

## FINDING THE OPTIMUM CONTRACT

Your partner opens 1♦ in second seat.

S	South
♠	KQ1074
♥	KJ102
♦	9
♣	K93

With 5-4 in the majors, you must start with your 5-card suit. After your response of 1♠, your partner rebids 1NT. He has assumed your spade suit was only four cards in length and he couldn't support it. His hand is relatively balanced and worth 12 to 14 points. If it was any stronger he would have opened 1NT.

But his rebid doesn't deny his holding 3 spades. If he did, spades would be a good strain to be in. There is a convention you could use to find out about his spade holding. It is called New Minor Forcing. If the partnership has agreed to use it, then a rebid by the responder of 2♣, the other minor, is a conventional bid that asks for more information. It asks if the opener has a 4-card heart suit – the other major. If so, he will bid that major. If he doesn't have four hearts but has 3 spades, he bids spades. If he has neither holding, he bids something else.

This is how the bidding proceeds:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Your partner does have 3 spades and a minimum opening hand. Thus his 2♣ rebid. Since you have an opening strength hand yourself, you jump to 4♠.

West leads ♥7, and this dummy comes down:

<b>N</b>	North
♠	852
♥	AQ
♦	K1043
♣	AJ75
<b>S</b>	South
♠	KQ1074
♥	KJ102
♦	9
♣	K93

What is your plan?

You have 1 or 2 spade losers, 1 diamond and 1 club loser. You have a two way finesse for the ♣Q and you have two club discards in the dummy on your long hearts. But this requires you to pull only 2 rounds of trump. Speaking of trump, you are missing the ♠AJ963 and if they break 4-1, you must be careful not to lose more than 2 spades.

After winning the ♥A, the first thing to do is start pulling trump. Your lead up to the ♠K is won by West's ♠A. East plays the ♠9. West now leads the ♣Q! What is this? Who leads a queen without the jack? Only someone who holds a singleton. That solves one problem (the club loser) and presents a new one – an impending ruff if East gets the lead.

Now your plan changes. You don't need the club ruff, so you should continue drawing trump. Win the club in the dummy and lead up to the ♠Q. East shows out, confirming a 4-1 break. That's bad news but the good news is that West has only the ♠J6 left. You can force out the jack with your 10♠ and then pull his ♠6 with your ♠7. It pays to watch the spots here. West will probably lead a diamond to East's ♦A and the rest depends on what suit East leads back. If he leads a club, West will ruff with his remaining ♠6 for a 1 trick set. If he leads the ♦Q, you can ruff with the 4 and pull West's last trump with your ♠7, making your contract on the nose.

This is the full deal:

D 16	<b>N North</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
	♠ 852 ♥ AQ ♦ K1043 ♣ AJ75	P 1♦ P 1♠ P 1NT P 2♣ P 2♠ P 4♣ P P P
<b>W West</b>		<b>E East</b>
♠ AJ63 ♥ 97643 ♦ J75 ♣ Q		♠ 9 ♥ 85 ♦ AQ862 ♣ 108642
	<b>S South</b>	
	♠ KQ1074 ♥ KJ102 ♦ 9 ♣ K93	
		4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/jccswtn> 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. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.