

PERSERVERENCE PAYS OFF

You are sitting in the South position and partner has opened the bidding:

South
 ♠ AKJ1087
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 8542
 ♣ J3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	??

What is your call?

You have only 9 HCP but your hand has a lot of extras. You have a self-sufficient six card spade suit and a singleton in the opponent's suit. This is certainly worth a rebid of 2♠, but is that enough? You can see six tricks in your hand. Partner should be able to come up with at least 3 more and maybe 4. I would rebid 3♠. This is not forcing. Partner can pass with a bare minimum. Here, though, North raises to 4♠ and West leads the ♥K. Plan your play.

North
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ A53
 ♦ 9763
 ♣ AK75

West: ♥K

♠ AKJ1087
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 8542
 ♣ J3

The first thing you should notice is that you have no losers in the spade, heart or club suits. Unfortunately, you have mirrored distribution in the four-card diamond suit. However, if the defenders' diamonds split 3-2, you will make one of the diamonds good and limit the hand to 3 losers. Since this is your only chance, you must plan for that split.

Now you must consider the order of play. If you intended to start pulling trump you are heading for defeat. There are five outstanding trump. If they break in a friendly 3-2, you have no problem. But, if they break 4-1, by the time you finished drawing the trump you will have reduced your holding to two. Now, when you play the diamonds you will have to lose the lead three times to set up that fourth diamond. Each time the opponents win a diamond they will return a heart. This will require you to trump and you can only do that two times. You will lose control of the hand and will go down in defeat.

Win the first heart in the dummy and lead a diamond. The defenders will return a heart and you will trump. Each time you win the lead back, you return another diamond and keep trumping the heart return. Now you will have four spades in your hand to pull the outstanding trump and you will be able to use that last little diamond as your 10th trick.

This is the complete board:

<table border="1"> <tr><td>D</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> </table>		D	1	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N North</td></tr> <tr><td>♠ Q9</td></tr> <tr><td>♥ A53</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ 9763</td></tr> <tr><td>♣ AK75</td></tr> </table>	N North	♠ Q9	♥ A53	♦ 9763	♣ AK75	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W N E S</td></tr> <tr><td>1♣ P 1♠</td></tr> <tr><td>2♥ P P 3♣</td></tr> <tr><td>P 4♠ P P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td></tr> </table>	W N E S	1♣ P 1♠	2♥ P P 3♣	P 4♠ P P	P
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Yes, if the trump split 3-2, pulling trump would have worked and if they split 5-0, nothing would work. It didn't hurt to plan for the worst distribution that you still could have recovered from.

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lp6ehct>

Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.