

LOOKING BEYOND THE CONTRACT

West deals and passes. Your partner opens 1♦ and East passes. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	AK74
♥	AKQ1084
♦	
♣	J86

You see great potential in this hand if you can find a fit in one of the major suits. You should start by making a forcing 1♥ response. If partner rebids spades, you will support with a jump. If he rebids diamonds, you will rebid hearts. It all depends on what he says next.

Before he gets to bid, West comes back in with a 2♣ overcall. Undeterred, partner rebids 3♥. He must have 4 hearts and between 16 and 18 points. Now that your hearts are supported your hand takes on many more points. You can add 1 point for the extra length in the trump suit and a point for the 4-card spade side suit. Most significant, though, is the 4 points you can add for the diamond void. I'd say your hand is now worth about 25 points. There is no question that you have enough strength for a slam. The bid question is do you have a first or second round stopper in clubs. You would hate to lose the first two tricks to the opponents' ♣AK.

You can find out about partner's club holding by starting a cue bid sequence starting with 3♥. Once you have confirmed a trump suit, bidding side suits show 1st or 2nd round stoppers. You and your partner continue cue bidding until one of you determines there is a unstopped suit. Then he returns to the agreed trump suit. You begin by bidding 3♠ and partner continues with 4♣. Now you know your hand is safe enough to ask for aces. You next bid 4NT and partner reports that he has two aces. This is enough for a 6♥ rebid by you. This is the bidding sequence:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
2♣	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

West leads the ♠A and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	98
♥	J962
♦	AQJ73
♣	A4

West leads ♣K

S	South
♠	AK74
♥	AKQ1084
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You have 10 top tricks. You need two more which can come from ruffing 2 spades in the dummy. The problem is that you might lose a diamond to the ♦K and they will lead another club. You can use a technique called the ruffing finesse, hoping that the ♦K is in East. If it works correctly, you can even make an overtrick – taking all 13 tricks.

There are 3 trump outstanding and you can afford to pull two rounds. You take the ♣A and pull trump in two rounds, ending in the dummy. Now you play the ♦A and discard a club. Then lead the ♦Q. If East plays low, you discard your last club. West could win but that will be his last trick. If East has the ♦K, he will cover the ♦Q. You ruff in your hand then go back to the dummy by playing the ♠AK and ruffing a spade. Now you can discard your last club on the ♦J and claim 13 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> D 16 </div>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>North</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♠</td> <td>98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥</td> <td>J962</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦</td> <td>AQJ73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣</td> <td>A4</td> </tr> </table>	N	North	♠	98	♥	J962	♦	AQJ73	♣	A4	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>N</td> <td>E</td> <td>S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>5♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>D</td> <td>D</td> <td>D</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1♦	P	1♥	P	3♥	P	3♠	P	4♣	P	4NT	P	5♥	P	6♥	D	D	D	D
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You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/ycysdu2y>, 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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