

♠♥♦♣ **COMBINING YOUR LOSERS** ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and open this hand 1♠.

S	South
♠	AKJ874
♥	A53
♦	A82
♣	5

Partner responds 2♠ and it's back to you. When you have found a fit in a major suit, you can use Losing Trick Count to help you decide your next bid. You have a 6 LTC hand. Counting the loser in the first 3 positions of each suit, you count 1 spade (♠Q), 2 hearts (♥KQ), 2 diamonds (♦KQ) and 1 club (♣A). You need your partner to cover three of those losers. A normal minimum opening hand has 7 losers and a simple raise by partner is always too weak to provide 4 cover cards. If you have only 5 LTC, you only need 2 cover card from partner, and a single raise promises at least two cover cards.

When you have a 6 LCT, your partner may or may not have 3 cover cards. You can find out if he does, by inviting him with a 3♠ rebid. If he has 3 cover cards, he will bid game; if only 1 or 2, he will pass. In this deal, he bids 4♠.

West leads the ♣A. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	Q1092
♥	976
♦	K54
♣	QJ3

West leads ♣A

S	South
♠	AKJ874
♥	A53
♦	A82
♣	5

Your partner was correct in accepting the game invitation. He has the ♠Q and ♦K. He also has four spades, giving you a 9-card trump fit. That is another positive feature of his hand and accounts for the 3rd cover card. Unfortunately he has the flastest hand shape possible.

You still have 2 losers in hearts, 1 in diamonds and 1 in clubs. After West wins the ♠A, he switches to the ♥Q. This is because he sees the ♣QJ in the dummy and he doesn't want to set up the club honor for an extra trick; possibly allowing you to discard a loser in the red suits.

You win the ♥A and pull trump in two rounds, ending in the dummy. The winning move is to lead the ♣Q. This was the play that West did not want to initiate. You know West holds the ♣K, from his initial lead of the ♣A. The key card to play from your hand is NOT a trump, but a heart. The ♣Q and the small heart are both losers. What you've done is combined them into one trick. This is called a "loser on loser" play. It comes up a lot in dummy play.

Now West has taken two tricks and can get only 1 more trick, because you are going to discard another loser, the small diamond, on the good ♣J in the dummy.

This is the full deal:

		N North ♠Q1092 ♥976 ♦K54 ♣QJ3	WES NOR EAS SOL P 1♠ P 2♠ P 3♠ P 4♠ P P P
		W West ♠63 ♥QJ4 ♦10963 ♣AK97	E East ♠5 ♥K1082 ♦QJ7 ♣108642
		S South ♠AKJ874 ♥A53 ♦A82 ♣5	
4♠ South NS: 0 EW: 0			

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

<https://tinyurl.com/y5ugn4wm>, 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.