

ADDING UP YOUR TRICKS

You are sitting South with this hand:

South
 ♠ A6
 ♥ A972
 ♦ AK10
 ♣ K973

You have an 18 HCP balanced hand, a hand too strong to open 1NT. To show this hand you must open 1♣ and jump to 2NT after partner responds. After partner uses Stayman to try to find a fit in spades, you end in 3NT. His initial response of 1♠ already showed a 4-card spade suit, but he wanted to give you the opportunity play the contract in 4♠ if you had a spade fit.

West leads the 3♥ and you see this dummy:

	North	
Vul: E/W	♠ QJ103 ♥ K4 ♦ J3 ♣ J10642	
West		East
♥3		
	South	
	♠ A6 ♥ A972 ♦ AK10 ♣ K973	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

In a notrump contract, you have to count your top tricks and look for ways to make up the difference between that count and 9 tricks. You count 1 spade, 2 hearts and 2 diamonds – 5 in total. You need 4 more which can come from clubs and spades. Since you have 5 clubs in the dummy and are only missing 2 of the top honors, you can count on 3 club tricks. Now you only need 1 extra spade to make the contract. In fact, you can even take an overtrick by scoring a second extra spade. But that assumes the defenders don't take 4 tricks first.

You should win the first heart in the dummy and lead a club to your ♣K, finessing against the ♣A. West wins and returns the ♥J. East plays the ♥Q and you win the ♥A. You play another club,

forcing out the ♣Q, again to West. West takes 2 more hearts but is end-played. He must now either switch to diamond, giving you a free finesse of the ♦J, or lead a spade giving you a free finesse of the ♠Q.

So the opponents do take 4 tricks, 2 hearts and 2 clubs. But you make your contract by concentrating on the suit that needed development and having a little luck that the hearts broke 4-3.

Here is the entire deal:

6	D	N North	W	N	E	S
		♠ QJ103 ♥ K4 ♦ J3 ♣ J10642	P	1♠	P	1♣
W West				E East		
♠ K95 ♥ J1053 ♦ 9876 ♣ AQ				♠ 8742 ♥ Q86 ♦ Q542 ♣ 85		
		S South				
		♠ A6 ♥ A972 ♦ AK10 ♣ K973				
					3NT S	NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/zm8d5pg>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.