

♠♥♦♣ MAPPING OUT THE HANDS ♠♥♦♣

You dealt yourself this hand:

S	South
♠	AQJ103
♥	A54
♦	Q8
♣	K54

You have 16 HCP and a balanced hand. Some would open 1NT and that isn't wrong as long as you have methods for showing the good 5-card spade suit. But the hand looks more like it wants to play in spades. I'd open 1♠. Over your 1♠, West bids 2♥. Partner raises you to 2♣ and East raises his partner to 3♥. You certainly have the strength to go to 3♠. The bidding stops there. West leads the ♥6. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	K874
♥	83
♦	J72
♣	Q1083

West leads ♥6

S	South
♠	AQJ103
♥	A54
♦	Q8
♣	K54

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
All Pass			

Though you have no spade losers, you do have 2 heart losers, one of which can be ruffed in the dummy, as well as 2 diamond losers and some number of club losers. You can't do anything about the red suits, so you will have to limit the club losers to only one.

You put up dummy's ♥3 and East plays the ♥K. Let's stop here. You actually know a lot about the defender's hands. In fact, given the bidding and the play of the first trick, you can map out the entire deal.

First count the HCP in your hand and your dummy's. Subtract that from 40 and you will know what the opponents hold. You have 22 so they must have a total of 18. It is weighted toward West, but East probably has more like 7 or 8 to be able to raise to the 3 level. Remember, West must have five hearts and East only three. Since East played the ♥K on the first trick, he doesn't have the ♥Q and must also have the ♥J. This is because if West had the ♥J as well as the ♥Q, he would have led the ♥Q – the top of touching honors.

Let's consider the diamonds. West doesn't have the ♦A and ♦K, or he would have led the ♦A, rather than a low card from a weak suit headed by the ♥Q. He must have one of the diamond honors for his overcall. So it's either the ♦A or the ♦K.

So he has 5 or 6 points in the red suits and nothing in spades. Therefore, he must have ♣A and probably the ♣J for his bid. The split would be 10 to 12HCP for West and 6-8 for East. That split is consistent with the bidding.

Does this give you a road map for the play? It should. Win the first trick with your ♥A and pull trump, ending in your hand. Lead a club up to the dummy and finesse the ♣10, playing West for the ♣J. Come back to your hand and finesse the ♣Q. You have 5 spades, 1 heart, 1 heart ruff and 2 club tricks for your 3♠ contract.

This is the full deal:

11		N North		WE: N OF: EAS SOL	
D		♠ K874		2♥ 2♠ 3♥ 1♠	
		♥ 83		P P P	
		♦ J72			
		♣ Q1083			
W West		E East			
♠ 92		♠ 65			
♥ Q10762		♥ KJ9			
♦ A103		♦ K9654			
♣ AJ2		♣ 976			
		S South			
		♠ AQJ103			
		♥ A54			
		♦ Q8			
		♣ K54			
3♠ South					
NS: 0					
EW: 0					

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

<https://tinyurl.com/y8bjkl98> , 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.