

♠♥♦♣ PREPARING FOR A THROW IN ♠♥♦♣

Your partner dealt and opened 1♣. The opponents are silent and you respond 1♥ with this very nice hand:

S	South
♠	A3
♥	AQJ8652
♦	42
♣	AJ

Partner raises you to 2♥. What is your hand worth now? When you picked it up you counted 16 HCP and 3 points for the 7 card heart suit. The hearts are also self sufficient, even against a singleton in partner's hand. You get another point for this Quality Suit. That's 20 total points. Once partner supports hearts, you can add 2 more points for the 6th and 7th card in the suit; plus another point for the 3 doubletons. Your upgraded 23 point hand, along with at least 12 points from partner's opening hand, is more than enough for a slam.

Before committing to a slam, though, you have to find out if you are missing the top two diamonds. All the points in the world won't help if you lose the the first two tricks to the ♦AK. In other to find out if your partner has a diamond stopper you start cue bidding. Technically, you should start with spades, but you are only interested in diamonds, so you can start with 3♣. If partner skips over diamonds in his next bid, you can safely return to 4♥.

However, partner bids 3♦. Now you rebid 4NT and partner shows 1 key card. This could be either the ♦A or the ♥K. Either way, you are rebidding 6♥.

Here is how the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

West leads the ♠J. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	KQ6
♥	10974
♦	AQ3
♣	Q105

West leads ♠J

S	South
♠	A3
♥	AQJ8652
♦	42
♣	AJ

You have 11 top tricks: 3 spades, 6 hearts 1 diamond and 1 club. You can get 1 more trick from either of two finesses – diamond or clubs. However, you may also lose the ♥K if it is doubleton in West. If that is the case, you have to pick the correct finesse. The rule on which finesse to take against the missing king is this: Take the finesse where the missing king is on-side; don't take the finesse where the king is off-side. 😊

Actually, a better rule is don't take either if you can help it!

Win the first trick in your hand with the ♠A and lay down the ♥A. If the ♥K falls, you will have two chances for the finesse. Unfortunately, the ♥K is doubleton in West. But that gives you another possibility. Get West to lead one of the minor suits.

To set this up you will lead to the ♠K at trick 3; then play the ♦A, and lead the ♠Q, discarding the losing diamond in your hand. If West follows suit, put him on lead with a low heart. Here, he will probably ruff with this ♥K. Now he must lead either a club, giving you a free finesse or a diamond. If he leads a diamond, play the ♦Q from dummy. If East holds the ♦K, ruff and try the club finesse. It isn't full proof, but gives you the best chance for 12 tricks.

This is the full deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> D 13 </div>		N North ♠ KQ6 ♥ 10974 ♦ AQ3 ♣ Q105	<table border="1" style="font-size: 0.8em;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e0e0e0;"> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♣	P	1♥		P	2♥	P	3♣	P	3♦	P	4NT	P	5♣	P	6♥	P	P	P	P
		W	N	E	S																						
1♣	P	1♥																									
P	2♥	P	3♣																								
P	3♦	P	4NT																								
P	5♣	P	6♥																								
P	P	P	P																								
W West ♠ J10 ♥ K3 ♦ K1085 ♣ K8743	E East ♠ 987542 ♥ ♦ J976 ♣ 962																										
		S South ♠ A3 ♥ AQJ8652 ♦ 42 ♣ AJ	6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0																								

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yyvb83vj> , 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.