



This is a set of four hands designed to complement David Bird's set of six deals for VB#19; ACOL version

VB#19 Y2 General hands ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ J83 ♥ AJ5 ♦ 8632 ♣ AK4		East ♠ AKQ ♥ 742 ♦ KJT97 ♣ 76
North ♠ T942 ♥ QT98 ♦ 4 ♣ T952	South ♠ 765 ♥ K63 ♦ AQ5 ♣ QJ83	

This set of four deals is all about defence. The four deals are strongly related; that is all we are going to tell you.

Can you read the cards accurately and defeat West's game contract on each deal?

Hand 1 sets the scene. Just what has partner led from?

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

Lead: ♥ T

On this deal you are defending against 3NT and partner leads the ♥10. This is a hard-to-read lead; you know declarer has the ♥J but the location of the ♥A and ♥Q are still in doubt. Partner would lead the ♥10 from ♥Q 10 9 8 or ♥A 10 9 8 as the top of an **interior sequence**. Such a lead is generally superior to a lead of the fourth-best card, as we shall see in later deals.

Here, though, you are not sure who has what. North may have led a Heart from ♥10 9 8 × (×) in which case your ♥K is worthless and West holds ♥A Q J. On the other hand, North may have ♥Q 10 9 × or even ♥A 10 9 ×. However, a quick count of points tells us that North has just 1-3 points, so at least we can rule out North having ♥A 10 9 × in the suit...

One thing's for sure, we must play the ♥K at trick one in any case. Even if West had all the remaining Heart honours it would cost us nothing.

West takes the ♥A and tries his luck in Diamonds by running the ♦8. No luck today – we take the ♦Q and return a Heart. This skewers West's ♥J and the defence can take three Hearts and two Diamonds in short order for one off.

[Note: As the cards lie it might have been best for West to have ducked the ♥K but the defenders can still defeat 3NT. The ♥K is ducked as is a second Heart. Now a Club switch allows North-South to get Clubs going before the ♦A Q are knocked out].



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Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

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

Lead: ♥ T

This deal has echoes of Hand 1. West opens 1NT and East gambles a raise to 3NT. From his perspective the Diamonds may well provide six tricks if West were to have the ♦A. Not today, maybe, but the bid is perfectly logical.

Anyway, North leads the ♥10 and you, as South, cannot be sure whether North has a higher Heart honour or not. A count of points shows that North has 2-4 points so it is possible that North started with the ♥Q or even the ♥A.

Anyway, the ♥K is the correct card to play so you play it. West wins trick one with the ♥A and then takes the Diamond finesse, which you win with the ♦Q. At trick three you return a Heart in the hope that partner started with ♥Q 10 9 ×. West takes his ♥Q at this point but this fools no one. Partner's ♥10 lead denies the ♥J so you now know that West started with the ♥A Q J and that playing the suit again would just be flogging a dead horse.

When in with the ♦A you should not think of playing a third, futile, Heart. West would take his ♥J and run off all the Diamonds. Your only chance is to grab three tricks quickly and the only suit that offers any promise is Clubs.

Partner will have to have the ♣A but what else can you play for? As the cards lie, the ♣Q switch is deadly as it traps the ♣K and allows the defenders to pick up three Club tricks.

One off – hard luck, West.

West	North	East
♠ QT9	♠ 853	♠ AK
♥ AQJ	♥ T987	♥ 542
♦ 863	♦ 42	♦ KJT975
♣ K743	♣ A652	♣ T9

South
♠ J7642
♥ K63
♦ AQ
♣ QJ8



How can you work out who has what here?

If you get it wrong, declarer will make his contract.



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VB#19 Y2 General hands ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

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

Lead: ♥ T

Partner leads the ♥10 against a rapidly bid 3NT (who said, "again?") and you must take stock. Who has what in Hearts?

Well, again, you don't know. North may have started with ♥10 9 8 × or ♥Q 10 9 8 or even ♥A 10 9 8. A count of points shows you that North has just 0-2 so at least you know where the ♥A must be...

Anyway, should we put up the ♥K at trick one? The answer is **No**. A resounding **No**. With three low cards on table the King would be the correct play but the ♥J in dummy makes a big difference.

There is no need to play the ♥K here as the ♥10 is doing all the work. If declarer has the ♥A Q × then playing the ♥K will hand three tricks to West on a plate; if declarer has the ♥A × or ♥A × × then the play of the ♥K will set up dummy's ♥J as a second stopper.

So the right play is to play low on the ♥10 (with an encouraging card – the ♥6 is the best you can do). When this forces the ♥A you know that North has the ♥Q (and that's all the high cards he can hold). When on lead with the ♦Q it is a simple matter to cash the ♥K and carry on with Hearts, defeating the contract by two tricks.

[An aside. Can you see why the ♥10 lead is better than the lead of the ♥8? Well, on this particular deal you can count North's points but suppose that you couldn't. If North led the ♥8 and all you could see was this layout:

North
♥8

Declarer
♥??

Dummy
♥J 4 2

You (South)
♥K 6 3

You wouldn't know what to do if dummy played small on the opening lead. It could be right to withhold the King, it could look very stupid if partner had led from a holding of ♥A Q 9 8 ×. This is one of the reasons that we lead the top card from *interior sequences*

North
♠ 843
♥ QT985
♦ 4
♣ T532



East
♠ AKQ
♥ J42
♦ KJT97
♣ 76

West
♠ JT9
♥ A7
♦ 8632
♣ AK94

South
♠ 7652
♥ K63
♦ AQ5
♣ QJ8

A slightly different case here.

What is your best defence, both early in the deal and later on?



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VB#19 Y2 General hands ACOL	Contract: 3N
Date: 07/10/2015	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

<p>West</p> <p>♠ KJT2</p> <p>♥ Q5</p> <p>♦ 8632</p> <p>♣ AK3</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ AQ</p> <p>♥ J74</p> <p>♦ KJT975</p> <p>♣ T9</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ 983</p> <p>♥ AT982</p> <p>♦ 4</p> <p>♣ 6542</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ 7654</p> <p>♥ K63</p> <p>♦ AQ</p> <p>♣ QJ87</p>	

How do you know how to defend this deal?

Is it a guess or can you see a way to resolve your problems?

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

Lead: ♥ T

For the fourth successive hand North leads the ♥10 against a rapidly bid 3NT and you contemplate a dummy that is slightly underweight. How should you defend this one?

Well, we know that it is wrong to play the ♥K at trick one (cf Hand 3) – best is to play an encouraging ♥6. West takes the ♥Q and this leaves us still in the dark – where is the ♥A? Unfortunately we don't know – West could easily have ♥A Q or ♥A Q ×. A count of points shows that North has 2-4 so it is possible that North holds the crucial Ace of Hearts.

Having taken the ♥Q West plays a Diamond at trick two and takes the finesse to our ♦Q. What now?

Playing the ♥K is dangerous – If West has the ♥A he will gobble up the King and set up the Diamonds – it may be too late to change tack and switch to Clubs. Best is to test the waters by trying the ♣Q at trick three, to see what partner's reaction is.

*[No, we do not advocate looking at partner's expression and seeing if he smiles or shakes his head. Such shenanigans will get you banned from all decent bridge clubs faster than if you'd admitted to having bubonic plague. You must study the **cards**, not the faces...]*

Partner might have the ♠K (allowing you to pick up three Clubs and two Diamonds) or he might have the ♥A. On the ♣Q declarer plays the ♣A and partner plays the ♣2. This is not encouraging! On the next Diamond North throws off another low Club, confirming the message that there is nothing of interest over there in Clubs.

Message received, partner. With nowhere else to go it's back to Plan A: **return partner's suit**. The ♥K brings joy (no Ace from declarer) and the next Heart allows North to cash out the suit. Two down.

It just isn't West's day – do try to appear sympathetic.

