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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 2 of 2. ACOL version. Updated winter 2015.

VB Y1 #8 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ 764		
		♥ KJ3		
		♦ J9763		
		♣ AQ		
West		East		
♠ QT852		♠ A9		
♥ 872		♥ T9654		
♦ AKQ		♦ 85		
♣ 73		♣ T984		
		South		
		♠ KJ3		
		♥ AQ		
		♦ T42		
		♣ KJ652		

This set of deals (the second of two series in this edition) continues the theme of *Entries*. The previous series looked at simple ideas, these deals are trickier. Only slightly harder, mind – we wouldn't want to make things too difficult...

In Hand 1 all you have to do is to untangle your nine tricks.

That doesn't sound too difficult, does it?

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

Lead: ♠ 5

Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1NT with 14 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape. Partner raises to 2NT, inviting us to bid game with a maximum.

With a full 14 points and a five-card suit it is routine to go on to 3NT.

Play.

West leads a low Spade (the ♠5) against 3NT, which we recognise as being from a long suit, topped by an honour. How do we know that? We can see most of the cards under the ♠5, and the lead of a low card signifies a high card. We've got the ♠K J and, when East plays the ♠A at trick one, we can place most of the Spades.

Our **Count** and **Plan** shows that we've got one Spade (after the opening lead), three Hearts and four Clubs. Only a vicious 5-1 or (6-0) break prevents us from having five Club tricks. So, in all probability, we have nine tricks on top. Once we get on lead we can use a **cut and run** strategy to take our nine winners immediately.

The order in which we play the tricks in is vital on this deal as the suits are tangled up. At trick two, when East returns his partner's lead, we grab the ♠K. The immediate danger here is that the opponents might get into their Diamond winners and take three tricks there in addition to a couple of Spades, if we let them.

At trick three, we start the play by *unblocking* the Clubs. We go to dummy and cash the ♠A Q. We do not need to overtake the ♠Q with the ♠K, since we can use Hearts, as our side-suit entry. Besides, a 4-2 Club break would prove fatal – we'd have to lose a Club (and the contract).

We come back to hand at trick five with the ♥A to cash all the Club winners, dumping a Spade and some Diamonds from dummy. Be careful not to stumble at this hurdle. Some players in the past (you are not the first to play this deal) have come to hand with the ♥Q at this point and have wrecked their chances.


Then for our grand finale, we overtake our ♥Q with dummy's ♥K, and are in the right hand at the right time to cash the ♥J, for a grand total of nine.

The key to this hand is recognising that in order to get all five Club tricks, we are able to use a side-suit for entries, rather than overtaking. As an extra we also had to untangle the Hearts, by overtaking. Nice job.



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VB Y1 #8 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ JT	
	♥ A7	
	♦ AT985	
	♣ A764	
West		East
♠ 985		♠ KQ632
♥ 95		♥ JT863
♦ J763		♦ 42
♣ KQJT		♣ 9
	South	
	♠ A74	
	♥ KQ42	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ 8532	

Part of a good **Count** and **Plan** is visualising what might go wrong. (Remember Murphy's Law? Whatever **can** go wrong, **will** go wrong.)

On this hand, you need to take heed of suit splits as well as the intermediate cards that the Great Dealer in the Sky has given you.

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

Lead: ♣ K

This deal shows the importance of intermediate cards such as Tens and Nines. It also helps to have a working knowledge of the odds involved in suit splits.

Bidding.

We open 1NT in second position (after East has Passed) with 14 points and a 4·4·3·2 shape. Partner raises immediately to 3NT and this rapid bidding ends the auction.

Play.

West surprisingly leads the ♣K (we might have expected an attack on our weak point, Spades, but we are not complaining) and we begin our **Count** and **Plan** with a count of *top tricks*.

We can see one Spade, three Hearts, three Diamonds and one Club. That's a total of eight. We are searching, therefore, for one extra. Let's consider suit splits.

If the Diamonds were to split 3-3 we could make five Diamond tricks and treat ourselves to an overtrick. However... if wishes were horses beggars would ride and there is no sound of hooves around. Typically, with six out against us, we would get a 4-2 split most often. Time to visualise. If an opponent has four Diamonds topped with the ♦J, that player could prevent us from taking all the Diamond tricks we need.

And then there's the problem with *entries*. We have two ways to reach the dummy, once the ♣A has been dislodged. Those entries are the red Aces. We need to preserve the ♥A as a way back to the Diamond winners, once we get the suit established. The intermediate cards are important here. Our ♦10 9 8 are all equals against the ♦J and can be used to force it out.

When we either don't have or need to preserve an outside entry, we may need to use the suit we are establishing as our entry. And that means our new friend, the **overtake**.

At trick two, we start on Diamonds and at trick three we overtake our winning ♦K with the ♦A on table. We play another, forcing out the ♦J, setting up the ♦9 8 as masters. West takes the

trick, and East shows out; this allows West to gain access to his Club winners. No problem, he only has three to cash and we can cope with that.

After West has taken the ♣Q J 10 he has to hand the lead back to us (with a Spade, as it happens) so we cross to the ♥A, cash the boss Diamonds and finally take the ♥K Q. 3NT bid and made.

Now, back to the Diamonds. If they had split 3-3, we, by overtaking a Diamond honour and giving up a trick to the ♦J, would have lost out on the opportunity to make an overtrick. Big deal. Guaranteeing the contract is all that matters in this game.

We need to stick to sound guidelines. Six cards out against us means a 4-2 break 50% of the time. Here we are safe to give up a Diamond trick because

(a) the Diamond suit had all the necessary intermediate cards and


(b) the opposition could not have enough winners to beat us.

There may be times when if we don't get a 3-3 split, we're going down and we'll have to play for the less-likely split. This deal isn't one of them. When we don't need a death-defying manoeuvre, play it safe.



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VB Y1 #8 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 863	
	♥ A8752	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ KQ8	
West		East
♠ KT72		♠ Q94
♥ KJ94		♥ T6
♦ 75		♦ K842
♣ J72		♣ T965
	South	
	♠ AJ5	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ QT963	
	♣ A43	

Each hand gets a little trickier and each hand you become more adept.

This deal has it all: *entries* – *unblocking* – *overtaking*.

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

Lead: ♠ 2

Bidding.

As dealer we open 1NT (13 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape) and partner responds 3♥. This is forcing to game and shows exactly five Hearts.

With nowhere to go but No-trumps (we can't support Hearts with only two) we retreat to 3NT.

Play.

West, deterred from leading Hearts by the bidding, leads the ♠2 and we settle down to **Count** and **Plan**. We can see that we've only got six winners off the top: one Spade, one Heart, one Diamond and three Clubs.

The best place to provide the missing extra three tricks is Diamonds. Hearts is a (distant) possibility but the suit quality is very poor – we'd need a 3-3 break for starters and East to hold the ♥K. Not good odds.

By contrast, in Diamonds we are missing the ♦K, but have most of the intermediate cards (the ♦10 9 prove especially useful). We expect a 4-2 split (and that's what we get) but would be defeated by a 5-1 (or 6-0) break. It's all down to the power of those intermediate cards.

Entries are our challenge. We see that we only have one outside entry to reach our Diamond winners in hand. Remember, the ♠A is going to be dislodged at trick one unless we are very lucky and East fails in his duty to play a high card.

To avoid the Diamond suit being *blocked* we're going to have to use the Diamonds themselves as our communications, preserving our ♣A as an outside entry until the bitter end. Having **Planned** it's time to **Execute**.

We take trick one with the ♠A (East correctly playing the ♠Q on his partner's lead) and begin our establishment of the Diamonds by playing to the ♦A at trick two. At trick three we lead the ♦J and overtake it with the ♦Q in the closed hand.

A digression. Note that East plays low on the ♦J. This is good defence. How many players of

your acquaintance would rush in with the ♦K here? A bad case of "see a trick – take a trick". East can see that we are trying to set up Diamonds and he is rightly reluctant to part with his high cards in the suit. Good for him.

With the lead safely in the closed hand following our overtaking manoeuvre we continue with a high Diamond to force out the ♦K. East naturally returns his partner's Spade suit and we have a few anxious moments to see if West has enough ammunition to shoot us down. No, Spades are 4-3 and West can only cash three Spade tricks.


West artfully returns a Heart to dummy's Ace but we are in the driving seat now with a clear road ahead. We cash three rounds of Clubs, ending in South, and take the two master Diamonds as the *coup de grâce*.

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



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VB Y1 #8 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ 753		
		♥ 642		
		♦ AK		
		♣ KJT62		
West				East
♠ KQJ94				♠ T8
♥ A9				♥ KJ753
♦ T7				♦ J942
♣ 8743				♣ 95
		South		
		♠ A62		
		♥ QT8		
		♦ Q8653		
		♣ AQ		

The bidding here is straightforward. The play, though; well, there's the thing.

If you don't pick your way carefully through the minefield here, you won't make this contract. The precise order in which you play your tricks is important.

You need to count the suits carefully as you play.

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

Lead: ♠ K

Bidding.

After three Passes we open 1NT (14 points and a 5·3·3·2 shape), which partner raises invitationaly to 2NT.

With 14 points and a five-card suit it would be cowardly to remain in a part-score so we advance confidently to 3NT.

Play.

West leads the ♠K from his lovely sequence and we see we've got nine tricks off the top but we have to do some untangling. We've got one Spade, three Diamonds and five Clubs.

Wait a moment... suppose Diamonds split 3-3 – might that be enough to make the contract? Oh yes! Five Diamond tricks would take us into the world of overtricks. So we need to count this suit carefully.

We take the ♠A at trick one and adopt a **cut and run** strategy to cash our nine tricks. However, both Clubs and Diamonds need untangling so the precise order of play is important.

Our first challenge is at trick two as we need to cash our ♦A K before anything else. Otherwise, when we go to the closed hand, we won't be able to cash the ♦Q. Planning is the name of the game. (**Counting** and **Planning**. Old friends, eh?)

At trick four, we go to the closed hand with a Club, taking it with the ♠A. Not, you should note, with the ♣Q. If we were to take the ♣Q we'd block the Clubs. Suits like this come with a note attached: "Handle with Care"

Next, we cash the ♦Q. Are they 3-3? Well, East (who has seen his partner's ♦10 fall and knows the ♦J 9 are *equals*) cunningly follows with the ♦J, desperately trying to look like a man with no Diamonds left. However, we should always trust our arithmetic skills and not our opponents. West shows out on this trick, indicating clearly that Diamonds are 4-2. With the baby Diamonds (the ♦8 6) definitely **not** masters we must revert to Clubs.

Giving East a look of disdain for his attempted subterfuge we go after our Club tricks. We lead the ♣Q and are forced to overtake this with the ♣K so that we can gain access to the otherwise barren dummy. Note that this play (*crashing* two Club honours) means that we must rely on Clubs splitting favourably.

A 5-1 split would kill us but luckily both opponents follow suit to the second Club. With Clubs 4-2 or 3-3 we can be confident that the remaining ♣K J 6 are all masters and that we have nine tricks.


In all we make one Spade, three Diamonds and five Clubs.

Game, set and match.



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VB#8 Y1 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ 7532		
		♥ QJ96		
		♦ AQ		
		♣ A86		
West				East
♠ KQJT				♠ 94
♥ 73				♥ T8542
♦ T72				♦ J953
♣ KQJT				♣ 94
		South		
		♠ A86		
		♥ AK		
		♦ K864		
		♣ 7532		

An easy hand to bid, an easy hand to play.

Well, for sure it's easy – look, there are nine on top.

What could go wrong this time? Calling Mr Murphy...

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

Lead: ♠ K

Bidding.

We have the simplest of auctions. We open 1NT in second position (after East has Passed) with 14 points and a 4-4-3-2 shape.

Partner raises immediately to 3NT and that is that.

Play.

After West leads the ♠K we settle down to **Count** and to **Plan**. No change there, then. Unusually, we have nine on top: one Spade, four Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club. **But** (and it's a big "but") we've got two suits that are *blocked* and need to be untangled.

Trick one knocks out our single Spade stopper, the ♠A. We need to look hard at this hand and plan carefully. For a moment, pretend that we are short-sighted enough to cash our ♥A K first. We would then go to dummy to play the Diamond winners and our ♥Q J but would have no way back to our hand to cash the ninth trick. We'd need an outside entry. It's worth trying to play this hand by cashing the Heart honours first. You'll find that 3NT can't be made if you do.

So, we have to look a little more deeply into the matter. It's Diamonds we have to tidy up first, leaving the ♠A with the otherwise stranded Heart winners. At tricks two and three we take dummy's ♦A Q and, at trick four, we come to hand with a Heart. We unblock the other high Heart and (before we forget) we cash the ♦K. Now we can see the harbour and should row for home.

We have taken six tricks (the ♠A, three Diamonds and the ♥A K) and dummy has three masters ready and waiting. So we cross to the ♣A and cash the ♥Q J for tricks eight and nine.


You were challenged by this deal, weren't you? Bridge forces us to plan ahead, often playing out the whole hand in our heads before touching a single card. The time we take to do that pays off in Spades. Pun intended.

Now try Hand 6 – before you forget this one.
Quick now...



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VB Y1 #8 Entries Part 2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ 7532		
		♥ QJ96		
		♦ AQ		
		♣ A86		
West				East
♠ KQJT				♠ 94
♥ 73				♥ T8542
♦ T72				♦ J953
♣ KQJT				♣ 94
		South		
		♠ A86		
		♥ AK		
		♦ K864		
		♣ 7532		

To paraphrase the old song, "What a difference a **lead** makes."

This is exactly the same deal as the last one (Hand 5), down to the last card.

So what's the point?

Ah! Wait and see. Wait and see.

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

Lead: ♣ K

This is interesting... It's Hand 5 all over again. Same cards, same strategy, ah! Different lead. Does that alter things significantly? Oh yes! You bet it does...

Bidding.

We have the simplest of auctions. We open 1NT in second position (after East has Passed) with 14 points and a 4-4-3-2 shape. Partner raises immediately to 3NT and that is that.

Play.

West leads the ♣K this time (on Hand 5 he led the ♠K) and that knocks out dummy's ♠A. We need to take time to **Count** and to **Plan**. As in Hand 5, we have nine on top: one Spade, four Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club. Once again we've got two suits that are *blocked* and need to be untangled.

This time, the opening lead knocks out dummy's late entry, leaving the ♠A in the closed hand to be used near the end. The difference that this lead makes is crucial. Should we play on Diamonds first (the correct line of play in Hand 5) we'd be defeated.

Here, we must clear Hearts first. At tricks two and three we unblock the ♥A K in the closed hand. We then cross to dummy by cashing the ♦A Q. While the lead is over there we must take the ♥Q J or we'll strand them there forever.

The ♠A provides the crucial outside entry we need to return to the closed hand to play our ninth trick, the ♦K. After that, well who cares? We have recorded nine tricks and that's plenty.

[Editor's note. *This deal has been played many times at various lessons and seminars. It never fails to confuse players who invariably end up in the wrong hand at the wrong time. If you managed to get Hand 5 right first time and then managed to get Hand 6 right, with its change of lead, without prompting we are really impressed. In fact – do you want a job at VuBridge?]*