

PLAY FOR THE WORST

You are sitting in the South and the bidding has started by your right hand opponent.

South
 ♠A9
 ♥AK87632
 ♦Q3
 ♣83

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

It's time for your rebid. Your partner has shown at least 10 points with his two over one response. You have 13 HCP but with a 7-card trump suit, headed by the ace and king, you can upgrade this hand to at least 16 or 17 points. You probably have enough for a game but you want to leave it up to partner. You rebid 3♥. This is a highly invitational bid and gives your partner an idea of how strong you are. North settles for 4♥.

West leads the ♠J and you see this dummy:

North
 ♠763
 ♥109
 ♦A97
 ♣KQJ42

West
 ♠J

East

South
 ♠A9
 ♥AK87632
 ♦Q3
 ♣83

As in all trump contracts, you must count your losers and plan your play. You have 1 spade loser, 1 diamond loser and 1 club loser. Since you probably can't do anything about them, you must bring the trumps in without losing one. There is a 33% chance that the clubs will break 3-3 and you'll be able to discard the diamond loser on the fourth club. Still, the trump suit is what you must try to bring in without loss.

You have 9 trump and the defenders have 4. If they break 2-2, there's no problem. You can handle a 3-1 break with a finesse. But if they break 4-0, you've got trouble. If the four hearts are in West there is no hope. If they are in the East, you can capture them with two finesses.

To perform the finesse, you'll win the first spade with your ♠A and lead twice to the dummy; once in the clubs and once in diamonds. If East has all four hearts he will split his honors on the first heart by playing the ♥J. You capture this and see West show out. After the second finesse you pull the rest of the trump and give up the three losers.

This is the complete board:

14 ^D	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 763 ♥ 109 ♦ A97 ♣ KQJ42	P	2♣	P	1♥
W West		P	4♥	P	P
♠ J1085 ♥ ♦ KJ542 ♣ 9765		P			
	E East				
	♠ KQ42 ♥ QJ54 ♦ 1086 ♣ A10				
	S South				
	♠ A9 ♥ AK87632 ♦ Q3 ♣ 83				
		4♥ S	NS: 0	EW: 0	

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pez8bxg>
Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.