




Four extra deals to supplement David Bird's deals for VB#3.

VB#3 Year 2 General series ACOL	Contract: 1N
Date: 06/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 75	
	♥ A63	
	♦ A8732	
	♣ T76	
West		East
♠ Q962		♠ JT83
♥ KJ942		♥ QT
♦ QT		♦ KJ6
♣ Q5		♣ K983
	South	
	♠ AK4	
	♥ 875	
	♦ 954	
	♣ AJ42	

This set of four hands has no theme and is by Paul Bowyer.

The hands have come from V-Blue Year 1 - how much can you remember of last year's ideas?

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

Lead: ♥ 4

On this deal you (South) play in 1NT after the shortest of bidding sequences and a fair dummy greets you after West leads a low Heart. Perhaps North should have removed 1NT into 2♦ – still, that's no longer your problem.

The issue is how to take seven tricks in No-trumps. Counting your top tricks you can see five easy ones (two Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and one Club). The only source of extra tricks is Diamonds (the long suit) but to get them going needs patience and a small amount of technique.

You decide to duck the first Heart lead and take the second (not that it matters much) before playing a Diamond. To maintain communications between dummy and the closed hand you must **duck** the first round by leading the ♦2.

East decides to win the first Diamond and makes what he hopes is a killing switch to the ♠J. Nice try, sir, no cigar. You take the Spade and revert to Diamonds; again you have to duck this trick to keep the ♦A on the table.


West wins this one and cashes his Heart winners. That's no problem, you have plenty of rubbish to put in the bin as this is going on. All you have to do is to keep the long Diamonds as they are now winners.

Eventually, having exhausted his Heart winners, West plays another Spade. You take that and can – finally – cash your three Diamond winners. Now you have enough tricks for your contract.



Four extra deals to supplement David Bird's deals for VB#3.

VB#2 Year 2 General series ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 06/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North		
	♠ KQT42		
	♥ A86		
	♦ 8		
	♣ K532		
West		East	
♠ J5		♠ A86	
♥ Q95		♥ KJT7	
♦ KJ97		♦ AQT	
♣ AQJ4		♣ T86	
	South		
	♠ 973		
	♥ 432		
	♦ 65432		
	♣ 97		

Here you have a Yarborough - a hand with no card higher than a Nine. Surprisingly, you still have a critical part to play in the deal.

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

Lead: ♠ 7

Here you are on lead after East-West bid briskly 1NT – 3NT. *So, what do you lead?*

Your first thoughts on picking up this load of tripe and watching the auction are that you are relieved that the opponents haven't bid a slam and that game must be icy cold. No problem (and no interest) – sling a card on the table, watch declarer make an overtrick or two and get on with the next deal.

Now, let's get positive. The aim of the game is to **defeat the contract** – never lose sight of that. You (and "you" is plural here) have to take five tricks. It is evident that you (singular) are not going to take any tricks at all with this junk so if 3NT is going off partner will have to take all the tricks to beat it. How can that happen?

Well – it certainly won't happen if you lead your putrid long suit (a Diamond). What is the point? You can't hope to set them up and get on lead to cash them. No, your only chance is to lead partner's suit – you have to find partner's five-card suit with your opening lead. Remember, partner could have a decent hand – the rapid bidding has frozen him out of the auction.

Now, most pairs look to find a major-suit fit if they have one (think Stayman) and ignore decent minors in the bidding. So dummy could well put down a long Club or Diamond suit but is unlikely to have as many as four cards in Hearts or Spades. *So we lead a major.* Which one? Well, frankly, it's a guess. A great player in times gone by once said, "*When in doubt, lead a Spade*". Of course it doesn't always work but it saves guesswork on hands like these.

Having decided on the suit (Spades), which card? Various partnerships have differing styles. Here at VuBridge we are going to follow the modern style of leading "*second highest from rubbish*". So with three worthless Spades we'd lead the middle one. Other partnerships lead "*top of trash*" and would lead the ♠9. Others might even lead the ♠3 (definitely not recommended!) Discuss this point with your teacher as well as your partner. The point, though, is that if partner can work out that you have led a non-fourth-highest lead he can infer that you don't want the suit led back. (Unless, that is, it suits him to do so).


Here, the Spade lead works like a charm. North has four Spade tricks set up instantly and can gain the lead with the ♥A to cash them (true, declarer might have chanced the Club finesse but that would have been two down).

Trust us when we say that not all speculative leads work as well as this one...



Four extra deals to supplement David Bird's deals for VB#3.

VB#2 Year 2 General series ACOL	Contract: 6N
Date: 06/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

	North		
	♠ A7		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ JT75		
	♣ A954		
West		East	
♠ T9862		♠ K54	
♥ 875		♥ 6432	
♦ 3		♦ Q98642	
♣ J872		♣	
	South		
	♠ QJ3		
	♥ AQT		
	♦ AK		
	♣ KQT63		

Here your ever-trusting partner puts you into a slam contract. Can you repay that trust with careful card-play?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2NT
P	6NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ T

Here you reach a small slam in rapid fashion and West leads a Spade from his sequence.

It can't hurt to run the Spade to your hand at trick one (even if it loses to East's ♠K you build up two Spade tricks) and now you can (apparently) count twelve tricks: two Spades, three Hearts, two Diamonds and five Clubs. *What's the problem?*

Well, you might not make five Club tricks if the fates are unkind and you are careless. If you were to take the ♠A at trick two and the ♣A at trick three you would find that you had a Club lose; West's ♣J × × × would be worth a trick to the defence.


As a prophylactic against ill fortune you have a perfect *precaution play*. At trick two you should play a low Club to the ♣K. Now if both opponents follow you know Clubs are breaking (3-1 or 2-2) and can claim your contract. If – as here – either opponent were to show out then you have a marked finesse against the ♣J. In this instance you can continue with a Club to the ♣9 and then cash the rest of the Clubs. If West were void of Clubs the play would be equally as easy.

Here, having taken the finesse of the ♣9, you can simply cash out your twelve winners and claim your contract.



Four extra deals to supplement David Bird's deals for VB#3.

VB#2 Year 2 General series ACOL	Contract: 6N
Date: 06/10/2015	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North		
	♠ A7		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ JT75		
	♣ A754		
West		East	
♠ T9862		♠ K54	
♥ 8754		♥ 632	
♦ Q963		♦ 842	
♣		♣ JT82	
	South		
	♠ QJ3		
	♥ AQT		
	♦ AK		
	♣ KQ963		

This hand may remind you of one you played recently... Can you play it with similar skill?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2NT
P	6NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ T

Here (in a deal spookily reminiscent of Hand 3) you reach a small slam in rapid fashion and West leads a Spade from his sequence.

It can't hurt to run the Spade to your hand at trick one (even if it loses to East's ♠K you build up two Spade tricks) and now you can (apparently) count twelve tricks: two Spades, three Hearts, two Diamonds and five Clubs. *What's the problem?*

Well, you might not make five Club tricks if the fates are unkind and you play inaccurately. Here, though, your Clubs are not as robust as those of Hand 3 – you are missing ♣J 10 8 2. You need to realise that if West has all four Clubs then he has a Club trick – there is nothing you can do. If, however, if East has all four Clubs they can be picked up by means of a *marked finesse*.

So on this deal you must cash the ♣A at trick three to discover your fate. If both opponents follow you know Clubs are breaking (3-1 or 2-2) and can claim your contract. If – as here – *West* were to show out then you have a marked finesse against the ♣J 10 on your right. You continue with a low Club, intending to play the ♣9. East "splits his honours" by playing the ♣10 so you win the ♣Q, cross to the table with a Heart and lead another Club.

Now you can finesse the ♣9 and then cash the rest of the Clubs. Having taken the finesse of the ♣9, you can simply cash out your twelve winners and claim your contract.

And if *East* had shown out on the ♣A? Then you were always doomed to go down in 6NT and can bemoan your ill-fortune to anyone prepared to listen to your bad luck stories.