

♠♥♦♣ PULL TRUMP OF NOT ♠♥♦♣

East dealt and passed. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	QJ10863
♥	AK3
♦	8
♣	AQJ

A shapely 6-3-3-1 hand with 17 HCP's. This is certainly worth a 1♠ opening. Your partner raises you to 2♠ and the opponents are silent – for a change!

It's time for a rebid. Your choices are to pass, invite or bid game.

Since you have a fit in spades, you can use Losing Trick Count (LTC) to help you decide. You have a 5 loser hand. Two spade losers, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 club loser. A simple raise from the responder usually promises two cover cards. Cover cards are cards that can eliminate losers in your hand. Aces and Kings are cover cards. So are long trump suits with shortness to go along with the trump. Based on this guideline, you rebid 4♠.

West's leads the ♥J and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	9752
♥	742
♦	K107
♣	K42

West's Lead: ♥J

S	South
♠	QJ10863
♥	AK3
♦	8
♣	AQJ

The dummy has two good things in it. The first is the ♣K, which covers your club loser. The other good thing is the ♦K. This may or may not erase the other loser that must be eliminated.

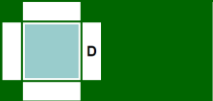
The play of the diamond will be to finesse the ♦K against the ♦A. The ♦A must be located in West for this to be successful. But if East holds the ♦A, there is no hope for this contract. We will assume the ♦A will be on-side.

The next question is whether or not to pull trump first. This is usually the default action after you first get the lead. But pulling trump first is only correct if there is no reason to defer. Here, there is a big reason to defer pulling trump. You have to lose the lead in spades twice, yet you only have 1 more heart stopper. When you lose the 2nd spade, they will take their good heart and they also have the ♦A to go along with the two spades.

You must eliminate the heart loser before pulling trump!

Assuming the ♦A is in West, lead the ♦8 to the ♦K on Trick 2. If West comes up with the ♦A and leads a second heart, you will win it, go to the dummy with the ♣K and discard the losing heart on the ♦K. If West plays low on your ♦8, you will insert the ♦K. If your positional assumption is correct, you have just eliminated your diamond loser and you don't card if they win a heart trick.

This is the entire deal:

	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 9752 ♥ 742 ♦ K107 ♣ K42	P	P	P	1♠ 4♠
W West		E East			
♠ K ♥ J1095 ♦ AJ63 ♣ 9863		♠ A4 ♥ Q86 ♦ Q9542 ♣ 1075			
	S South				
	♠ QJ10863 ♥ AK3 ♦ 8 ♣ AQJ				
		4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0			

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yfbabpkw>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.