

♠♥♦♣ ENLIST THE OPPONENTS' HELP ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and open 1♥ with this hand:

S	South
♠	KQ6
♥	AQJ105
♦	85
♣	AQ6

Your partner responds 3♥, showing 10-12 points and 4 or more hearts in support. This is a limit raise. You have 19 or 20 points and could have enough for slam. Before you ask for aces, you must find out if partner has a 1st or 2nd round stopper in diamonds. You can survive being off 1 ace; but if you are off both and the ♦A and ♦K of diamonds, you could go down before you get the lead. You can learn about diamonds by making a control asking cue bid of 4♣. If your partner bids 4♦ you are safe for the slam. If he bids anything else, you must abandon your plans for slam and retreat to game in hearts. North bids 4♥ hearts and you pass. This becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♦A and you see this dummy - plan the play:

N	North
♠	A532
♥	K862
♦	Q7
♣	853

West leads ♦A

S	South
♠	KQ6
♥	AQJ105
♦	85
♣	AQ6

You have 2 sure diamond losers, and if the club finesse loses, you have another two club losers. Do you risk the contract on the finesse?

I hate to take finesses because I seems to defy the odds and lose more than 50% of the time. When a finesse is available, I consider whether I can

arrange for the opponents to lead into my tenace. This is called an end play. It requires one to first strip the hand of the other non-involved suits so you have only the finessing suit and trump left. Another requirement is that you must put the correct opponent in the lead so that he is forced to either lead the suit into your tenace; or give you a ruff and discard.

Let's see how these preparations apply to this hand.

You must lose the first two diamonds. West will switch to the ♠J. You win in the ♠Q in your hand and draw two rounds of trump clearing the defenders of the suit. Now is the time to strip the spades. You play the ♠K and ♠A in that order. This puts you in the dummy. West hasn't played his known ♠10 yet. Now lead the remaining ♠5 from the dummy. This is the time to throw West into the lead. Instead of trumping this spade, discard your losing ♣6! This is called a "loser on loser" play, combined with the "throw in" play. Now, whatever West lead guarantees your contract. If he leads a club, no matter who holds the ♠K, you will score your ♠AQ. If he leads any other suit, your voids in that suit will allow you to trump in the dummy and discard the ♣Q. Either way, by enlisting the help of your opponents, you hold your losers to three and you make your 4♥ contract.

Look at the entire deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ A532 ♥ K862 ♦ Q7 ♣ 853	P 3♥ P 4♣ P 4♥ P P P
W West		E East
♠ J1097 ♥ 74 ♦ AKJ4 ♣ K72		♠ 84 ♥ 93 ♦ 109632 ♣ J1094
	S South	
	♠ KQ6 ♥ AQJ105 ♦ 85 ♣ AQ6	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/y4foxgvd>, 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.