

AGGRESSIVE BIDDING WINS THE DAY

You are sitting South and your partner, the dealer, opens 1♥. Your RHO overcalls 1♠. What should you do with this hand?:

South
♠ 4
♥ J9432
♦ A76532
♣ 4

If your partner had opened a black suit, you would probably pass. But his 1♥ opening changes things greatly. You have 10 hearts between you. The Law of Total Tricks says you are safe bidding to the total number of trumps. You are safe at the 4-level. You don't know if partner will take 10 tricks or go down, but you are sure the opponents have a part score in spades and maybe, even a game. This is a pre-emptive jump raise. If you had real values, you would do something different. A cue bid of 2♠ describes an invitational or better hand in support of hearts.

Over your 4♥, LHO raises to 4♠, which is passed around to you. What would you do now?

Passing seems like you're giving the opponents an easy game. You have only one defensive trick, the ♦A. You really want to have this hand on offense. I would bid 5♥. Even going down 1 or 2 doubled score better than a game in 4♠.

Your LHO bids 5♠ which again, comes around to you. I think its time to give up.

You are on lead. What would your lead be?

The normal lead would be a heart. But you need 3 tricks to set the contract. At most, you can take only 1 heart since your side holds 10 of them. You have the ♦A, but where is the 3rd trick coming from? Your only hope is that partner holds the ♣A and can give you a ruff. Therefore, you lead the stiff ♣4. This is the dummy:

	North	West
East		
♠ KQJ83		
♥ Q		
♦ 9		
♣ KQ10965		
	South	
	♠ 4	
	♥ J9432	
	♦ A76532	
	♣ 4	

If partner is paying attention, he will know that the only reason you wouldn't lead a heart is that you are leading a singleton. He wins the ♣A and returns a club which you ruff with your only trump. You take your setting trick with the ♦A and then lead a heart which produces your 4th trick. From that point on, the declarer has the rest of the tricks.

This is the entire hand:

D				
1				
	N North	W	N	E S
	♠ 107		1♥	1♠ 4♥
	♥ AK10876	4♣	P	P 5♥
	♦ 1084	5♣	P	P P
	♣ A8			
W West			E East	
♠ KQJ83			♠ A9652	
♥ Q			♥ 5	
♦ 9			♦ KQJ	
♣ KQ10965			♣ J732	
	S South			
	♠ 4	5♣ E NS: 0 EW: 0		
	♥ J9432			
	♦ A76532			
	♣ 4			

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/k4grg43>, 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 set the hand on your own.