




Eight General Hands. SA Version. Updated spring 2015

VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ Q864		
	♥ 8		
	♦ AK742		
	♣ KQ7		
West		East	
♠ J		♠ 953	
♥ KT952		♥ AJ64	
♦ QJ8		♦ T9	
♣ JT95		♣ A832	
	South		
	♠ AKT72		
	♥ Q73		
	♦ 653		
	♣ 64		

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

Hand 1. We start off with a deal where we reach a good contract after partner takes an optimistic view of his hand.

To play the hand we need to assess the hand as a whole to help us choose the best option available.

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	P	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ J

### Bidding.

Partner opens 1♦ and we respond 1♠ on the South hand, giving North a small problem of valuation.

North's hand consists of four prospective trumps, a decent Diamond suit and a singleton Heart. Some would only raise to 2♠ on those North cards but we like 5-4-3-1 hands when we have four-card support for partner's suit. North's actual choice of 3♠ may be pushy but 2♠ is a little wet. Hey, live a little!

Holding 9 points ourselves (including a fifth trump), we raise to game, fully expecting that it should have play.

### Play.

West leads the ♣J against 4♠ and we begin the hand by applying the **Count** and **Plan** principle.

A Heart, a Club and a Diamond must be lost and there is potential to lose two more Hearts. To fix this problem, two options are open. We could either try to set up dummy's side-suit (Diamonds) or we could negotiate two Heart ruffs in dummy. The latter plan is easier to deal with as we might not need to rely on a 3-2 Diamond break.

So we begin by covering the ♣J lead with the ♣Q, losing to the ♣A, and capture East's trump shift in dummy. Note that it is best to win this on the table since we expect the opponents to continue with another trump after we give up a Heart and it's the second round of trumps that we'd like to win in the closed hand.

Next we give up a Heart; East captures this trick with the ♥A and plays another trump to our Ten. Although two rounds of trumps have been played we still have two trumps left in dummy to deal with two losing Hearts.

Our next play is to ruff a Heart then we cash the ♣K and ruff a Club (to cross back to the closed hand). Now we are well-placed to ruff our last Heart.

All that's left is to cash the ♦A K (hoping no one ruffs!) and eventually make the ♠A K for tricks nine and ten.

As it turns out, the alternative line of establishing dummy's long Diamonds would have succeeded as well – sometimes the bridge gods are friendly to us, making sure that we make our contract no matter what we do.

*(The "alternative line" is simply to draw trumps and play the ♦A, ♦K and another Diamond. Dummy can be accessed eventually with a Heart ruff and the two remaining Diamonds can be used to pitch any remaining losers. Is that a better line of play? Choose your poison).*



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Eight General Hands. SA Version. Updated spring 2015

VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/01/2016	By: East
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

North

♠ J962

♥ QJ4

♦ 74

♣ KJ52

West

♠ AKT5

♥ 85

♦ J93

♣ T643



East

♠ Q83

♥ AT2

♦ AQT85

♣ AQ

South

♠ 74

♥ K9763

♦ K62

♣ 987

Are you a mystery solver? If so, this deal should prove to be easy.

If not, don't be alarmed – you don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to work out who has what.

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

Lead: ♥ 6

### Bidding.

East opens 1♦ and rebids 2NT after the 1♠ response from West. Knowing of 18-19 points opposite West has an easy raise to game.

### Play.

We, naturally enough, lead the ♥6 and watch with interest as partner's ♥J forces out declarer's Ace.

Declarer crosses over to dummy at trick two with a top Spade to play the ♦J, which runs to our ♦K. What next? Careful analysis allows us to be crowned the victor of this battle. The most important piece of information appeared at trick one.

Partner's ♥J forced out declarer's ♥A – the question to ask ourselves is: where is the Lady of Love, the ♥Q? If declarer had it surely he would have taken partner's ♥J with it, so logically it is partner who must have the ♥Q.

*It is also clear that declarer has the ♥10. With the ♥Q J 10 North would have played the ♥10...*

With this key information we continue with a low Heart to partner's Queen, hoping North has a third Heart to lead back. Indeed he has, and we soon find ourselves cashing out all of our Hearts to take declarer's contract one off.


Note partner's key role in the defense. If he had thoughtlessly played the ♥Q at trick one (quoting *third hand high* or *somesuch*) then we wouldn't have known what to do. It might have been right to try to put partner on lead (with a Club?) to fire a Heart through declarer's remaining ♥J ×.

In third seat with two equal cards we should *play the lower*.


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Eight General Hands. SA Version. Updated spring 2015

VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ KQ63	
	♥ 87	
	♦ 984	
	♣ J932	
West		East
♠ J94		♠ AT852
♥ QT9		♥ 5432
♦ QT752		♦ AJ3
♣ Q7		♣ 6
	South	
	♠ 7	
	♥ AKJ6	
	♦ K6	
	♣ AKT854	

Better put your reverse gears on – you'll be in for a ride on this deal.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
P	1♠	P	2♥
P	3♣	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ 5

### Bidding.

We start the auction by opening 1♣ and are hardly surprised when partner responds 1♠. However, having mastered the art of **the reverse**, we rebid 2♥ to show a hand with at least five Clubs, four Hearts and a minimum of 16 points.

Yes, our hand is a full blown 18-count, but there's no need to worry – reverse bids are **forcing** so partner is not allowed to Pass.

Here, partner has a weak hand so he shows his weakness by bidding 3♣, a *simple preference bid*. Note that preference bids are not designed to be encouraging – quite the reverse, in fact (no pun intended).

However, we are far too strong to be discouraged and we decide to take a pot at 3NT (since we have a Diamond stopper). Nine tricks in 3NT should have fair play, especially when we know that partner has something of a Club fit for us.

Well, we might have tried 5♣ instead. It's close.

### Play.

West leads the ♦5 against our 3NT.

We can count four top tricks to start off with (the Ace-King combinations in Hearts and Clubs) and we can add another trick to our tally as the Diamond lead is coming round to the ♦K, establishing that as a sure trick.

Our main source of tricks here is Clubs so this is where we should be focusing our attention. Here, we have ten Clubs between us. This is good news because a ten-card fit has about a 78% chance of splitting 2-1, so the odds are heavily in our favor that the ♣Q will come down on the ♣A K. If the ♣Q does come down in two rounds then we should be collecting two Hearts, one Diamond and six Clubs – nine happy toppies!

At trick one East takes his ♦A and returns the ♦J

to our ♦K. Now the moment of truth. We try the top Clubs and are delighted to see the ♣Q drop. A Club to the Jack follows and we cash out our remaining top tricks to make our solid contract.


Yes, 5♣ would have made as well. Perhaps you might care to count eleven tricks in that contract...



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VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ K6		
	♥ KJ953		
	♦ 983		
	♣ A32		
West		East	
♠ A		♠ T943	
♥ T842		♥ A6	
♦ 74		♦ JT652	
♣ KQJ865		♣ 97	
	South		
	♠ QJ8752		
	♥ Q7		
	♦ AKQ		
	♣ T4		

The bidding is straightforward here.

How do you handle the trump suit, though?

This is within the context of the full deal, of course.

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1♠
2♣	2♥	P	2♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ K

### Bidding.

We have an easy opening bid of 1♠ in fourth seat. West, a Passed hand remember, now enters the fray with 2♣ and partner shows his Hearts. We rebid 2♠ to show a minimum hand (12-14 points, more or less) with long Spades and that leaves North with a difficult bid.

Too strong to Pass (11 points) he lacks a suitable bid. 2NT is not such a good idea with just one Club stopper so North decides to try a raise to 3♠ and this allows us to go on to game.

### Play.

West has an easy lead of the ♣K and, at first glance, we can see three losers off the top (two major suit Aces and a Club as the ♠A is about to be knocked out).

Provided trumps break 3-2 (the most likely spilt) we can count enough winners for the contract (five Spades, a couple of Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club). In fact, that totals eleven tricks. With sufficient winners it is best play to *draw trumps*.

What's the best way to play the trumps, though? Having taken the ♠A at trick one it may seem obvious to lead the ♠K off the dummy at trick two (*play the high cards from the short suit first* and all that jazz). Well, that would be fine and dandy if Spades were to split 3-2 but not if they didn't. If the trumps break 4-1 then there isn't much we could do – except if an opponent has a singleton Ace.

If West held a singleton ♠A we should cross to hand and lead a low trump towards dummy. Once West flies in with his ♠A, everything would be sweetness and light. On the other hand, if East were the one harboring a singleton ♠A, we should lead a low trump from dummy towards our hand. Once East produces the ♠A on air, we'd have it easy. Which option to choose?

Well, the clue comes from the bidding. Two clues if you like. Firstly, West broke radio silence with his 2♣ overcall, showing that he

had something tasty in his hand. That makes it likely (not certain) that he has the ♠A. Secondly, West is known to hold long Clubs. That makes all the more likely that he has short Spades; certainly he is less likely to have four Spades (and East a singleton) than the other way around.

With these thoughts in mind we come back to the closed hand with a Diamond at trick two and lead a low Spade. Eureka! West reluctantly produces the ♠A on our ♠2 and the hand is all but over. After this it's all matter of good housekeeping. We ruff the third round of Clubs, unblock the ♠K, cross back to hand with another Diamond and draw the last couple of trumps. Finally we knock out the ♥A and claim our game.

Note that leading the ♠K off the table at trick two would have seen us defeated as we would have lost two Spades, the ♥A and a Club.



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VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

North

♠ A  
♥ AQ3  
♦ KQT862  
♣ T74

West  
♠ KT872  
♥ 9762  
♦ 53  
♣ K8



East  
♠ 943  
♥ JT  
♦ A974  
♣ A953

South  
♠ QJ65  
♥ K854  
♦ J  
♣ QJ62

What should you do here when partner jumps the bidding?

Is the play that straightforward?

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

Lead: ♠ 7

### Bidding.

North opens 1♦ and we respond 1♥ as South (with 4-4 in the majors, we bid suits "up the line"). North now jumps to 3♦ to show six-plus Diamonds and roughly 15-17 points (essentially an invitational hand – we might Pass this should we choose).

With no real liking for Diamonds but a whole 10 points we should now try 3NT (not 3♠ since North has denied four Spades by not rebidding 1♠) and that's where the auction dies.

### Play.

West leads the ♠7 and our count of top tricks ends at just four (one Spade and three Hearts). Diamonds is the obvious source of extra tricks and it is here that we need to focus.

There's no devious twist to this deal – provided that we remember to unblock the ♦J as the first play. If we were to lead the ♦K on the first round of Diamonds we would lose out any time that an opponent had four Diamonds headed by the ♦A 9 × ×. We have to hold our Diamond losers to one given that there are also two top Clubs and the ♠K to lose.

At trick two we lead a low Diamond to the ♦J, which is allowed to win (a defender is rarely in a hurry to grab an Ace with a long suit evident in the dummy). Now we must return to dummy with a Heart to continue the attack in Diamonds.


East, after winning the ♦A, naturally continues with a Spade and, as long as we put in a Spade honor, there is nothing else that the defense can do to prevent us from collecting our nine tricks. In fact, by continuing the attack on Spades, West presents us with an overtrick.





Eight General Hands. SA Version. Updated spring 2015

VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/01/2016	By: West
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ Q963	
	♥ A983	
	♦ Q943	
	♣ 5	
West		East
♠ KJ742		♠ A
♥ Q64		♥ T5
♦ KT8		♦ A65
♣ 82		♣ AKJT963
	South	
	♠ T85	
	♥ KJ72	
	♦ J72	
	♣ Q74	

Exceptions in Bridge arise in many forms. Yes, we all like to have rules to follow, but there is always that one small tiny case where an exception may pop up.

*"The exception that proves the rule".*

Whatever that means...

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

Lead: ♥ 3

### Bidding.

The bidding by East-West on this deal strongly resembles the auction on Hand 5.

By opening 1♣ and rebidding 3♣ East shows a hand with six-plus Clubs and (roughly) 15-17 points. West, with values and stoppers in the side-suits, closes matters with 3NT.

### Play.

Partner, North, leads the ♥3 on which we must remember to play the ♥K, following the rule of *third hand high*. This is the first hurdle to overcome but the second hurdle is a little more difficult. Rather than the traditional, textbook return of a low Heart with three cards remaining in Hearts, on this deal we must return the Jack of Hearts. Why is that?

The main reason is because of the ♥10 visible in dummy. The ♥J serves to "squash" dummy's ♥10 in order to establish partner's Heart suit more easily. If dummy only had two low Hearts then we would have returned our normal, lowest Heart instead.

Can you see what would happen on this deal if we had returned the ♥2? Declarer may well have followed with the ♥6 and now partner's ♥A would be forced by dummy's ♥10. As a result, declarer's ♥Q would have become a winner.


The killer card was the ♥J, enabling us to "pin" dummy's ♥10, trapping declarer's ♥Q. After four Heart tricks are taken in defense, declarer cannot avoid losing another trick to our guarded ♣Q. One off.



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VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J4	
	♥ KQ8643	
	♦ 74	
	♣ 874	
West		East
♠ 73		♠ Q95
♥ J92		♥ AT7
♦ T93		♦ Q852
♣ Q9653		♣ AJT
	South	
	♠ AKT862	
	♥ 5	
	♦ AKJ6	
	♣ K2	

You have an interesting hand here.

How should you bid it?

What final contract should you reach?

How should you play it?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
P	1NT	P	3♦
P	3♥	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ 5

### Bidding.

There's no denying that we have a powerful hand here as South.

We start off with 1♠ and hear a discouraging 1NT response from partner. To show our strength we make a **game-forcing** jump of 3♦. This indicates a natural Diamond suit and a minimum of 18 points.

North (probably hating the whole business) now tries 3♥ to show Heart length and we rebid 3♠ to show our sixth Spade. North dutifully raises that to 4♠.

### Play.

West leads the ♣5 against 4♠ and this is won by East's Ace. A Club is continued to our ♣K.

*[A trump return at trick two would have been awkward – can you see the counterplay?]*

Anyway, with a Club already lost there is also a Heart to be lost along with a possible Spade loser and two potential Diamond losers.

The best chance on this hand is to ruff our losing Diamonds in dummy, which is where the *short trumps* are. We cannot afford to draw any trumps so, after winning the ♣K, we should immediately play off the ♦A and the ♦K and follow with a Diamond ruff with dummy's ♠4.

When the ♦Q does not appear (so our ♦J is not the boss Diamond) we return to our hand via a Club ruff and ruff the ♦J with dummy's ♠J. We would welcome it if our opponents would over-ruff dummy's ♠J with the ♠Q (if they could) since that would promote all of our Spades.


As it is, West, the opponent with the short Diamonds, does not ruff our last Diamond. So in the end we just lose one Spade, one Heart, and one Club.



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Eight General Hands. SA Version. Updated spring 2015

VB#16 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/01/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
<a href="#">Play this hand online!</a>	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ A85	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ T74	
	♣ A9642	
West		East
♠ JT42		♠ 9
♥ 83		♥ T752
♦ AK95		♦ J8632
♣ Q73		♣ KT8
	South	
	♠ KQ763	
	♥ KQ964	
	♦ Q	
	♣ J5	

This deal is an interesting one as it shows you how to deal with a pesky opponent.

Oh yes, the bidding has some interesting points as well.

Get ready for the ride...

West	North	East	South
P	1♣	P	1♠
P	1NT	P	3♥
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ A

### Bidding:

Over North's 1♣ opening, the normal action for responder is to bid suits "up-the-line". This is the case when responder has two four-card suits but when we have a 5-5 shape we should, instead, respond in the higher ranking suit first. This allows us to rebid our second suit in a cheap way.

*[This is a very similar principle to opening a hand when we hold 5-5 in two suits. For example, if we were the dealer on this deal we would open 1♠ and plan to rebid 2♥].*

Anyway, after the 1♣ – 1♠ start to this auction, North rebids 1NT to show a minimum balanced hand. Knowing of game values between us (12-14 opposite our 13) we now jump to 3♥, indicating a hand that has enough for game and a 5-5 shape in Spades and Hearts. North, with a fair hand and three-card Spade support, converts our 3♥ back to game in Spades.

### Play:

West leads the ♦A followed by the ♦K and we ruff. With plenty of tricks apparently available (five Spades on a 3-2 break, five Hearts – unless they split 5-1 – and the ♠A) it looks right to draw trumps at once. Following Plan A we cash the ♠A and ♠Q. Oops! Spades are 4-1. Time for Plan B.

Taking the third top Spade would be a mistake now as the side-suit (Hearts) is *blocked*. It is now necessary to cash the ♥A J, cross back to the closed hand with the ♠K and then play master Hearts at West. That player can do whatever gives him the greatest pleasure.

True, West has the boss trump but what can he do with it? If he ruffs a winning Heart then we are in charge of the field as our ♠7 gets promoted and becomes the boss. If he stubbornly holds on to his master trump then we merrily cash Hearts and the ♠A and make ten tricks that way. Heads we win, tails West loses. Eventually, West decides to trump a Heart and concedes the game in that manner.

Our losers in total are: A Spade, a Diamond  
and a Club.