

## ONE UNUSUAL BID

West is the dealer. It's two passes to East, who opens 1♥ in 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

This is your hand.

S	South
♠	AJ85
♥	98
♦	AQ108
♣	973

You have almost an opening hand and are short in hearts. The hand is slightly imperfect for a takeout double – but only slightly. Over your double, West jumps to 4♥. West has suddenly come to life. So has your partner. He bids 4NT. He doesn't want to play in notrump. This is the "unusual" notrump, indicating he is long in diamonds and clubs, and is asking you to pick your longest minor.

East passes so you are required to take partner out of this artificial contract. You certainly prefer diamonds, and 5♦ becomes the final contract.

This is the bidding:

West North East South

Pass Pass 1♥ Dbl  
4♥ 4NT Pass 5♦  
All Pass

West leads the ♥4. Plan the hand after dummy comes down:

N	North
♠	
♥	A3
♦	J97654
♣	KJ865

West leads ♥4.

S	South
♠	AJ85
♥	98
♦	AQ108
♣	973

You have your work cut out for you. You will win the ♥A but you have another heart loser, plus a possible diamond loser. You could lose all 3 clubs.

Since there are limited entries to the dummy, you had better finesse against the ♦K right now. Lead the ♦J and if that wins, lead another diamond to your ♦10 if East plays low. Even if diamonds break 3-0, you will pick up all the trump if the ♦K is in East.

Once trump are dispatched, play the ♣A and discard dummy's heart. That eliminates another loser. Now lead up to your club honors for the finesse. The question is which card do you play - the ♣K or the ♣J? Assuming clubs break normally, if both the ♣A and ♣Q are in West, you lose only 1 club. If they are both in East, you will lose 3 clubs. There is nothing you can do about either of these conditions. The only one that should concern you is if the two honors are split. Sometimes that ♣A will be on your left and the ♣Q on your right. Other times, the positions will be reversed. So 50% of the time you will guess right and 50% of the time you will guess wrong. But if every time you make this decision you finesse differently, you can disturb the averages and lose more than 50% of the time. You zig when the average position zags, and vice versa. Therefore, to average out at 50% over the long run, you must make this decision the same way every time you run up against it. Myself, *I always finesse the lower honor first*. I suggest you do the same.

Here, East takes the ♣J with the ♣A, making your ♣K good. Now you can give up another club and claim. You have lost only the ♣A and ♣Q. And you've taken 11 tricks on only 20 points.

This is the entire deal:

D	16	N	North	W	N	E	S
♠				P	P	1♥	X
♥	A3			4♥	4NT	P	5♦
♦	J97654			P	P	P	
♣	KJ865						
W	West						
♠	K10942						
♥	J7542						
♦							
♣	Q42						
S	South						
♠	AJ85						
♥	98						
♦	AQ108						
♣	973						
				5♦ S		NS: 0 EW: 0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:  
<http://tinyurl.com/yap8rpq4> , 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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