

GOING FOR AN OVERTRICK

West is the dealer and there are three passes to you:

S	South
♠	AKJ104
♥	AQ543
♦	Q5
♣	J

You have a very nice hand. 17 HCP and two 5-card major suits. This hand is worth an extra 3 tricks; 2 for length in each major, and 1 for the quality of the spade suit. If partner has enough to respond, you have enough for game.

You open 1♠ and your partner raises you to 2♠. He is showing at least 3 spades and 7 to 10 points. This is called a constructive raise. You are sure that you belong in game, but it doesn't hurt to find out more about North's hand by making a "help suit game try." Rebidding 2♥ asks him if he has any help in hearts. He denies help by returning to 3♠. At this point, you are sure you belong in a spade game and rebid 4♠.

West leads the ♦A and you see this dummy. Plan your play.

N	North
♠	632
♥	K10
♦	109874
♣	A103

West leads ♦A

S	South
♠	AKJ104
♥	AQ543
♦	Q5
♣	J

You see 2 definite diamond losers and a possible spade loser. If hearts break 4-2 and the ♥J doesn't drop, there could be a heart loser also. On the other hand, you have good diamond intermediates. You are only missing 3 honors, so the suit might be able to be set up for heart discards. Also, you have a spade finesse that gives you a 50-50 chance of saving a spade loser.

West follows the ♦A with the ♦K and the ♦J, which you ruff. East follows to all three diamonds. The proper way to finesse the spades is to play the ♠A first, catering to a singleton ♠K in West. Although this is unlikely, there is a discreet probability that it will occur. The ♠K doesn't fall so you go to the dummy with the ♣A and finesse the ♠J. Both East and West follow suit, so you draw the ♠Q with your ♠K.

Now your ♦109 are good in the dummy which you reach with the ♥K. You discard two hearts on diamonds and claim the rest of the tricks – making ♠5.

I hope you noticed the defensive error West made by playing the 2nd and 3rd diamond in the beginning. After seeing the dummy, he would have saved a trick for their side by switching to a club at trick 2. This takes out one of the two needed entries to the dummy and would have led to an eventual heart trick when they, of necessity, are played from your hand.

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ 632 ♥ K10 ♦ 109874 ♣ A103	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	P	P	1♠	P	2♠	P	3♥	P	3♠	P	4♥	P	4♠	P	P
	W	N	E	S																		
P	P	P	1♠																			
P	2♠	P	3♥																			
P	3♠	P	4♥																			
P	4♠	P	P																			
W West ♠ 97 ♥ 62 ♦ AKJ ♣ Q87654	E East ♠ Q85 ♥ J987 ♦ 632 ♣ K92																					
	S South ♠ AKJ104 ♥ AQ543 ♦ Q5 ♣ J	4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0																				

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

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