

♠♥♦♣ GOING FOR THE OVERTRICK ♠♥♦♣

North is the dealer and passes. So does East, and this is your hand, sitting South:

S	South
♠	AKQ86
♥	A32
♦	9
♣	AKQ9

With 22 HCP and a fairly shapely hand, you open 2♣. Partner makes a waiting bid of 2♦ and you bid your 5-card spade suit – 2♠. Partner raises you to 4♠, and you pass. West leads the ♥K.

This is the dummy:

N	North
♠	J1042
♥	107
♦	KQ7
♣	8532

West's Lead: ♥K

S	South
♠	AKQ86
♥	A32
♦	9
♣	AKQ9

North used Losing Trick Count when he saw the spade fit with you. He has a 9 LTC. The normal count for a 2♣ opening is 4 LTC. That's a total of 13 losing tricks. Subtracting from 24, that leaves 11 winners – not enough for slam. Of course, you can overrule your partners "computation" but you decide to bid this hand cautiously, and you pass.

You have 2 hearts losers, 1 diamond loser and 1 club loser. There shouldn't be any trouble in eliminating 1 heart loser.

The most common techniques for eliminating losers are finesses, ruffing in the short hand (dummy) and discarding on a long suit in the dummy. You can easily ruff a heart loser, giving you 10 tricks. But since this is a matchpoint game, overtricks are

essential. That extra trick must come from the elimination of the club loser. If the club suit breaks 3-2, there will be no problem. But what if clubs are 4-1?

Had your partner one less club, you might have engineered a club ruff. But that would have only been possible if trumps broke 2-2. With the normal 3-1 break, you will have only 1 spade left in the dummy, and you need that for the heart ruff.

The diamond suit, however, offers a option to discard. This is how the hand should be played. You win the heart lead and pull trump. That will require three rounds. You end in your hand and lead the $\spadesuit 9$ up to the dummy. If West comes up with the $\spadesuit A$, you get two discards on the $\spadesuit K$ and $\spadesuit Q$. The discard of the $\clubsuit 9$ saves a loser, but the heart discard doesn't help. You still have to lose a heart.

West does best to duck the first diamond lead. You play the second diamond honor from the dummy and discard your losing club. This is a loser on loser play. You were going to lose a diamond anyway. You combined that loser with the club loser – all onto one trick.

West, winning the $\spadesuit A$, will take his heart trick with the $\heartsuit Q$, but that is all they can get. You will ruff your last heart with dummy's remaining spade and claim.

This is the entire deal:

		N North		W	N	E	S
		\spadesuit J1042 \heartsuit 107 \diamondsuit KQ7 \clubsuit 8532		P	P	P	2 \clubsuit
				P	2 \diamondsuit	P	2 \spadesuit
				P	4 \spadesuit	P	P
				P			
W West				E East			
\spadesuit 975 \heartsuit KQ4 \diamondsuit AJ10842 \clubsuit 4				\spadesuit 3 \heartsuit J9865 \diamondsuit 653 \clubsuit J1076			
		S South					
		\spadesuit AKQ86 \heartsuit A32 \diamondsuit 9 \clubsuit AKQ9					
				4 \spadesuit S NS: 0 EW: 0			

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ydj3frqb>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.