

♠♥♦♣ **ANALYZING THE DEAL** ♠♥♦♣

East is the dealer and passes. What do you do with this?

S	South
♠	J4
♥	853
♦	AQJ4
♣	AQ97

You have 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Your jack-doubleton doesn't quite do the job your 1 HCP assigned to it. But you do have a nice 1♦ opening call. The opponents don't interfere and partner responds 1♥. It's back to you where a rebid of 1NT completes the description of your hand. Your partner rebids 3NT and, of course, you get a low spade lead – the ♠2.

N	North
♠	K7
♥	AK42
♦	10965
♣	J108

West leads ♠2

S	South
♠	J4
♥	853
♦	AQJ4
♣	AQ97

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The first question you need to answer is what should you play from the dummy? You have the ♠J in hand so your chances of success can be analyzed. If both the ♠A and ♠Q are in East you are going to lose all the spades and most likely, the contract. If they are both in West, it doesn't matter what you play. So the only cases you should be concerned with is if they are split. If the ♠Q is in East

and the ♠A is in West, then you must play the ♠K. If they are switched, you must pay low.

Let's leave that question for a minute. Assuming you win the first spade, how are you going to proceed to take 8 more tricks?

The only way you are going to succeed is to finesse against the two minor suit kings in the East hand. So let's assume East holds the ♦K and ♠K.

How many spades do you think East holds? The lead of the ♠2, if not a false card, indicates that West started with 4 spades and therefore, East started with 5. If East held five spades headed by the ♠A along with the 2 kings, don't you think he would have overcalled North's 1♥ bid? If he held five spades to the ♠Q, and 8 points, he could have easily passed your constructive bidding.

So to put it all together, we must play for East to hold the two minor kings; and if he holds the two kings, he is unlikely to hold the ♠A along with them. Therefore, go up with the ♠K and run the top diamonds until East's ♦K appears. Return to the dummy with the heart to run the ♣J. You will end up with 11 tricks.

This is the full deal:

14	N North	♠ K7	W	N	E	S
		♥ AK42	P	1♥	P	1NT
W West	S South	♦ 10965	P	3NT	P	P
		♣ J108	P			
E East	S South	♠ A1062	E East			
		♥ QJ7	♠ Q9853			
S South	S South	♦ 872	♥ 1096			
		♣ 642	♦ K3			
		♠ J4	♣ K53			
		♥ 853				
		♦ AQJ4				
		♣ AQ97				
		3NT S		NS: 0 EW: 0		

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yd9h9u4e> ,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.