

♠♥♦♣ MAKING A DECISION ♠♥♦♣

North and East pass and it's your turn:

S	South
♠	KQJ3
♥	A93
♦	A63
♣	Q102

With 16 HCP and a balanced hand, you open 1NT. West passes and your partner raises you to 3NT.

West leads the ♥4 and you see this dummy.

N	North
♠	64
♥	KQ5
♦	KQ10
♣	J9853

West leads ♥4

S	South
♠	KQJ3
♥	A93
♦	A63
♣	Q102

Time to plan for your 3NT contract.

In notrump, you first count your winners and if there aren't enough, you devise a way to get the needed 9 tricks. Once you do that, you see if there are any more tricks you can take. Every extra trick is important.

You have 3 hearts and 3 diamonds off the top. You need 3 more for your contract. The spade suit offers 2 tricks once the ♠A is driven out; the club suit offers 3 tricks once the defenders take the ♣A and ♣K.

Your attention might go right to the spades because you are only missing one honor there. However, this is the wrong choice. If you lead spades after winning the opening heart lead, West will take the ♠A and lead another heart. You will get your 2 spades, but you still need a club. The opponents will win the first club and clear the heart suit. Now when you lose the second club, West will set you with 2 more heart tricks to go along with their 2 clubs and 1 spade.

You must go after the clubs first. Win the ♥A and lead the ♣Q. Regain the lead and lead the ♣10. West will lead another heart, clearing the suit, but you will have 3 good clubs to go with your 6 red suit winners.

You can only take 9 tricks with this holding, but notice that if West hadn't started with a heart, you could have even made an overtrick.

Look at the entire deal:

D 1	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 64 ♥ KQ5 ♦ KQ10 ♣ J9853		P	P	1NT
W West		P	3NT	P	P
		P			
	E East				
	♠ A52 ♥ 107642 ♦ 942 ♣ AK				
	S South				
	♠ KQJ3 ♥ A93 ♦ A63 ♣ Q102				
			3NT S		NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yy5hqt6h> 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.