

DO YOUR WORK EARLY

You are the dealer with this hand:

S	South
♠	AQ108
♥	J10
♦	A76
♣	KQ74

With 16 balanced points, you open 1NT and partner raises you to 3NT. You might be worth a little less with the "dubious doubleton" in hearts, but you're sure your partner will cover that 😊

East leads the ♣10 and partner tables this hand:

N	North
♠	976
♥	K72
♦	KQ104
♣	J65

East leads ♣10

S	South
♠	AQ108
♥	J10
♦	A76
♣	KQ74

Do you agree with partner's raise to 3NT?

I do. North has a "good" 9 points. Five of them are working in the diamond suit, along with the ♦10. Unless I hold a "bad" 9 points I always push to game. Even games with 24 points often make. Lots of things contribute to this. The opponents often make an initial lead that gives an extra trick; because they can't see into each other's hand, they often make advantageous leads when they regain the lead; finesses do sometimes work!

Let's plan the play. You're in notrump so you want to count your instant winners. You have 1 spade and 3 diamonds. You will be able to promote 2

more in clubs; the diamonds might break 3-3 and give you an extra diamond trick; and since you hold three heart honors, you will be able to promote an extra trick in hearts. That leaves a possible repeated finesse in spades for 1 or 2 extra tricks. This adds up to 5 or 6 extra tricks. The only problem will be to take them while not losing 5 tricks to the defenders.

You play low from the dummy and East puts up the ♣A, returning a club. This is great news, giving you an extra 3 club tricks. You have limited entries to the dummy, so win the trick in North and run the ♠9. Also, you want to take the finesses early so that you keep the stoppers in the other suits in case they fail.

West win the ♠J and returns a club. Win in your hand and get back to the dummy with the ♦K so you can finesse the ♠8. This loses to the ♠K, but now your ♠AQ are high. On the last club, East signaled with a high heart. West switched to a low heart, which East wins with the ♥A. This makes your ♥K good and gives you 9 tricks in total: 2 spades, 1 heart, 3 diamonds, and 3 clubs.

This hand is a good example of the fortuitous lead. If West had led a heart instead of a club, they could have set you.

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ 976 ♥ K72 ♦ KQ104 ♣ J65	W N E S P 3NT P 1NT P P
	W West ♠ KJ4 ♥ Q84 ♦ J93 ♣ 10932	E East ♠ 532 ♥ A9653 ♦ 852 ♣ A8
	S South ♠ AQ108 ♥ J10 ♦ A76 ♣ KQ74	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/ybz4le5o>, 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.