




This is a set of 4 hands designed to complement David Bird's set of six deals for VB#9

VB#9 General hands Y2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

		North		
		♠ T83		
		♥ Q96		
		♦ J9764		
		♣ QT		
West		East		
♠ 75		♠ AKQ		
♥ AJ853		♥ T7		
♦ T85		♦ AKQ3		
♣ J63		♣ A754		
		South		
		♠ J9642		
		♥ K42		
		♦ 2		
		♣ K982		

This set of four deals concentrates on defensive play. The hands, though, are in two pairs, there being a link between Hands 1 & 2 and another link between Hands 3 & 4.

In Hand 1 you are defending against a game contract after an informative auction.

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

Lead: ♠ 4

Here you are defending against 3NT after East has shown a balanced hand of 20-22 points and no liking for Hearts. You start by leading your fourth-highest Spade and North's ♠10 at trick one tells you that declarer started with ♠A K Q.

East's first play (having won the first trick with the mildly deceptive ♠K) is the ♥10. How should you defend?

Well, early in the piece or not, this is the crucial defence of the hand. You simply must cover that with the ♥K.

There are two reasons to do so. One it adheres to the *cover-an-honour-with-an-honour* principle (yes, the Ten is certainly an honour under the meaning of the act) and secondly it isolates the Heart suit. Let's look at these points in turn.

Firstly, by covering the ♥10 with the ♥K we take out the ♥A and partner's ♥Q 9 are now promoted to winning rank. This is the rationale of covering honours with honours – trick promotion.

Secondly, by forcing the ♥A out early we **isolate dummy**. Imagine if declarer's Hearts were ♥10 9. Now we have only one Heart trick in defence whether we cover or not as partner's ♥Q 7 6 couldn't be promoted. However, the difference between covering and not covering is a staggering four tricks!

If we let the Heart run to the ♥Q declarer has four Heart tricks in dummy awaiting his pleasure after taking a second finesse. However, by putting the ♥K on the ♥10 we disrupt communications and East can only make one Heart trick whether he ducks the ♥K or takes it with the ♥A.

After your devastating defence declarer has to hope that either Diamonds or Clubs breaks 3-3 to make 3NT. You have to be careful to discard accurately but assiduous counting saves the day. One down.



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VB#9 General hands Y2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

<p>West</p> <p>♠ 75</p> <p>♥ AJ853</p> <p>♦ T85</p> <p>♣ 763</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AKQ</p> <p>♥ T9</p> <p>♦ AK63</p> <p>♣ AQ54</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ T83</p> <p>♥ 762</p> <p>♦ QJ974</p> <p>♣ JT</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ J9642</p> <p>♥ KQ4</p> <p>♦ 2</p> <p>♣ K982</p>	

Again (cf Hand 1) you are defending 3NT after a big hand is announced on your right.

What should you do this time?

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

Lead: ♠ 4

Again (as in Hand 1) you are defending against 3NT after East has shown a balanced hand of 20-22 points and no liking for Hearts. You start by leading your fourth-highest Spade and North's ♠10 at trick one tells you that declarer started with ♠A K Q.

East's first play (having won the first trick with the mildly deceptive ♠K) is the ♥10. How should you defend this time?

Here, you may think it obvious to cover with the ♥Q (or a deceptive ♥K) to dislodge the ♥A and disrupt the communication between dummy and declarer. Not so fast!

That play would certainly work if East were to win the ♥A and play another – you could take the second Heart and wave goodbye to dummy. Declarer, though, might be in desperate straits in this deal and may be forced to play for four Heart tricks. He can manage that by **ducking** your honour card at trick two and subsequently finessing on the second round.

True, by playing low on the ♥10 you may be giving declarer two Heart tricks instead of just one but – as against that – you are ensuring that East is prevented from making **four** Heart tricks.


After you let the ♥10 hold East has little choice but to play on Clubs and Diamonds for his extras. With Clubs 4-2 and the ♣K offside he cannot make the contract. Had you covered the ♥10, though, there was a chance that he might have done.

Tough? Well, this is Year 2! What did you expect?



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VB#9 General hands Y2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: E / W

		North		
		♠ QJT83		
		♥ 752		
		♦ T2		
		♣ Q94		
West		East		
♠ K95		♠ 76		
♥ AQT		♥ KJ4		
♦ 7654		♦ AQJ83		
♣ A76		♣ KJ3		
		South		
		♠ A42		
		♥ 9863		
		♦ K9		
		♣ T852		

When in third seat there are defensive rules, correct? *Third player plays high.*

Does that always hold true?

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

Lead: ♠ Q

Here you are defending 3NT after a routine 1NT - 3NT sequence. Partner leads the ♠Q - how should you plan the defence?

Well, normal play when you have the Ace and partner has led the Queen is to make the Spade situation clear to partner by playing the ♠A and returning one. This knocks out declarer's ♠K and the defence know where they stand. If you play low then partner may well assume that declarer has the ♠A K and may decide to look elsewhere when on lead. Also, if partner has led from, say, ♠Q J 9 × × of Spades he may funk leading another one in case declarer started with ♠A K 10.

Well, that's on a normal day. This isn't one of those. Why not? Because dummy's source of tricks is Diamonds – that's where declarer is going for tricks and we are the ones to be on lead in this hand with our well-placed ♦K.

Suppose we took the ♠A and returned one. Declarer would – most likely – hold up his ♠K for a round. Now West would take the Diamond finesse into our hand and we'd lead... what, exactly? We'd have no Spades by now and if North has no entry we'd have no tricks.

The solution is to play a low Spade smoothly at trick one. Now declarer doesn't duck his ♠K – for all he knows, your partner started with ♠A Q J × × and that he'd better make his ♠K now or never.

After he falls for this plan West is doomed. You take the ♦K and play off the ♠A and another Spade and North gratefully takes the rest of the Spades. One down.



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VB#9 General hands Y2 ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

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

Lead: ♠ 4

Here, once again, you are defending again 3NT after a routine 1NT - 3NT sequence. Partner leads the ♠4 this time (presumably fourth-highest) - how should you plan the defence?

Well, the textbooks say "*third player plays high*" or somesuch and they tell you that you should take the ♠A and play back the ♠Q. Are they wrong?

The answer is that they are right - *on most occasions*. Not here, though. If you were to play the ♠Q and West were to play the ♠K partner (poor thing) would be confused about the location of the ♠A. He would naturally assume West had it after your failure to play it. So on most days, most layouts – follow the textbooks.

Here, though, partner's feelings and thoughts are not important – he is not getting on lead. You are going to be on lead with the ♦K very shortly (how else is declarer going to make 3NT if not with Diamonds?)

Now, were you to play the ♠A and follow with the ♠Q West would hold up his ♠K, take the third round and finesse Diamonds into your hand. Disaster (for you), triumph (for West). You'd be on lead with nary a Spade to lead and declarer would have the rest (or, at least, enough tricks for his contract).

Try the effect of a sly ♠Q at trick one. Declarer daren't play low on this – he'd look a total lemon if North had led a Spade from ♠A J 9 × × as he'd now lose the first five Spade tricks. No, he'd grab the ♠K and try the Diamond finesse. Now you take the ♦K and – with communications intact – you can play the ♠A and another Spade to defeat the contract.

Note that this play costs you nothing. If North has the ♠K then the ♠Q is equally effective as the ♠A.

West	North	East
♠ KT5	♠ J9843	♠ 76
♥ AQT	♥ 752	♥ KJ4
♦ 7654	♦ T2	♦ AQJ83
♣ A76	♣ Q94	♣ KJ3

South
♠ AQ2
♥ 9863
♦ K9
♣ T852

Not playing high in third seat is often a crime, often referred to as a *finesse against partner*.

Does crime pay sometimes?

