

♠♥♦♣ CHOICE OF ADVANCES ♠♥♦♣

West is the dealer and opens 1♦. Your partner doubles and East passes. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	964
♥	98
♦	AQ92
♣	K1073

Partner's double promises an opening hand, counting dummies points for the diamond shortness, and tolerance for the 3 other suits. Tolerance means he could have 3 cards in one of the suits, but should have 4 in the others. What do you bid as your advance?

Your partner obviously wants you to bid a major, but you can't. Whenever you are asked to advance a double, first consider whether you can bid notrump. This is just such a hand. A bid of 1NT promises between 8 and 10 points and no 4-card major. If you have a 4-card major you are required to bid that first. Of course, you also need stoppers in the opponent's suit. This hand is perfect for a 1NT advance.

If you chose to bid 2♣, you would be promising 0-8 points. Bidding 3♣, would show 9-11 points. This is what you have, but do you really want to play at the 3-level in a minor when you can be at the 1 level in notrump?

North passes and you can play this hand in 1NT. West leads the ♠2.

N	North
♠	K85
♥	AQ43
♦	106
♣	AJ84

West leads ♠2

S	South
♠	964
♥	98
♦	AQ92
♣	K1073

You have only 3 top tricks. You must find at least 4 more. One thing you have in your favor is knowledge of the location of the missing honors. You and your partner have 23

HCP and since West opened, he must have almost all of them. That means the ♠A, ♥K, and ♣Q are probably all in West's hand and are easily finessed against. That means you can pick up a spade, a heart and at least 2 clubs.

Although you can risk putting up the ♠K on the initial lead, it is wiser to duck the first trick, in case the suit breaks 5-2. The likelihood of East getting the lead is slight, but it is possible and you wouldn't want him to lead a spade to West's remaining 4 spades.

East wins the spade lead and returns the ♠J. West wins his ♠A and clears the suit. Now you must plan two trips to your hand so you can finesse the ♥Q and ♣J. Lead a low club to your ♣K and another low club to dummy's ♣J. West plays the ♣Q. You win the ♣A and pick up 2 extra club tricks.

Now come back to your hand with a diamond to your ♦A and lead up to the ♥Q. This finesse also wins. You already have 1 overtrick. You can safely try for two by leading the ♦10. It is possible for East to have the ♦J and if so, he will cover. Your ♦Q draws West's ♦K and now your ♦9 is also a winner.

All in all, you take 9 tricks for a score of 150. In order to score 150 in clubs, you would have to take 11 tricks. Although you can get one extra trick by trumping the West's spade winner, you would only make 4♣ for a score of 130. Scoring in notrumps is always better than in a minor suit contract.

This is the full deal:

♠ 8		<b>N North</b>	W	N	E	S
		♠ K85	1♦	X	P	1NT
		♥ AQ43	P	P	P	
		♦ 106				
		♣ AJ84				
<b>W West</b>			<b>E East</b>			
♠ AQ32			♠ J107			
♥ K1052			♥ J76			
♦ K85			♦ J743			
♣ Q2			♣ 965			
		<b>S South</b>				
		♠ 964				
		♥ 98				
		♦ AQ92				
		♣ K1073				
			1NT S			NS: 0 EW: 0

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

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