now 3NT would make with ease (in fact, it would make with an overtrick).



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VB#12 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 976	
	♥ KJ873	
	♦ 43	
	♣ QJ6	
West		East
♠ Q53		♠ AKT2
♥ Q4		♥ A5
♦ QJT2		♦ 986
♣ KT84		♣ A752
	South	
	♠ J84	
	♥ T962	
	♦ AK75	
	♣ 93	

A very similar hand to the last one.

Not quite the same though...

It's your lead.

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

Lead: ♦ A

Bidding.

East-West reach 3NT in rapid fashion (East opens 1NT and West raises that to game).

Play.

We have to find an opening lead against 3NT. Well, with good Diamonds we may think that is the obvious choice of suit to lead. However, *which Diamond?*

With only a four-card suit the imperative of leading fourth-highest has been removed. We cannot hope to take the first five tricks (at least, not in one suit) and, if we can cash the first four Diamonds, we don't need to lead a low one.

With a holding of ♦A K × × experience suggests that leading a top one is best play. If partner is well at home in the suit (he may have ♦Q × ×, for example) we can still continue with a low one at trick two, having surveyed the dummy.

The big gain comes on a hand like this, when Diamonds is very much **not** the suit to lead. Had we led a low Diamond East would win cheaply and then set about Clubs, losing the third round to North. East would make four Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and three Clubs for a haul of nine tricks.


As it is, the ♦A lead identifies the need for a rapid switch. Hearts is the most promising suit and the ♥10 switch (or any Heart for that matter) proves lethal. East can only take his medicine by winning the ♥A and playing to set up Diamonds. As South we step in with the ♦K and complete declarer's ruin by continuing Hearts. Two down.



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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #12 General Hands SA	Contract: 2D
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ Q83		
	♥ J9742		
	♦ K62		
	♣ Q7		
West		East	
♠ JT964		♠ K72	
♥ A63		♥ KT8	
♦ 83		♦ A94	
♣ 986		♣ A432	
	South		
	♠ A5		
	♥ Q5		
	♦ QJT75		
	♣ KJT5		

This deal revolves around one topic: Counting.

If you're having a bit of trouble with counting then this is the perfect time to practise.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♦
P	1♥	P	2♣
P	2♦	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ J

Bidding.

As South with 13 points we open 1♦, partner responds 1♥ and we try 2♣. This 2♣ rebid shows an unbalanced hand with at least five Diamonds and at least four Clubs.

North, with a minimum hand, *gives preference* back to 2♦ and that's where the auction should (and does) end.

[**Note:** *East, despite having 14 points, has nowhere to go in the auction. What could he bid?*]

Play.

West leads the ♠J and a quick count of our **losers** should point us towards the right direction. Here we have five losers; one Spade, two Hearts, one Diamond and one Club. There are no other potential losers as the solidity of our Diamond and Club suits only require forcing out each respective Ace, establishing the two minor suits.

If we count **winners** we see one Spade, four Diamonds and three Clubs for a total of eight. Having sufficient winners suggests that the right play is to draw trumps as soon as we can.

At trick one we play the ♠Q from dummy (why not? Maybe West has led the Jack from a ♠K J 10 9 holding) and behead East's King with our Ace.

The next move is to draw trumps by playing a low one to dummy's King, with East winning his ♦A. The defense now play two more rounds of Spades and we ruff the third and draw trumps. Had trumps been 4-1 we would not draw a third round before playing on our side-suit, Clubs. As it is, the 3-2 break makes things easy; we can now finish pulling our opponents' trumps before setting up our Club suit for three winners.


The defenders can do nothing to prevent us taking our eight tricks and 2♦ makes on the nose.



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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #12 General Hands SA	Contract: 2S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J4	
	♥ AJ62	
	♦ J8653	
	♣ 86	
West		East
♠ 75		♠ K863
♥ K9743		♥ QT
♦ KQ92		♦ A7
♣ Q3		♣ JT942
	South	
	♠ AQT92	
	♥ 85	
	♦ T4	
	♣ AK75	

Continuing on with the counting theme, we will now meet a deal where you need to count your tricks.

Can you see your way to make the contract?

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

Lead: ♥ 4

Bidding.

We open 1♠ after three Passes and partner responds 1NT showing 6-9 points. (We can see now that he is not strong enough for a 2♦ response. That would require a minimum of 10 points and partner is some way short of that).

We now rebid 2♣ to show at least five Spades and at least four Clubs.

Since we are showing (in principle) longer Spades than Clubs partner is obliged to give preference back to 2♠. Passing 2♠ is clear-cut on our hand.

Play.

West leads the ♥4 (the ♦K lead would be acceptable too) against our 2♠ contract.

A quick count of our losers suggests that we have six of them; one Spade, one Heart, two Diamonds, and two Clubs.

We certainly cannot do anything about our Heart and Diamond losers, but we can definitely get rid of a Club loser. To eliminate one of them we could ruff a Club in dummy.

So the play is to win the Heart opening lead, cash the ♠A and the ♣K and follow with a third Club.

Surprisingly, West ruffs before dummy with the ♠5. He is hoping to force the ♠J from dummy and maybe upset our applecart by forcing us to use up our trump honors prematurely. However, this doesn't bother us much as we can over-ruff with dummy's ♠J and still have powerful trumps in hand.


With four tricks in the bag all that's left is to collect four trump tricks. Using our ♠A Q 10 9 2 we can easily force out and concede a trick to the ♠K but we are still left with four Spade tricks. The opponents gain the lead with the ♠K and enjoy themselves for a while, cashing some winners, but they cannot take more than five tricks.

Eight tricks come from five Spades (four in hand and a ruff on table), the ♥A and the ♣A K.



Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #12 General Hands SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ AJ8	
	♥ AK6	
	♦ 84	
	♣ K7642	
West		East
♠ KT5		♠ Q9732
♥ 42		♥ 873
♦ JT972		♦ K3
♣ T83		♣ AQ9
	South	
	♠ 64	
	♥ QJT95	
	♦ AQ65	
	♣ J5	

Here's a hand to practise your skills in eradicating losers by ruffing.

There's a small twist, though. Be careful.

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

Lead: ♦ J

Bidding.

North opens 1NT (fair enough with 15 points and a 5·3·3·2 pattern) and we jump to 3♥ to show five Hearts and a game-going hand. Partner now chooses to raise to 4♥ as he knows of a 5-3 major suit fit.

Play.

West leads the ♦J and we take stock. There appears to be a lot of possible losers: two in Clubs, two in Diamonds, and one in Spades.

We can see, however, that the Diamond lead has given us two Diamond tricks (that is: whatever Diamond East follows with, we can either bash the ♦K with our ♦A, or win the ♦J cheaply with the ♦Q). With a doubleton Diamond in dummy, this lends itself to a ruffing-losers-in-dummy type of play.

So we win the opening lead with the ♦Q, cash the ♦A, and ruff the third Diamond in dummy. However, we mustn't forget to ruff the Diamond with a high trump on the table just in case East is out of Diamonds too (as, indeed, is the case). If we ruffed with the ♥6 East would be in a position to over-ruff and make a cheap trick with the ♥7.

Our plan now should be to ruff our last Diamond in dummy, so we play the ♥6 to our ♥9 (to gain entry to the closed hand) and play our fourth Diamond ruffing in dummy with the other big trump, the ♥A.

We are a little stuck on the table now, so we cash the ♠A and get off lead with a Spade. West tries to cash the ♠K but we ruff and pull all the trumps. At this point we are guaranteed to make ten tricks and can lead up to the ♠K for a possible overtrick. When East crushes dummy's ♠K with the ♠A we have three losers.


Two Diamonds, two Diamonds ruffs, five trumps in our hand and the ♠A adds up the total to ten tricks. Contract made.



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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #12 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ QJ96	
	♥ 742	
	♦ QT862	
	♣ 7	
West		East
♠ T72		♠ AK53
♥ KQ85		♥ 96
♦ AJ9		♦ 53
♣ J52		♣ AKQT9
	South	
	♠ 84	
	♥ AJT3	
	♦ K74	
	♣ 8643	

Counting is an important part of bridge.

One variation on this all-important themes that you will not have met yet is to count the opponents' tricks.

How might that help? Well, it may get you to find a killing defense...

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

Lead: ♦ 6

Bidding.

East opens 1♣, West responds 1♥, East rebids 1♠ and West has a small problem.

With 11 points he is far too good to bid either 1NT or to give simple preference to 2♣ (a cry of weakness). So he jumps to 2NT to show an invitational hand with a decent Diamond stop.

East has an easy raise to 3NT.

Play.

North leads the ♦6. As this is the *unbid suit* it isn't immediately obvious what North has in Diamonds. As it happens, it's the traditional fourth-highest of his longest suit but North might be protecting Heart and Spade length (remember that these suits have been bid) and just be leading from garbage. It can happen.

Anyway, we are obliged to play our ♦K in third seat and this forces declarer's Ace. Declarer now plays a Club to dummy and leads a low Heart off the table. What's going on?

Asking ourselves the right questions will reveal all of the answers to this deal.

With our pathetic Club holding we can see declarer has five Club tricks any time he wants them. He also has the ♠A K to take – dummy has seven tricks for declarer. So... why is declarer playing on Hearts?

If West started with the ♦A Q he would have nine on top and wouldn't be messing about. He is leading Hearts to set up his ♥K for his ninth trick.

It may be instinctive to play low on this trick (*second hand low* and all that jazz) but that can hardly be right here. If declarer sneaks a Heart trick through he will have nine tricks (the seven we can see on table, the ♦A already in the bag and a Heart).

Our only shot is to take the ♥A and try our luck in Diamonds. As the cards lie, a grateful North cashes out his long suit and 3NT fails.


Was that a faint smile on partner's normally wintry features? It was! "Well defended!", he says. We may bask in glory for a while – at least until we pick up our cards for the next deal.



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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

VB#12 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 2C
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ K9542	
	♥ Q5	
	♦ T84	
	♣ Q64	
West		East
♠ QT76		♠ A83
♥ J932		♥ A76
♦ KQJ5		♦ 9732
♣ T		♣ A87
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ KT84	
	♦ A6	
	♣ KJ9532	

Should you draw trumps, or should you not draw trumps?

That is the question. Whether it is nobler...

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

Lead: ♦ K

Bidding.

We open 1♣ as dealer and North responds 1♠. What should we rebid now?

A rebid of 2♥ here would be considered a **reverse bid** (a two-level rebid of a higher ranking suit than our original suit) and that would promise at least 16 points. We are at least an Ace short for a reverse so we must make do with a 2♣ rebid, announcing long Clubs and a minimum hand (12-14 points or so).

No one has anything else to say (although East may look a little frustrated with his three Aces) and 2♣ becomes the contract.

Play.

West leads the ♦K against our 2♣ contract. With six potential losers in sight (one Spade, three Hearts, one Diamond, and one Club) we must formulate a plan to shed one (or more) of those losers.

We may think of trying to sneak a Spade trick by leading a Spade towards dummy's King, hoping for West to play low with the Ace, but that play is not worth our chips as it is likely to be a losing bet.

Instead, with the Heart shortage on table, we should plan to ruff a Heart in dummy. This is, for sure, a much better plan – as we are sure to be able to manouver a ruff in the short trump hand. So, we win the opening lead and play a Heart towards dummy's ♥Q.

If the Queen were to win our plan would be to continue with another Heart and aim to ruff a Heart (or two) on table.

As the cards are, East takes his ♥A and astutely plays the ♣A and another Club. He can see our plan and has (something) of a counterplay. If we don't lead trumps as declarer it is often right for the defenders to do the deed instead. Good defense but not quite good enough. We win the second Club in our hand so we can take the ♥K and a ruff a Heart with

dummy's ♣Q.

(If we had taken East's second Club lead with the ♣Q on table we might have put ourselves in danger. On some layouts our Heart ruff may have met an unwelcome over-ruff).


It was important on this deal to play on Hearts before drawing trumps as the count of tricks shows that we have insufficient winners. As it is, eight tricks come from six Clubs (that's five in hand and a ruff in dummy), one Heart and the ♦A.



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Eight General Hands. SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #12 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ J8753		
	♥ AK752		
	♦ Q		
	♣ K4		
West		East	
♠ A9		♠ QT42	
♥ QT98		♥ 64	
♦ A5		♦ 8642	
♣ T8762		♣ Q93	
	South		
	♠ K6		
	♥ J3		
	♦ KJT973		
	♣ AJ5		

Will you be tricked or will you have your treats on this board?

Better not fall into a trap...

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

Lead: ♣ 6

Bidding.

North opens 1♠ (it is best to open the higher ranking suit when holding a 5-5 shape) and we respond 2♦, promising 10-plus points. North now rebids 2♥ and, instead of rebidding a discouraging 3♦ (which could easily end the auction), we show our strength with a jump to 3NT, which looks to be our side's most likely game contract.

Play.

West leads the ♣6. This hand is full of trickiness as there are several hurdles to jump.

We first count just four top winners (two Hearts and two Clubs) but note that the establishment of the long Diamond suit would yield five additional tricks. Since West has led a low Club, we might be inclined to call for a low Club from dummy so we can take an extra trick with our ♣A J 5 combination...

Trick one is where the first trap lies. If we were to play a low Club from dummy, East's ♣Q would force out our Ace and, suddenly, we would find that we have no easy entry back to our hand once the Diamonds have been set up.

The correct play (as we can see with a view of all four hands) is to take dummy's ♣K (so we preserve our Ace), and play the ♦Q not forgetting to overtake it with our ♦K. If we do not overtake we would find ourselves stuck in dummy as West would refuse to part with his ♦A. It is fortunate that our Diamonds are solid enough (from the ♦K all the way down to the ♦9) that we can safely overtake dummy's Queen with our King.

West can take his ♦A whenever he wants (he actually ducks the first round so we naturally continue with the Diamond assault) but we have nine tricks. These are: two Hearts, five Diamonds and two Clubs. West's innocent Club continuation gives us a tenth trick but that's just icing on the cake.

A careful **Count-Plan-Execute** strategy at trick one may help avoid pitfalls (such as exist on

this deal) in the future.