

♠♥♦♣ FINDING 7 TRICKS ♠♥♦♣

West passes and your partner opens 1♠. East Passes and this is your hand.

S	South
♠	83
♥	AJ6
♦	Q85
♣	J10864

You only have enough points to respond 1NT. Going to the 2-level to show your clubs requires 10 or more points. To your surprise, this is passed out. You are declaring this 1NT contract.

West leads the ♥10 and you see this dummy.

N	North
♠	J7542
♥	K5
♦	962
♣	AKQ

West leads ♥10

S	South
♠	83
♥	AJ6
♦	Q85
♣	J10864

How can you find 7 tricks?

You think you've been given a gift with the heart lead. By playing the ♥5 from the dummy, you will score the ♥J, no matter who has the ♥Q. That gives you 3 heart tricks and you have the 3 good clubs in the dummy. But that is only 6 tricks. The rest of the tricks must come from your 5-card club suit. But how will you get back to your hand to use them, after you unblock the dummy's clubs?

If you think this problem out ahead of time – before you play a single card, you will understand that you can't afford to take the free heart finesse. You must win the ♥K in the dummy, saving the ♥A in your hand to access those 2 good clubs once you play the dummy's top clubs. That will give you 2 hearts and 5 clubs, allowing you to make your contract.

You can make an overtrick if you finesse the ♥J on your way to your hand. But if the ♥Q is off side, you will forfeit the contract. Remember, the opponents could have taken the first 8 tricks if they had led a spade or a diamond

Look at the entire deal:

D	8	N North		W	N	E	S
		♠ J7542	♠ 1♠	P	P	P	1NT
		♥ K5		P	P	P	
		♦ 962					
		♣ AKQ					
W	West	E East					
♠ K9		♠ AQ106					
♥ 109873		♥ Q42					
♦ KJ73		♦ A104					
♣ 52		♣ 973					
		S South					
		♠ 83					
		♥ AJ6					
		♦ Q85					
		♣ J10864					
				1NT S NS: 0 EW: 0			

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yxwuavex> 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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