




Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ T4		
	♥ A842		
	♦ AKJ5		
	♣ K53		
West		East	
♠ J87		♠ Q9	
♥ K963		♥ QT7	
♦ 98		♦ T74	
♣ QJT8		♣ A9642	
	South		
	♠ AK6532		
	♥ J5		
	♦ Q632		
	♣ 7		

Here are eight general practice hands on the themes that we have been looking at in VuBridge. They are in no particular order of difficulty, just enjoy them as they come...

Here you are responder when your partner starts off with a classic *limit bid*.

What should you respond to that?

Can you fulfil the resulting contract?

West	North	East	South
-	1NT	P	4♣
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ Q

Bidding.

When partner opens 1NT to show 15 to 17 points what should we do as South? We are surely going to play this hand in Spades; the question is are we going to play in game or in a part-score?

With 10 points we must be in game opposite 15 to 17; with a known eight-card trump suit (North has to have at least two Spades to open 1NT) the obvious call is 4♣. If it fails, well, *that's the way the cookie crumbles*.

Remember – 1NT is a *limit bid*. After that **we** are in charge of the auction.

Play.

Against our game contract West leads the ♣Q and we thank partner as he carefully lays out the dummy.

Now, we need to look at a number of features when playing in a suit contract. One is "*Where are our winners coming from?*" and the other is "*What losers are we looking at?*" So what can we see here?

Now, looking at the two hands and the opening lead we should realize immediately that the ♣K is waste paper. West has the ♣Q J 10 and East has the ♣A and the defenders have just made a pretty sandwich out of dummy's ♣K. We can play the ♣K if we like at trick one but we just know it will get knocked off by the ♣A. Mind you, if we **don't** play the ♣K West will hold the lead with the ♣Q and plug away in Clubs. Heads we lose, tails they win. *'Twas ever thus*.

So... doing the necessary **Counting**: there is a slow Heart loser, an obvious Club loser and at least one, slow, Spade loser. That's a minimum of three losers – and three is the most we can afford.

The actual number of Spade losers depends on how the trumps break. If they are 3-2 then there will be five winners and one loser. If trumps are 4-1 or (horror of horrors!) 5-0 then there will be fewer winners and more losers.

We simply have to hope that Spades break 3-2 – if they don't we are down. So we ruff the

second round of Clubs and start by drawing trumps. This is done by cashing the ♠A K and watching to see what the defenders do. Here they both follow to two rounds so the suit is now known to be splitting favorably.

A recount of winners and losers shows there to be five Spade winners (and one loser), one Heart winner and one loser, four Diamond winners and no Diamond loser and no Club winners with just one loser. Ten winners, three losers – perfect!

Having cashed the ♠A K we could just *knock out* the ♠J and make the contract with four Diamonds, five trumps and the ♥A.

However, it's usually good practice when in this situation (all the trumps drawn bar one and the defense left with the master trump) to start cashing outside winners leaving the defenders to take their inevitable trump trick when they wish.


It makes not the slightest difference on this hand but it is generally a good habit to get into.



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Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J4	
	♥ J2	
	♦ AQ753	
	♣ K873	
West		East
♠ QT875		♠ K9
♥ AK8		♥ T9643
♦ T964		♦ 82
♣ 4		♣ JT92
	South	
	♠ A632	
	♥ Q75	
	♦ KJ	
	♣ AQ65	

This deal is easy to bid and easy to play.

Well, we think so... although you must remember to **count**.

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

Lead: ♠ 7

Bidding.

A rapid transit auction.

We open 1NT in second seat and partner raises that to 3NT. True, he is 5-4-2-2 (so not classically balanced), but all his length is in the minors and we treat them with a certain amount of disdain. Forget about 5♣ and 5♦ and try to make nine tricks in No-trumps.

Play.

West kicks off with a Spade lead (the ♠7 to be precise).

Naturally enough, we thank partner profusely for his contributions to date and settle down to think about our prospects. In terms of *top tricks* we have eight (one Spade, no Hearts, four Diamonds and three Clubs).

The Spade lead is inconvenient for us because it knocks out the ♠A and leaves us wide open in the suit – should we subsequently lose the lead the opponents would be able to cash a veritable fistful of Spades.

As an aside, we have nothing to lose by trying dummy's ♠J at trick one. If West has led a Spade away from the ♠K Q (and just why couldn't he have started life with ♠K Q 8 7 5?) then the ♠J would score a cheap trick. Well, if wishes were horses beggars would ride and we're not riding this one – East covers the ♠J with his ♠K and our ♠A is forced. So – where now?

Well, either Diamonds or Clubs might provide a ninth trick – it depends how the suits *split*. We should notice that the Diamonds are a little tangled up (they can't be played off consecutively) so that is the suit we must play on first. We take the ♦K and the ♦J and then cross to the table with the ♣A to carry on with the Diamonds. Having cashed the ♦A Q we now have the \$64,000 question – is the last Diamond (actually the ♦7) a master?

If you have been counting the suit (an **absolute must** at this game) then you will know that the Diamonds were originally 4-2 and so they have

all been played. Armed with that knowledge we cash the last, boss, Diamond (all the time chucking worthless low Spades) and then revert to Clubs.

If Clubs were to split 3-2 then there would be four Club tricks to take and an overtrick to be bagged. As it happens, though, Clubs break 4-1 so we can only take the three top tricks in Clubs that we were dealt. No matter – together with five Diamonds and the ♠A we have wrapped up the contract and that's all that we should care about.


3NT bid and made.

[Note that East doggedly hung on to his Clubs while we ran off the Diamonds, pitching his Hearts. It usually pays to match the length of your suits with those of dummy's when in defense].



Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 2N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ T932	
	♥ K6	
	♦ K532	
	♣ K65	
West		East
♠ K54		♠ A87
♥ QJT98		♥ 7432
♦ 87		♦ QJT
♣ T83		♣ QJ7
	South	
	♠ QJ6	
	♥ A5	
	♦ A964	
	♣ A942	

Here you have to make a decision in the bidding (*to bid game or not to bid game – that is the question*) and then you have to play the hand with accuracy.

Are you up to the challenge?

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

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

Here, with 15 points and a 4·4·3·2 hand, it is correct both to open 1NT and to refuse the game invitation when partner raises to 2NT.

Play.

The defense attacks Hearts (West has a very pretty sequence to lead from – lucky him!) and we are immediately reduced to one stopper in the suit. A brief count of top tricks shows there to be only six (two Hearts, two Diamonds and two Clubs); a shortfall of two which we may hope to close by knocking out the ♠A K.

As soon as we lose the lead the defense continues with the attack in Hearts, driving out our second stopper. We are now wide open in Hearts but have no choice but to continue Spades since cashing our other winners would only make matters worse.


Luckily the defenders can only take three Heart tricks to add to their two Spades. As West is gleefully cashing his long Hearts we have plenty of low cards to throw away from both dummy and the closed hand. Eventually, West has to give us the lead back with a Club and 2NT makes on the nose.

Many No-trump contracts are like this – essentially they are races between the defenders and the declarer. Never forget that the advantage the defenders have is that they get to go first.



Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 1N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 852	
	♥ Q64	
	♦ 9852	
	♣ KT5	
West		East
♠ QT64		♠ KJ7
♥ T852		♥ J93
♦ AK7		♦ Q6
♣ J6		♣ Q8742
	South	
	♠ A93	
	♥ AK7	
	♦ JT43	
	♣ A93	

The majority of the deals you play in VuBridge are game contracts. Let's face it, they are the most exciting hands.

However, you should not treat part-score contracts with contempt – they can add up over the year to a considerable amount of points.

Here, then, you are about to play in a modest contract. Can you steer it home?

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

Lead: ♠ 4

Bidding.

Here we open 1NT after three Passes and are not entirely pleased when that ends the auction.

1NT can be a very difficult hand to play and the struggle for the decisive seventh trick can be awkward. Here, dummy displays a miserable 5 points so we know instantly that the two sides are very evenly matched – we have 21 points and East-West have 19.

Play.

West leads a low Spade – which is a good choice for his side – and we stop to count our *top tricks*. We can see six without any difficulty (one Spade, three Hearts and two Clubs) but where is the seventh coming from?

Well, it may be an unlikely source but we have to set up the long Diamond. Sure, we are missing the ♠A K Q but we can still manage to make a Diamond trick – if there is time. Anyway, there is no other place to go for the extra trick so we win the ♠A and immediately play a Diamond. That runs to the ♦Q (note that West correctly sees no reason to blunder in with his ♦K) and East returns a Spade.


West cashes three Spades (we are relieved that he can only take three Spade tricks – let's face it, on some layouts it could have been worse) and we have to make some discards. We throw a Heart from dummy and a Diamond from hand and wait to see what West does. He tries his luck with a Heart so we win that with the ♥Q on table and patiently play another Diamond.

There is nothing West can do now. Another Heart from West is countered by yet another Diamond from us and – eventually – the ♦9 is a winner, sitting proudly in dummy. One Spade, three Hearts, one Diamond and two Clubs makes a total of seven.



Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: West	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ QT8	
	♥ A9832	
	♦ T75	
	♣ 65	
West		East
♠ K964		♠ A73
♥ T5		♥ Q64
♦ AQ9		♦ KJ642
♣ AK42		♣ T3
	South	
	♠ J52	
	♥ KJ7	
	♦ 83	
	♣ QJ987	

In these next four deals you are going to be a defender. Defense needs every bit as much practice as declarer-play, maybe even more.

After all, in real life you do defend hands twice as often as you declare them...

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

Lead: ♥ 3

Bidding.

The opponents take the freeway here. West opens 1NT (16 points and a 4·4·3·2 shape) and East raises that to 3NT. We can only sit and watch as South.

Play.

North, our beloved partner, starts off by leading a low Heart. West thanks his partner courteously and calls for a low card from dummy – how should we defend?

Well, this is a very simple hand. We must play the ♥J. We at VuBridge have been pointing out the virtues of playing *third hand high* in some of our earlier deals but you have to take account of what is on table. If dummy had held only small Hearts then our correct play would have been the ♥K – our duty is to play the highest card we can to help out partner.

However, when we have the ♥K J that encircle dummy's ♥Q it would be crazy to play the ♥K when the ♥J would do equally as well. If North has the ♥A then the ♥J would hold; if West has it then the ♥J will force the ♥A out and the ♥K hovers over the ♥Q ready to knock her royal block off later in the deal.

As the cards actually are the ♥J holds. Now what? Well, we have to play another Heart (naturally enough). It may look tempting to shift suits (to the ♣Q, maybe?) but that would be a dereliction of duty. We should *return partner's suit*.

How? Not by leading the ♥7, that's for sure! Should we do that we'd tangle the suit up good and proper (play it through mentally and see what happens – the ♥7 to the ♥A, North leads a Heart to our ♥K and now...?) Oops!


No, the correct play is to lead the ♥K (when you hold two cards left, lead the higher) and now the path is clear. A third Heart goes to partner's ♥A and North cheerfully cashes out his long Hearts. Declarer sullenly claims the rest for one down.



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Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: West
Dealer: South	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ K9832	
	♥ T984	
	♦ 843	
	♣ T	
West		East
♠ T5		♠ Q64
♥ K753		♥ AJ
♦ AK7		♦ 652
♣ AQ83		♣ KJ742
	South	
	♠ AJ7	
	♥ Q62	
	♦ QJT9	
	♣ 965	

This deal has some similarities with the previous one. We have the same bidding and an opening lead that finds dummy with Q × in the led suit.

So how do you intend to defend this time?

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

Lead: ♠ 3

This deal is eerily similar to the previous deal. Odd how that happens in VuBridge...

Bidding.

West opens 1NT (16 points and a 4-4-3-2 shape) and East raises that straight to 3NT.

Play.

Is our defense going to be eerily similar to Hand 5 as well?

North, our cherished partner, starts off by leading a low Spade. West, ever courteous, thanks his partner and calls for a low card from dummy – how should we defend?

On the previous deal we held the ♥K J over the ♥Q. Here we have the ♠A J over the ♠Q. So what should we play at trick one? The ♠A or the ♠J?

The answer is that we must play the ♠J. If we were to play the ♠A the ♠Q would be a certain trick, regardless of the location of the ♠K. If we play the ♠J it might not be.

If declarer, by the way, were to hold the ♠K then the play of the ♠A would present him with two instant Spade tricks. The play of the ♠J would give him the ♠K but would still hold him to one Spade trick.

As the cards lie, the ♠J holds. Now what? Well, this is perhaps a little easier than the previous deal. We must take the ♠A and play another Spade to North who, having a cashable suit, happily runs off the next few tricks. A **low** Spade from us at trick two (horrible defense!) would tangle the suit up.


Declarer, in a foul mood, claims the rest for one down.



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Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: North	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J43	
	♥ T8762	
	♦ JT3	
	♣ 42	
West		East
♠ 95		♠ AK7
♥ KJ9		♥ AQ4
♦ K652		♦ Q84
♣ KJT7		♣ Q986
	South	
	♠ QT862	
	♥ 53	
	♦ A97	
	♣ A53	

Now you are the defender on lead against a game contract.

So you have to find the opening shot (not a testing assignment) and then the subsequent defense.

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

Lead: ♠ 6

Bidding.

East opens 1NT (17 points and a 4-3-3-3 shape) and West raises that to 3NT. Our side has nothing to say.

Play.

This time we are on lead against 3NT, declared by our right-hand opponent, East. Naturally, we start off with the ♠6 lead – the time-honored *fourth-highest-of-your-longest-and-strongest*.

Dummy is depressingly strong – partner can have very little in his hand to help us out. A quick count of points shows that North can have no more than 4 of them. One of those points is shown at trick one when North obliges with the ♠J, forcing East's ♠K. That's a good start for our side.

Declarer has to knock out a couple of Aces to set up his nine tricks. Here he starts on Clubs, leading the ♣Q. We should take that with the ♣A (no reason to delay matters) and must continue with the Spade attack.

Watchpoint. East is known to have the ♠A K so we need to lead the ♠Q (or the ♠10) to drive out the ♠A and to crush the ♠9 on the table. Leading a low Spade would give declarer a cheap, undeserved trick with the Nine. Note that the ♠Q and the ♠10 are **equals** after the ♠J has gone.

East now cashes his Clubs and follows that suit with the ♥A K Q. As South we have little to do except to follow suit where possible and to chuck trash when it isn't. Here, though, we must appreciate that all the Spades are gold-dust and all the other small cards are garbage. So we can throw Diamonds or Clubs away but must keep the long Spades.


Eventually East has to lead a Diamond, hoping to build a trick there, and we pounce on that with the ♦A and take the last two Spade tricks. Delightfully, the thirteenth and final trick is taken with the lowly Deuce of Spades. Wonderful!



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Eight assorted deals. SA version. Updated winter 2015.

VB#6 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ QT982		
	♥ QJ96		
	♦ KJ		
	♣ 72		
West		East	
♠ K54		♠ AJ7	
♥ K43		♥ AT72	
♦ 97		♦ A652	
♣ QT984		♣ KJ	
	South		
	♠ 63		
	♥ 85		
	♦ QT843		
	♣ A653		

Once more you are the defender on lead against a game contract.

So you have to find the opening lead (fairly clear, we think) and then the subsequent defense.

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

Lead: ♦ 4

Bidding.

East opens 1NT after two Passes (17 points and a 4·4·3·2 shape) and West raises that to 2NT. Having a maximum, East goes on to game.

Play.

Again we are on lead against 3NT, declared by our right-hand opponent, East. Naturally, we start off with the ♦4 lead, the *fourth-highest-of-your-longest-and-strongest*.

Dummy has the expected 8 points for his bidding so partner is marked with something useful and we do have control of dummy's long suit in the form of the ♣A. We are, therefore, optimistic about our chances of defeating this one. Assuming East has 17 points for his bid of 3NT North must have 9 points to make the points total balance.

North obliges at trick one with the ♦K and East – reluctant to part with his ♦A – decides not to take the trick. Partner, well-trained, *returns partner's suit* by leading the ♦J and again East declines to part with his ♦A.

Now the critical part of the deal has been reached. It is easy, fatally easy, to play small on this and leave North on lead. However, you can see now what effect that would have. North would be on lead unable to play another Diamond and there is no suit he could lead that could embarrass declarer. East would have a cakewalk to his contract.

This deal is our responsibility. With dummy starting with the ♦9 we must realize that our ♦Q 10 8 are all equals after North produces the ♦K J.

We can afford to **overtake** the ♦J with the ♦Q to continue the Diamond attack from our side of the table. The ♦Q followed by the ♦10 gives declarer no chance at all. He takes the ♦A and has to play a Club to set his suit up. At this point we grab the ♣A and cash out the long Diamonds for one down.

