

SCRAPING UP 12 TRICKS

You are dealt this hand:

S	South
♠	A876
♥	932
♦	A94
♣	AJ3

You plan to open 1♣ until you hear the dealer on your right open 1♠. What can you do now? Your hand is too square and weak to double. Your long suit is your RHO's long suit, as well. The only bid available is to pass. Sometimes you have to pass with an opening strength hand when overcalling and doubling aren't available.

West passes as well, and partner bids 2♠. This is called a Michaels Cue Bid. It shows two long suits; hearts and a minor. You really don't care which suit you play in, since you have 3 cards in each of them. Before you can rebid, East rebids 3♠. This lets you off the hook. If you pass, partner will either bid his long suit, which you will support; or double, which you can convert to a penalty double by passing.

Your partner does bid his long suit and calls 4♦. You raise to game and he rebids 6♦.

East leads the ♠K. Take over for North and plan the play:

S	South
♠	A876
♥	932
♦	A94
♣	AJ3

East leads ♠K

N North
♠
♥ AK864
♦ KJ8762
♣ Q9

You have no spade losers and if heart break 3-2, you have only 1 heart loser. You have 1 potential diamond loser to the ♦Q and 1 potential club loser. You can try a diamond finesse against West for the ♦K, and you can discard the losing club on the ♠A. The trick will be to take your tricks in the right order and to have a little luck.

You win the opening lead and discard a club. Play the ♦A and lead up to the ♦J in your hand. This is the critical play for the slam to come home. You are in luck when your ♦J holds. Take the remaining trump with your ♦K and lead the ♣Q. If East has the ♣K he will cover. If he plays low, you will win the ♣A. East does cover and you can discard a heart on the good ♣J.

Now the only thing left is to play the hearts for a 3-2 break. You play the ♥AK and both follow. Give up a heart and claim the rest of the tricks.

This is the entire deal:

14	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ AK864 ♥ KJ8762 ♦ Q9	P	2♠	3♠	P
W West	♠ 109 ♥ 107 ♦ Q105 ♣ 1087652	P	4♦	P	5♦
E East		P	6♦	P	P
S South	♠ A876 ♥ 932 ♦ A94 ♣ AJ3	♠ KQJ5432 ♥ QJ5 ♦ 3 ♣ K4			
		6♦ N		NS: 0 EW: 0	

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

<http://tinyurl.com/yaral8ym>, 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.