

KEEP RE-EVALUATING

North is the dealer and opens 1♣. He has 13 HCP but his honor doubleton in diamonds doesn't have much value. Likewise, his J♣ has dubious potential. However, it's better to open marginal hands like this than pass and let the opponents have a clear field.

You are South and respond 1♥. You have 11 HCP but 4 of your points are in short suits where they don't help to develop tricks or even take tricks in their own right. Your partner raises to 2♥, showing minimum opening hand of 12-15 HCP. Should you pass or bid on?

North
♠AQ105
♥A1087
♦Q9
♣J72

South
♠J2
♥KJ96532
♦K
♣K103

After your partner supports your hearts your hand improves significantly. You have a known 10-card trump fit, which could even be as much as 11 cards if partner supported with 4 hearts. Now your short suits are positives rather than the negatives you originally counted them for. I'd say the hand was worth about 16 points. You want to be in a heart game so you should simply raise to 4♥ which becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♣9 won by East's ♣A. East returns the ♣4. What is your plan?

First count your losers. You have 1 spade loser, no heart losers, 1 diamond loser and 2 potential club losers, given East's play on trick one. You must eliminate one of these losers.

There is a potential spade finesse which holds a 50% chance of success. Is there anything better?

Notice that you have a ♦Q in the dummy on which you can discard the losing spade. That's nearly 100%. The other thing you should have noticed was the opening lead. Do you think it was 4th down from a long club suit? Hardly. There are only 5 cards higher than the nine and you have 3 of them. The 4th higher card was just shown in the East hand. Therefore, the ♣9 must have been from the "top of nothing" or from a singleton. Either way, you don't want to put your ♣K on East's ♣4. Either the ♣10 will win the trick or your ♣10 will be ruffed.

You insert the ♣10 and West follows suit with the ♣8. Now it's just a matter of pulling the two outstanding trump and setting up the ♦Q for your spade discard. You will take 1 spade, 7 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs; 11 tricks in total.

This is the complete board:

D	1		
		N North	W N E S
		♠ AQ105	1♠ P 1♥
		♥ A1087	P 2♥ P 4♥
		♦ Q9	P P P
		♣ J72	
W West			E East
♠ 8743			♠ K96
♥ Q			♥ 4
♦ J86432			♦ A1075
♣ 98			♣ AQ654
		S South	
		♠ J2	
		♥ KJ96532	
		♦ K	
		♣ K103	
			4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

Notice there were only 24 HCP between the two hands. If you had relied only on counting high card points, you would have passed your partner's 2♥ raise and missed this 11-trick game.

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ms2s4wx>
 Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.