




This is the second series about opening 1NT (12-14) for in issue 1 of VBlue. There is some discussion of leads into tenaces; Updated spring 2015.

VB#1 Y1 Opening 1NT Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ QJ74		
		♥ QJ7		
		♦ AK8		
		♣ 953		
West		East		
♠ 92		♠ T865		
♥ K853		♥ AT		
♦ 973		♦ 652		
♣ KJ84		♣ Q762		
		South		
		♠ AK3		
		♥ 9642		
		♦ QJT4		
		♣ AT		

This set of six deals is a further introduction to VuBridge and continues to focus on the opening bid of 1NT. In ACOL style (also known as *Standard English*) this opening bid promises a balanced hand of 12-14 points. In this context "balanced" means a hand with a suit pattern of 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 or even 5-3-3-2

Hand 1 requires you to play the hand with a little caution.

You must remember to *Count* your tricks and make a *Plan*.

Remember also not to flit from suit to suit as you play (we call that "butterflying"); you should identify a suit to play on and then stick to it.

When you are ready click on **Play**.

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

Lead: ♣ 4

### Bidding.

We have a classic hand to open 1NT after East has Passed as dealer. We are balanced (4-4-3-2, in point of fact) and have the requisite number of points (14 in this instance).

North (our cherished partner) can add up what we have shown (12-14 points) to what he can see in his hand (13 points) and can deduce that our partnership has a combined total of 25-27 points.

Partner's hand is completely balanced (4-3-3-3) so he realises that No-trumps is the best spot for North-South. Knowing we have the values for game North simply bids 3NT and doesn't stop to pick the daisies.

### Play.

West leads the ♣4 against the contract of 3NT, following the principle of leading the *fourth highest of his longest and strongest*. We thank partner warmly for his contributions and settle down to sort out our thinking. We will continue to beat this particular drum – this is a time to **think**, a time to **count** and a time to **plan**.

Our *count of tricks* comes to nine on this hand as we can see four Spades, four Diamonds and one Club. We might make a Heart trick eventually but that would be just icing on the cake as we have sufficient tricks for our contract.

Are there any problems? Well, only that we must take care in cashing our tricks in the correct manner. Both Diamonds and Spades are *asymmetric* (in that they are split 4-3 between dummy and the closed hand). When playing off these suits it is essential to **play the high cards from the short suit first**.

Also, as ever, it is important not to flit from one suit to another (for example, it would be inadvisable to take the ♦A, then the ♠A, then the ♦K, then... and so on). We call this indecision "butterflying" and it is generally poor play. Best play is to choose a suit and stick to it.

In this case we decide to play on Diamonds first

(equally good would be to play on Spades, it is true) and to do this we play the suit in the order the ♦A, the ♦K then the ♦J and the ♦Q. Having exhausted ourselves of Diamonds we turn to Spades and play the suit in the same manner: the ♠A, the ♠K, the ♠J, the ♠Q.

That's the first nine tricks and, with the contract secured, we can throw the remaining scraps to the dogs.



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Date: 24/03/2016

Dealer: East


[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 3N

By: South

Board #: 2

Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ 742		
		♥ A652		
		♦ Q83		
		♣ AK9		
West				East
♠ QJ863				♠ KT5
♥ 83				♥ T974
♦ KJ7				♦ A95
♣ T84				♣ 652
		South		
		♠ A9		
		♥ KQJ		
		♦ T642		
		♣ QJ73		

Here, as declarer in the world's favourite contract, you have to see how to play through a suit when the suit is a little tangled up.

This takes a little care and attention – so you need a thoughtful **plan**.

When you are ready click on **Play**.

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

Lead: ♠ 6

### Bidding.

We have another textbook hand to open 1NT after East has Passed as dealer. We are balanced (a 4-4-3-2 pattern) and have the right strength (13 points).

Partner is capable of performing simple arithmetic – in this case he adds up the 13 points he can see to those we have announced and calculates a partnership total of 25-27 points. That (and the fact that North's hand is also balanced) is sufficient knowledge to bid game in No-trumps without delay.

### Play.

West leads the ♠6 against 3NT, following the principle of leading *fourth highest of his longest and strongest*. After the necessary display of gratitude to North ("Thank you, partner") we count our tricks.

Our *count of tricks* comes to nine on this hand as we can see one Spade, four Hearts and four Clubs. We are unlikely to make a Diamond trick but that's unimportant as we don't need one to make 3NT.

Are there any problems? **Yes**. The Heart suit is problematical. Play it through in your head. We play off the ♥K Q J and then what? We are in the wrong hand to cash the ♥A. These tangled-up suits are a nuisance and, in general terms, need to be played first, just to unravel them.

So we take the ♠A at trick one and immediately take the ♥K Q J. Now we play a Club to to the ♣K to reach the table and – while we are over there – cash the remaining Heart.

Having done that we cash the ♠A (*play the high cards from the short suit first*) and finally return to the remaining ♣Q J.

Nine tricks. Job done.



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VB#1 Y1 Opening 1NT Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ K42		
		♥ A87		
		♦ T86		
		♣ AJT6		
West				East
♠ T85				♠ QJ63
♥ QT542				♥ 93
♦ KQ5				♦ A972
♣ 52				♣ 984
		South		
		♠ A97		
		♥ KJ6		
		♦ J43		
		♣ KQ73		

Most of the time that you are bidding an opening bid of 1NT makes partner choose the final contract.

Are there occasions where he can pass the buck back to you? Of course...

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	2NT	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ 4

### Bidding.

We are 4-3-3-3 with 14 points. That is spot-on to open 1NT as dealer.

Partner does the maths and reckons that the total might come to 25 – and, then again, it might not. Looking at 12 points in his own hand he knows that the total point-count is 24-26. To convey this small dilemma partner makes an *invitational* raise to 2NT, passing the buck back to us. It's now our choice whether we bid game (3NT) or whether we Pass out 2NT.

As we are maximum for our 1NT bid we should go on to game. With a minimum (12 points) we would Pass. And with 13 points...? Who knows? We'll discuss this another day.

### Play.

West leads the ♥4 against our final contract of 3NT, as usual following the principle of leading *fourth highest of his longest and strongest*. We thank partner and settle down to **count our tricks**.

Here there are two Spades, four Clubs and no Diamonds but what about Hearts? Well, West – in all innocence – finds an unlucky lead. Unfortunate for his side, fortunate for our side. We should see that a Heart lead *guarantees* us three Heart tricks – provided that we let the lead “run round” to the closed hand.


Regardless of the location of the ♥Q (West actually has it, but it might have lain with East), we can always make three tricks in Hearts once West has led the suit. We must, however, play low from dummy and allow the lead to come round to our ♥K J ×.

As the cards lie, the ♥J scores trick one and then it's just a mopping-up operation. We cash four Clubs, two Spades and the remaining two Hearts for nine in all.



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VB#1 Y1 Opening 1NT Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 1N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ Q875		
		♥ K62		
		♦ AQ7		
		♣ 984		
West		East		
♠ T42		♠ AK9		
♥ 75		♥ J98		
♦ T86		♦ J43		
♣ AJT65		♣ KQ73		
		South		
		♠ J63		
		♥ AQT43		
		♦ K952		
		♣ 2		

Most hands played in VuBridge have you sitting as declarer. However, we also like to make you play as a defender on occasion. After all, you will defend twice as many hands as you will declare so this is an important role.

On this deal how would you play **against** a modest contract of 1NT?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
P	P	1NT	P
P	P		

Lead: ♥ 4

### Bidding.

We are sitting you in a defender's seat for a change on this deal. East (our right-hand opponent) opens 1NT after two Passes and nobody else has anything to say. Certainly we have nothing we can bid on the South cards.

### Play.

The right lead from this type of hand against 1NT is routine, in general. We should lead our longest suit and, when it has holes in it as this one does, we lead the fourth highest card. So in this case the textbook lead is the ♥4. The aim is to make as many tricks as we can from our long suit.

Note that this "rule" (lead the *fourth highest of your longest and strongest*) only applies against No-trump contracts. There is little point in leading long suits if there is a trump suit – by the time our suit contains winning cards one of the opponents will be mean enough to stick a trump on it...

Here, dummy is bad news for declarer – good news for us. Nonetheless, declarer gravely thanks his partner (it's bad form to look depressed or say anything untoward) and calls for a low Heart.

Partner agreeably produces the ♥K (note this play – partner should not withhold his high cards on the fatuous grounds that he'll make tricks with them later. **Bridge is a partnership game**) and *returns our suit*. Again – no "butterflying" here. We, as a defensive partnership, are trying to make tricks in Hearts. It would be poor play for partner to take the ♥K and try his luck in another suit.


This defence allows us to cash the first five Heart tricks. Having done so we switch to our next best suit – Diamonds. To our joy and delight partner turns up with useful cards there as well so we take four Diamond tricks to go with the five Heart tricks.

With declarer looking on helplessly we manage to take the first nine tricks. East morosely claims the last four but that is still three down.


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VB#1 Y1 Opening 1NT Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ Q962	
	♦ Q942	
	♣ AJ8	
West		East
♠ KT864		♠ A97
♥ AK		♥ T853
♦ 653		♦ JT87
♣ 642		♣ 53
	South	
	♠ J53	
	♥ J74	
	♦ AK	
	♣ KQT97	

Here is a deal that just requires a little thoughtful preparation.

Can you see how to get at all of your tricks?

Oh, yes! This assumes that you haven't fallen into a trap prepared earlier...

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1NT
P	2NT	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠ 6

### Bidding.

We are 5-3-3-2 with 14 points. We might open 1♣ but with the right strength to open 1NT and the right shape (5-3-3-2 hands count as balanced) it's better to bid No-trumps than a piffling minor suit.

Partner now raises to 2NT, showing that he isn't quite sure what to do. The grounds for his indecision can only be that he has 11-12 points and can't be certain whether the partnership has 25 points or not. To find out he enlists our help by passing the buck. Our duty is to bid game (3NT) with a maximum 14 and to Pass with a minimum 12. Here it's a no-brainer and we happily advance to game.

Note, in passing, that North Passed as dealer. We might take the inference that he has 11 points exactly. After all, with 12 he might have opened 1NT himself...

### Play.

West leads the ♠6 against our final contract of 3NT, as usual following the principle of leading the fourth highest of his longest and strongest. We thank partner courteously and proceed to *count our tricks*.

Here there are three Diamonds and five Clubs – for a total of just eight. We might wangle a trick from Hearts but ought to realise that the opponents (unwittingly) are developing a "slow" trick for us in Spades. We play low from dummy at trick one (playing the ♠Q would be a bad mistake) and East-West take the ♠A K before playing a third round to our ♠J. This is not an error on their part; there is little they could do.

We must now take the next eight tricks. However, we should see we have a tangled suit – Diamonds. Following the principle outlined in Hand 2 we must take tricks in that suit first. So we cash the ♦A K and – being unable to cash the ♦Q just yet – cross to the ♣A. Having done so we cash the ♦Q while we are over there and then go back to Clubs – taking all the tricks in that suit.

One Spade, three Diamonds and five Clubs.  
That's nine tricks – the opponents are welcome  
to take the last two.



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VB#1 Y1 Opening 1NT Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 1N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

<b>West</b> ♠ AJ5 ♥ J73 ♦ K8653 ♣ A6		<b>East</b> ♠ K8 ♥ 9642 ♦ 97 ♣ KQJT2
<b>North</b> ♠ Q632 ♥ QT85 ♦ A42 ♣ 97		
<b>South</b> ♠ T974 ♥ AK ♦ QJT ♣ 8543		

For the last hand we are going to sit you back as a defender and see if you can beat an opponent's contract.

The bidding is simple – what about the play?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

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

Lead: ♥ 5

### Bidding.

As in Hand 4 we are sitting you in a defender's chair. We pick up an absolutely average hand (10 points) and Pass after East has Passed as dealer. West, our left-hand opponent opens 1NT, a bid which gets Passed out.

### Play.

Partner leads a low Heart against 1NT, rather suggesting he is leading the fourth-highest card from a long suit. We would like to keep playing Hearts but the suit is tangled up with our ♥A K. We do the best we can by taking the two top Hearts but then have to switch our attention to another suit.

Clubs are out of the question, looking at that dummy, so it's a choice between Diamonds and Spades. A Spade lead would set up dummy's ♠K, regardless of who has the ♠A so a better choice is a Diamond – made even more attractive by the fact that we have a sequence in the suit.

As usual, when leading sequences, we lead the top card. This alerts partner to the layout of the suit and has the effect here of trapping declarer's ♦K. The ♦Q holds the trick so we play another Diamond. Declarer tries his ♦K but partner crushes that with the ♦A, cashes his two remaining Hearts and plays a third Diamond.

As a defensive pair we take the first seven tricks (three Diamonds and four Hearts) before declarer gets a look in.

An exasperated West claims the rest but he is still one down.