

RE-EVALUATING YOUR HAND

East bids and passes. What is your call?

S	South
♠	Q109732
♥	K
♦	AJ1064
♣	K

Although you have 13 HCP, your singleton kings aren't worth the 3 points you had initially given them. Your spade suit is missing the top 3 honors. These are all negatives but you do have six spades and a very shapely hand. There is a saying that goes with 6-5 hands: "Six five come alive." It's not the strength but the shape that makes this hand good. It is certainly worth a 1♠ opening.

West passes and your partner raises you to 2♠. East passes and it's back to you. His single raise promises 6-10 points and 3 spades. There are valid arguments for passing. Your kings are potentially worthless and your partner may not have any of the missing honors.

There is also a case for inviting your partner to game; either by raising to 3♠ (asking for spade honors) or rebidding 2♦ (asking for help in diamonds.) If North is near the top of his range and/or he has a fit for your diamonds, he would accept and rebid 4♠.

When I played this hand, I took a third approach. I jumped to 4♠! Knowing we had a 9-card trump fit added a point. A good 5-card side suit added another point. Finally, holding two singletons added 4 points. I really didn't need much from partner's hand and I didn't want to miss a game if he couldn't appreciate the special shape of my hand.

West leads the ♥10 and your partner tables this hand:

N	North
♠	K85
♥	QJ873
♦	Q93
♣	QJ

West leads ♥10

S	South
♠	Q109732
♥	K
♦	AJ1064
♣	K

Even though North has 10 HCP, 5 queens and jacks and no aces make the hand worth less. He probably wouldn't have accepted my invitation to game.

East plays his ♥A, felling your ♥K. Knowing you started with a stiff heart, East switched to clubs. West captures your ♣K and returns a heart. You win your ♥J and start pulling trump. Since you only have the ♠KQ, you need spades to break 2-2. It is essential to play the ♠K first. You must leave the ♠Q in your hand should West win the ♠A and return a heart that East could ruff with ♠J. That is exactly what happens but you over ruff with the ♠Q and take all the remaining tricks. You pull the last trump, ending in the dummy and successfully finesses against the ♦K in East's hand.

This is the entire deal:

10 ^D	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ K85 ♥ QJ873 ♦ Q93 ♣ QJ	P	2♠	P	1♠
W West		P	P	P	4♠
♠ A6 ♥ 109542 ♦ 52 ♣ A1085		E East			
	S South	♠ J4 ♥ A6 ♦ K87 ♣ 976432			
	♠ Q109732 ♥ K ♦ AJ1064 ♣ K			4♠ S	NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/y7gal3zk> , 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.

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