

BIDDING A 2/1 GAME

West is the dealer and there are three passes to you:

S	South
♠	AJ976
♥	Q963
♦	A832
♣	

You've got lots of reasons to open 1♠. You have only 11 HCP, but you do meet the rule of 20. You have 9 cards in your two longest suits when added to your 11 HCP equals 20 or more; and you have the necessary two quick tricks. Another reason for opening is that you have only 6 losers in your hand; two in each suit. This is one less than an average opening hand has. Finally, you have 16 Pierson points. Your HCP and the number of your spades should equal 15 or more to open in the 4th seat. This is based on spades being the master suit and if the opponents have a fit in spades they can easily outbid you. Having 15 or more Pierson points decreases the probability that they will have the resources to compete with you.

Your partner responds 1NT. You are playing the 2 over 1 style, where his bid can show up to 12 points. Since his hand can be so good, his 1NT response is forcing for one round. Your second bid can be a rebid of your major if you have 6 or more spades; or a 4 or 5-card heart suit; or a 3 or more card minor if you can't bid hearts. With this hand, you will rebid 2♥.

Your partner raises to 4♥ and this ends the auction.

West leads the ♣Q and you see this dummy. Plan your play.

N	North
♠	K
♥	J10752
♦	975
♣	AK72

West leads ♣Q

S	South
♠	AJ976
♥	Q963
♦	A832
♣	

North has a 5-card heart suit. If you had opened in 1st or 2nd position, your partner would have been too weak to respond in his 5-card heart suit. In the 2/1 system, he needed a full opening strength hand to respond 2♥. Having been a passed hand, he could have responded 2♥, which you would have raised to game on your rebid.

It doesn't seem too hard to make the contract. This is a hand whose solution is easier to visualize from the North perspective. If North were the declarer, he would count two heart losers, two diamond losers and two club losers. He can discard one diamond loser on the ♠A and ruff the two club losers in the South hand. That leaves 3 losers – enough to make 4♥.

But if you were playing in a matchpoint scored game, where overtricks are the difference between average and top scores, you want to look to the possibility of taking 11 tricks.

Again, looking at the hand from the North viewpoint (this is called "dummy reversal"), You have a good 5-card spade suit in the "dummy" which you can set up for an extra trick if the opponents' spades break no worse than 4-3.

The order you play the cards in is important here. Win the opening club lead by ruffing in your hand. You want to ruff early, using the low hearts, saving the higher trump to force the outstanding ♥AK. Unblock the ♠K and ruff a second club. Play the ♠A and discard one of the "losing" diamonds in the dummy. Now a third spade, the ♠J, ruffing in the dummy. These three spade leads have pulled the ♠Q and ♠10 from West. Come to your hand with a diamond to the ace and lead the good ♠9, expecting to over-ruff if West ruffs low. West discards a club. This means that East has the last outstanding spade and West is probably void in hearts. Take this opportunity to discard the last losing diamond. Now all you have to do is force the play of the ♥AK and you have the remaining tricks.

This is the entire deal:

D 16	N North	W N E S
	♠ K ♥ J10752 ♦ 975 ♣ AK72	P P P 1♠ P 1NT P 2♥ P 4♥ P P P
W West	E East	
♠ Q103 ♥ ♦ Q1064 ♣ QJ8643	♠ 8542 ♥ AK84 ♦ KJ ♣ 1095	
	S South	
	♠ AJ976 ♥ Q963 ♦ A832 ♣	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/ybwgkc2e>, 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.

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