

DEVELOPING THE EXTRA TRICKS

There are two passes to you and this is your hand:

S	South
♠	Q1043
♥	Q94
♦	AK
♣	A985

You have 15 HCP and a balanced hand. This is a classic 1NT opening. Your partner uses Stayman to ask for a 4-card major and you rebid 2♠. He shows an invitational hand by raising to 3♠. What do you do now?

You have justification for passing. Your hand is a minimum and doesn't have any extra features that argue for accepting the invitation. But this is imps scoring, which, like rubber bridge, rewards a game score. Say you rebid 4♣. After West leads the ♣Q, you see this dummy. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	AJ82
♥	J102
♦	95432
♣	K

West leads ♣Q

S	South
♠	Q1043
♥	Q94
♦	AK
♣	A985

If you pull trump and they fall 3-2 and the ♠K is on side, you have 3 spade tricks and you can use the other two trump separately, for a total 5 tricks.

You have 4 minor suit tricks and you can promote a heart winner. That's 10 total tricks.

But what if the ♠K is in East? That's 1 less trick for you. Also, what if they break 4-1? That could be another lost trick because you will need all your spades to draw the opponents trump.

Is there a better way?

Yes. This is one of those occasions when you should not draw trump first. Win the club lead in the dummy and come back to your hand in diamonds to take the ♣A discarding dummy's diamond. Now work on the hearts. East will win the first heart and send another heart back to West. When he wins he leads the ♠5. This is probably not from the ♠K, He is giving you a chance to err by taking the finesse. Go up with the ♠A and go back to your hand with a diamond, ruffing a club. Now ruff a diamond low in your hand. You ruff your last club with dummy's ♠J. This is over ruffed by East's ♠K. *Notice that you didn't waste two spades just to lose to the king.* You are left with 2 high spades in your hand and the good ♥Q. Whatever East leads back, you are in control and take the last 3 tricks – making 4.

This is the entire deal:

D					
9					