

COMING UP WITH THE TRICKS

Dealer is North. Your partner passes and so does your RHO. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	A10854
♥	KJ62
♦	J
♣	KQ7

Not counting the singleton ♦J, you have 13 HCP and 1 more point for the 5-card spade suit. This is an easy 1♠ opening. West passes and your partner bids 2♥. Since he is a passed hand, he must have between 10 and 12 points and a 5-card or longer heart suit. With a known 9-card trump fit and a singleton diamond, you can force to game and invite possible slam with a splinter bid of 4♦. A splinter is an unnecessary jump in an unbid suit that shows a singleton or void in the suit bid and support for partner's suit. Partner should re-evaluate his hand in light of that new information and make a decision to go back to 4♥ if he has a duplication of values in diamonds, or start cue bidding, if he has losers in diamond, while all of his points are in the three other suits. If he can discount diamonds, then there are only 30 points to be worried about and slam can be made with only about 26 of them.

North's rebid is 4♠. This shows a control in spades, and since you have the ♠A, he must have the ♠K. Since the bid wasn't a simple return to 4♥, he must be encouraging the slam try. You have control in all the suits, so you check on key cards with a rebid of 4NT. He shows you 2 Key Cards, including the possible ♥K, which you assume he holds. You are only off 1 key card so you bid the slam you hope to make – 6♥.

Easts lead the ♥4. Plan the play for North.

S	South
♠	A10854
♥	KJ62
♦	J
♣	KQ7

East leads ♥4

N	North
♠	K
♥	A10975
♦	A543
♣	1042

East's lead is probably the safest lead against a slam contract. It doesn't give anything away in the other suits and might cut down on ruffs in either declarer's or dummy's hand.

Indeed, you do have some ruffing to do. However, you are missing the ♥Q and if you plan to ruff all of your diamonds, one of the opponents can over ruff on the later diamond ruffs. You can't afford to lose any trump because you are missing the ♣A.

A safer line of play is to count on a 2-2 heart break and pull all their trump in two rounds. Then you can take the rest of the hearts separately giving you 7 hearts in all. In addition, you have 2 spades and a diamond. You need only 2 more tricks and you can get them if your finesse of the ♣KQ is successful. That is, you need the ♣A to be in East and must lead up to them from your hand.

So, to make this slam, you need the hearts to split 2-2 and the ♣A to be in East. This is less than 50%, but this is only way to play it.

Win the heart lead and pull another round, ending in your hand. They do fall 2-2. Now lead up to the club honors. The ♣Q wins the trick. Now lead back to your hand with a low spade and lead another club. East will take his ♠A and lead the ♦K. Ruff that in the dummy and take your ♠A, discarding a diamond. Ruff a spade in your hand and ruff your last diamond. Your ♣K and the remaining trump take the rest of the tricks.

This is the entire deal:

D 9	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ K ♥ A10975 ♦ A543 ♣ 1042		P	P	1♠
W West			P	2♥	P 4♦
♠ J763 ♥ 83 ♦ Q1072 ♣ 985			P	4♠	P 4NT
			P	5♥	P 6♥
			D	D	D
		E East			
		♠ Q92			
		♥ Q4			
		♦ K986			
		♣ AJ63			
	S South				
	♠ A10854				
	♥ KJ62				
	♦ J				
	♣ KQ7				
			6♥ N		NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/yck54ls7>, 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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