

PLAYING THE ODDS

You are sitting North and your partner opens 1NT. Your RHO passes and you are faced with this hand:

North
 ♠J1062
 ♥A10873
 ♦72
 ♣J4

You could respond 2♦ as a transfer to hearts. When partner rebids 2♥ you would pass. You only hold 6 HCP. But you have a better option. You could bid 2♣ - Stayman. If partner rebids 2♦, denying a four card major, you could rebid 2♥. This says you have one 4-card and one 5-card major. The 5-card major is hearts and furthermore, you have no ambition for a game.

South, instead of rebidding 2♦, rebids 2♥, saying he has a 4-card heart suit. Now your hand has gotten better. You have a couple of more points for the two doubletons. This is almost enough to invite. You rebid 3♥ and leave it up to partner.

Partner accepts the invitation and you are in 4♥.

Here is the entire deal:

11																						
D	N North ♠ J1062 ♥ A10873 ♦ 72 ♣ J4	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;">W</th> <th style="width: 10%;">N</th> <th style="width: 10%;">E</th> <th style="width: 10%;">S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td>P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♥</td> <td>P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S				1NT	P	2♣	P	2♥	P	3♥	P	4♥	P	P	P	
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			1NT																			
P	2♣	P	2♥																			
P	3♥	P	4♥																			
P	P	P																				
W West	♠ KQ973 ♥ K5 ♦ J86 ♣ Q73	E East ♠ 54 ♥ J6 ♦ A543 ♣ K10962																				
	S South ♠ A8 ♥ Q942 ♦ KQ109 ♣ A85	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0																				

As you can see, South has 1 spade loser, 1 diamond loser and 1 club loser. He must bring the heart suit in without a loss. How would you play this?

You could either lead a low heart to the ♥A, playing for West to have the singleton ♥K; or you can lead the ♥Q, and hope that East has a singleton ♥J.

They are mathematically equal, but leading the ♥Q is a little better because West might fail to put up his ♥K.

You win the first spade lead with the ♠A and lead another spade. West wins and switches to a low club. This is his best option. You win the ♣A and lead the ♥Q. Luckily, West does misplay and inserts the ♥5. You then pick up his ♥K and make the contract.

Sometimes the opponents provide help in spite of themselves!

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kny7snw>, 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.