

# FINDING THE SAFEST CONTRACT

East is the dealer and passes. It's your turn and this is your 9 HCP hand:

<b>S</b>	South
♠	Q1095
♥	6
♦	AK108642
♣	5

Your first thought, seeing that nice 7-card diamond suit, is to open a pre-emptive 3♦. But that would be incorrect. You have a decent 4-card spade suit and if partner has 4 spades, you will never be able to discover the spade fit. He will pass your 3♦ bid. Passing this hand would be better than opening pre-emptively. But you can be a little more disruptive by opening 1♦. If partner has a spade suit, he will respond 1♠. If he have hearts and spades and mentions hearts first, You will give him the opportunity to bids his spades in the next round.

This is how the bidding continues:

North	South
	1♦
1♥	2♦
2NT	

With 2 singletons and especially with one in the unbid suit, you can't play in notrump. You must bid your diamond suit again. The question is, at what level. You probably have a misfit with partner and you don't know about his spade controls. Best to bid 3♦ and be satisfied that you are in the correct strain.

After partner passes 3♦, West leads the ♣A. You see this dummy:

<b>N</b>	North
♠	A82
♥	AQ43
♦	3
♣	J10743

West leads ♣A

<b>S</b>	South
♠	Q1095
♥	6
♦	AK108642
♣	5

You have a definite club loser, 2 or 3 spades losers and a very possible diamond loser. You plan to finesse the ♥Q and discard a spade on the ♥A. You also plan to finesse the ♠Q and save another of the spade losers.

West wins the 1<sup>st</sup> trick and leads another club. You ruff and play the two top diamonds. The ♦Q falls under the ♦K, but the ♦J is still out.

Next you finesse the ♥Q which is successful and dump a losing spade under the ♥A. Ruff a heart in your hand and lead a spade to dummy's ♠A. Now lead the ♠2. East puts in the ♠J and you take the ♠Q. Give up a spade to the ♠K, and except for the outstanding ♦J, the rest of the tricks are yours. You lost 3 tricks: a spade, a diamond and a club.

This is the entire deal:

14	<b>N</b> North	W	N	E	S
	♠ A82 ♥ AQ43 ♦ 3 ♣ J10743	P	1♥	P	1♦
<b>W</b> West		P	2NT	P	2♦
♠ 763 ♥ K10752 ♦ Q5 ♣ A86		P	P	P	3♦
	<b>E</b> East				
	♠ KJ4 ♥ J98 ♦ J97 ♣ KQ92				
	<b>S</b> South				
	♠ Q1095 ♥ 6 ♦ AK108642 ♣ 5				
		3♦ S		NS: 0 EW: 0	

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Notice that West's initial lead of a club held you to 10 tricks. If he had led anything else, you could have ditched the losing club before the opponents took it. Since the spades broke 3-3, you could have used your 4<sup>th</sup> spade as the 11<sup>th</sup> trick.

In 3NT, East would have led a club and they end up getting 3 clubs, the ♠K and the ♦J to set the contract.

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

<http://tinyurl.com/yc4mel4m>, 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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