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This series is about handling communications & entries. It also involves the use of overtaking plays so as to be in the right place at the right time. Part 1 of 2. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

Y1 VBlue #8 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 8542	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ AK	
	♣ 65432	
West		East
♠ KT3		♠ AJ7
♥ T62		♥ 98743
♦ 6		♦ 98742
♣ KQT987		♣
	South	
	♠ Q96	
	♥ AJ5	
	♦ QJT53	
	♣ AJ	

**This set of six deals (the first of two series in this issue of VBlue) is all about *Entries*. We have already given you a few deals in VuBridge where you have to be in the right hand at the right time; now – in these two sets of six deals – we are going to explain this idea in more detail.**

**As well as understanding the general term *entry* you will also have to understand the terms *blockage* and what it means to *overtake a trick*.**

Hand 1 sets the scene by making use of all three of the terms *entry*, *blockage* and *overtaking*. Here, there are nine easy tricks in 3NT.

Did we say easy? Well, sort of...

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

Lead: ♣ K

### Bidding.

North is dealer on this deal and has 12 points, suggesting he has sufficient to open the bidding, but it's the weirdest 12 points we have seen in a long time. All the high cards are concentrated in the short suits, and the long suits (Clubs and Spades) are bereft of playing strength.

Partner might open 1♣ on that but what would be the point? Rather sensibly he Passes. That allows us to open 1NT in third seat with 15 points and a 5-3-3-2 pattern.

North now raises us to 3NT (what else could he bid?) and that naturally ends the auction.

### Play.

The opening lead of the ♣K promises to be the top of a sequence. In this case it's a *near sequence* (we lead the top card from suits such as ♣K Q 10 or ♣Q J 9).

When the dummy is exposed we must count our top tricks. We can see three Hearts, five Diamonds and one Club giving us nine tricks off the top. That means we can cream our nine winners immediately and let the dogs fight over the rest.

Can we fail? Oh yes! Let's look at our Diamond suit. We, after playing off our ♦A K, have three winners waiting in our hand. But... it's all about *entries*.

Take a good look at our hand (the closed hand). We only have one entry... Our ♥A.

Success in a hand often rests in the ability to get back and forth. Hearts is our *transportation suit*, the one that allows us to get back to the closed hand.

That means the order in which we play the tricks is crucial. We take the ♣A at trick one (noting the startling 6-0 Club split) and then (and this is critical) we must strip the dummy of its ♦A K at tricks two and three.

We'd like to continue with Diamonds but we can't – the suit is **blocked**. At trick four, we have to turn to Hearts by cashing the ♥K. When we continue with the ♥Q we must **overtake** this with our ♥A in order to place the lead in the right hand at the right time. If we fail to do this (if the ♥Q were allowed to win) then the lead would be on table with only feeble black cards to lead. East-West would gain the lead and then would feast on winners – lots of 'em.

Now the lead is in the closed hand we are in position to play our three good Diamond winners, dumping the useless Clubs as we do so. Then we cash the ♥J as the *coup de grâce*. Graciously we concede the last four tricks to the rapacious opposition.

Success comes from cashing the top Diamonds, then *overtaking* a winning Heart in dummy in the closed hand. It is our only way "home" to cash the rest of the Diamond winners.



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ A4	
	♥ 942	
	♦ AKT52	
	♣ T83	
West		East
♠ KQJ82		♠ 953
♥ J		♥ T87653
♦ 9864		♦ 73
♣ K76		♣ A9
	South	
	♠ T76	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ QJ542	

One of the traps for the unwary at this game is to isolate winners in one hand and be unable to cash them.

It happens to all of us but that doesn't make the embarrassment any less acute.

How can you avoid a pair of red ears here?

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

Lead: ♠ K

### Bidding.

After East Passes as dealer we open 1NT with 15 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape. Partner, with his 11 points and good five-card Diamond suit takes us straight to game.

1NT – 3NT is the way to bid many bridge hands, certainly this one.

### Play.

West leads the ♠K from his attractive sequence and we pause awhile to **count** our *top tricks*. This Count shows us that we have nine tricks on top: one Spade, three Hearts and five Diamonds. When all our tricks are there we adopt the "hit and run" strategy. There is no need to mess around.

Careless play would do us in, though. We need to examine the Diamonds carefully. We have five tricks in the suit, but entries are a bit of a problem. With our ♠A dislodged at trick one we have no way back to the winning Diamonds except the Diamonds themselves. In the last deal (Hand 1) we used an outside suit to gain access to our winners. This hand, we need to use the suit with our source of tricks as our "transportation suit."

Notice that the ♦A K Q J 10 are all present. We start off by leading a low Diamond to the ♦J (*play the honors from the short suit first*) and continue with the ♦Q. Now, if we allow this to win the trick, the ♦A K 10 would be stranded in dummy, with no means of access.

*Let's not fool ourselves that we could ever reach the Diamonds with a Club – by the time that suit became set up the opponents would have buried us under a landslide of Spades (and then the top Clubs).*

So, we need to **overtake** the ♦J in dummy on the second round or the suit would be **blocked**. This means that we cannot stand a 5-1 split in the suit. Even though we hold the top five Diamonds we'd be defeated if one of the opponents held five Diamonds. Any five Diamonds. It's worth checking the truth of this.

[Now, here's a little advanced thinking. (Skip this paragraph if you prefer to). Look at the Diamonds again; focus on dummy. Why not just play the ♦A, then the ♦K, dropping the ♦Q J on them? Why go to our hand for the first Diamond trick? Ah-ha! Take a look at the opposition's Diamonds, which are split 4-2. When there are six cards out against us, a 4-2 split is the most common lie. If we just slapped down dummy's two top Diamonds and followed with the ♦10, can you see how West's ♦9 would become a winner?]

Victory comes by *unblocking* the suit, *overtaking* a winner with another winner, and managing our *entries*. Now we are adding a little *counting* into the mix. You do remember counting...?



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ 865		
	♥ A3		
	♦ 83		
	♣ AQ9852		
West		East	
♠ T		♠ QJ9743	
♥ KQJ62		♥ 854	
♦ A964		♦ QT	
♣ 643		♣ T7	
	South		
	♠ AK2		
	♥ T97		
	♦ KJ752		
	♣ KJ		

The bidding here is smooth and accurate.

What about the play? Can you avoid stranding winners on the table?

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

Lead: ♥ K

### Bidding.

We open 1NT as dealer (15 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape) and this gives partner a small problem.

There are those (certainly not any of our VuBridgers!) who would look at the North hand and try to play the hand in Clubs rather than No-trumps. We know, however, that the way to riches and fame is through the highest scoring strain and we look for almost any excuse to be there.

The six-card Club suit should provide a useful source of tricks in No-trumps so North tries his luck in 3NT.

### Play.

When we **Read the Lead** of the ♥K, we know West has led from a long string of Heart honors. We begin our **Count** and **Plan** with a count of *top tricks*, which is mandatory in No-trumps.

We have two Spades, one Heart, no Diamonds and four Clubs. That's a total of seven. Assuming that the Clubs "run" (by breaking in friendly fashion) we might up that total by two – we may be able to cash six Club tricks.

If Clubs behave nicely we have nine tricks off the top, so our strategy is to hit and run. We plan the order in which to play the tricks, paying special attention to the Club suit. With six Clubs in dummy, our strategy has to include entries.

With the ♥A surgically removed from dummy after the opening lead we cannot afford to take the ♠K and the ♣J as winners. One of them has to be overtaken in dummy to avoid getting blocked in the closed hand. We have no entries in dummy except the Club suit itself.

The problem that this causes, though, is that we have to rely on a favorable Club break. The Clubs have to split nicely – 3-2 or the ♣10 falling singleton. Put another way, either the ♣10 comes down quickly or we go down slowly.

So at trick two we play a Club to our ♣K in hand, then *overtake* our ♣J in dummy at trick

three. On this trick we anxiously scan what the opponents do. If one of them shows out then 3NT is going off. (At least two off, in point of fact). However, here the ♣10 falls on the second round so we can cheer up.

The next few tricks are Club winners with discards of Hearts and Diamonds from our hand. (How do we know what to discard? If it's not a winner and can't "grow up" it's a discard).

With seven tricks in the bag all we need are two more and the top Spades provide those. After that – well, who cares? East's shenanigans give us hope of an extra Spade trick but that proves an illusion.

We bag nine tricks with our **hit and run** strategy and it's time to allow the opponents their turn. They duly mop up the rest.



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 2N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

North

♠ A83  
♥ 42  
♦ KJ962  
♣ 952

West  
♠ KQJT  
♥ JT  
♦ 8743  
♣ A63



East  
♠ 95  
♥ Q9763  
♦ T5  
♣ KT74

South

♠ 7642  
♥ AK85  
♦ AQ  
♣ QJ8

Hands 2 and 3 have neatly set the scene for this deal.

So, what do you need to make your contract?  
What splits will allow you to succeed?

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

Lead: ♠ K

### Bidding.

After three Passes we open 1NT on our 4-4-3-2 hand containing 16 points. Partner now gives that a gentle raise to 2NT.

Well, we have the buck passed to us now. Do we advance to game or do we Pass the hand out in 2NT?

With 15 points we'd Pass, with 17 points we'd advance to 3NT. With 16 points we seek inspiration and try to make a case for an upgrade.

Here, there is no case for calling this collection of 16 points, 17 points. The Spades are lousy, the ♠A Q doubleton is more a liability than a bonus and the Clubs do not inspire us. We suggest that a downgrade is more appropriate than an upgrade...

With that view in mind we regard Pass as being clear-cut. 2NT it remains.

### Play.

West has an easy lead of the ♠K and we must **Count** and **Plan**.

Our initial count of top tricks shows one Spade, two Hearts and (with luck) five Diamonds. That's eight on top and that's all we need as we Passed out 2NT.

Now, on a friendlier lead we'd have an easy time. We could cash the ♠A Q, cross to the table using the ♠A as an **outside entry**, and revert to Diamonds. Only an unwelcome and unlucky 5-1 Diamond split would cause us any problems.

However, this West is not blessed with the spirit of friendliness. His ♠K lead is about to dislodge the ♠A from dummy and that will remove the all-important entry to the long suit. We may think of not taking the ♠A but that would only delay the inevitable. West would continue with Spades, forcing the ♠A at trick two or trick three. So we may as well take the ♠A at trick one and plan from there. Well?

Our revised count of top tricks shows that there are just six – one Spade, two Hearts and three Diamonds. The only way to play Diamonds (with dummy having no *outside entry*) is to cash the ♦A and *overtake* the ♦Q before cashing the ♦J. That gives three Diamonds on top.

To make more Diamond tricks (to swell the coffers to five) we need a favorable split. If Diamonds are 3-3 then the remaining ♦9 6 would be established as winners. A further (small but significant) chance is if one opponent started with ♦10 × and his partner with four low cards. This would also allow five Diamond tricks. Regardless – we still need fortune on our side.

Anyway – the fate of the hand is in the lap of the gods. We take the Spade lead and play a Diamond to the ♦A and then the ♦Q, overtaking with the ♦K. What we do see – oh frabjous joy! – is the ♦10 coming down in two. This leaves the ♦J 9 and the baby ♦6 all as winners.

We cash the Diamonds rapidly and gratefully and secure the contract with two Heart winners.



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ KJ3		
	♥ Q8		
	♦ 92		
	♣ Q76432		
West		East	
♠ T98752		♠ 64	
♥ K653		♥ AJ92	
♦ AQJ		♦ 864	
♣		♣ T985	
	South		
	♠ AQ		
	♥ T74		
	♦ KT753		
	♣ AKJ		

You reach a dubious game contract after an invitational auction.

What about the play? Can you steer your boat through choppy waters?

The hand may look trivial to play but be warned. It isn't.

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

Lead: ♠ T

### Bidding.

Partner Passes as dealer, as does East, and we open 1NT on our 5-3-3-2 hand containing 17 points.

Partner now gives that an invitational raise to 2NT, passing the buck again. Well, should we advance to game or should we Pass the hand out in 2NT?

With a maximum for 1NT and a fair five-card suit it's clear-cut to bid 3NT.

### Play.

West leads the top card of his Spade sequence (the ♠10) and we pause to study the dummy and to count our top tricks.

The highlight of this hand is the six-card Club suit. We've got the nine winners we need right off the top after this Spade lead (six Clubs and three Spades), but we have two suits to manage.

In passing, West could have beaten 3NT by leading a Heart initially. The defenders could have gobbled up the first four Heart tricks and followed that with two Diamond winners. Ouch! However, it's not West's fault that he was dealt a six-card suit and chose to lead it. Wouldn't you have done so? We certainly would have.

Anyway, back to the plot. The Clubs look easy to cash. We'd take the ♣A K and then overtake the ♣J to run the rest of the suit. No problem, unless...? Unless Clubs split 4-0 in which case this plan would prove nugatory. Now we could not overtake the ♣J as East would make a trick with his ♠10.

Our first order of business should be to think which card should win trick one. That has to be the ♠A, thereby *unblocking* the suit. Be careful to note that taking trick one with the ♠Q would sink our boat before we left the harbor. Next we cash the ♣A and note the evil 4-0 split. So we take the other two top Club winners to unblock that suit.

At trick five, we return to the dummy by

overtaking our ♠Q with dummy's ♠K. And we continue to take our winners, three remaining Clubs and the ♠J.

With the job neatly done we concede the rest, graciously of course.



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

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

Lead: ♥ 2

### Bidding.

After East Passes as dealer we open 1NT with 15 points and a 4·4·3·2 shape. Partner, with his 10 points and five-card Diamond suit, raises immediately to game.

### Play.

West leads the ♥2 and our **count** of *top tricks* shows one Spade, one Heart and three Clubs for five on top. We need four more and we can see that if we can establish our Diamonds, we'll have the four tricks we need.

The problem, of course, is going to be about *entries* and *unblocking*.

We decide **not** to take the ♥A at trick one, just in case the opponents are away with the fairies and do something stupid. Nope, not today. East accurately takes the ♥K and returns his partner's suit, so we take the ♥A at trick two.

Now we have to set about Diamonds. At trick two, we play to the ♦K (**not** the ♦J) and at trick three we must *overtake* our ♦J with the ♦Q in dummy. Otherwise, we would be blocked. Note that the defenders cannily refuse to take the ♦K with the ♦A and refuse to take the ♦J as well. Had we not overtaken we'd have been in the wrong hand at the wrong time.

As it is, the ♦Q wins so we lead the ♦10 next to force the ♦A. Now we are at the mercy of further Heart leads. If East-West can cash four more Heart tricks we are down – we'd have to shrug our shoulders and get on with our lives. Here, though, Hearts split 4-3 (something we might have guessed from the opening lead of the ♥2) and West can only cash three Hearts.

When West has finished cashing his winners he has to hand the lead back. We take the Spade shift with the ♠A in hand, cross to the outside entry (the ♣Q), cash the remaining Diamonds and we have the ♠A K as the last two tricks.

Nine tricks come from one Spade, one Heart, four Diamonds and three Clubs.

North

♠ Q5  
♥ A74  
♦ QT962  
♣ Q64

West

♠ J984  
♥ QJ62  
♦ A743  
♣ 3



East

♠ KT2  
♥ K93  
♦ 85  
♣ JT872

South

♠ A763  
♥ T85  
♦ KJ  
♣ AK95

You reach a routine contract in routine fashion. So far so very easy.

The play, though, needs a modicum of thought. How do you avoid stranding winners in one hand?