

SHAPE COUNTS

West is the dealer and you, in South, hold:

South
♠ 2
♥ 10
♦ J9642
♣ KQJ643

West opens 1♥ and your partner overcalls 1♠. East passes. What is your call.

My suggestion would be 2♣. This might seem too aggressive since you only hold 7 HCP. But your clubs are excellent and you don't want to play in spades or hearts. You plan to mention your diamonds if you get the chance.

Over your 2♣ bid, West rebids 2♥. Your partner jumps to 4♣. East, again, passes. What is your call now?

Here again, I would take the aggressive route and bid 5♣. Your shape is extraordinary and partner's jump in your suit is highly invitational to the game in clubs.

Here is the auction:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♣
2♥	4♣	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

West leads the ♥K and you see this dummy:

	North
	♠ Q10975
	♥ A986
	♦ A
	♣ A107
West: ♥K	
	South
	♠ 2
	♥ 10
	♦ J9642
	♣ KQJ643

If you count losers you have 1 spade and 1 heart loser and four diamond losers. But there is a better way to analyze this hand. You have two aces, so you need nine more tricks. You also have nine trump. If you can take each of the trump individually, you have your 11 tricks.

Whenever you execute a cross ruff, take your side suit winners first. If you wait until the end, the defenders may have voided themselves in the suit and trump what you thought were winners. Therefore, you win the ♥A and take the ♦A.

There is another problem. If you start cross ruffing with a heart, it goes: heart ruff, diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff, heart ruff and diamond ruff. Now you are in the dummy with nothing to ruff until you lose the ♠2 in your hand. But the winner of the spade will surely lead a trump, thus collapsing two of your trump winners into the same trick.

What you need to do is set up the spades first with a deceptive play that will not prompt a club lead from the spade winner. While in the dummy, lead the ♠Q. When you play the ♠2 on this, it will look to West like you are taking a finesse. He will win the ♠K and lead the ♥Q which he thinks will be a winner. You, of course, will trump this heart and you will be all prepared for a cross ruff of nine tricks to make your contract.

Here is the entire hand:

♠ 12	N North	W N E S
	♠ Q10975 ♥ A986 ♦ A ♣ A107	1♥ 1♠ P 2♣ 2♥ 4♣ P 5♣ P P P
W West		E East
♠ K4 ♥ KQJ753 ♦ K83 ♣ 98		♠ AJ863 ♥ 42 ♦ Q1075 ♣ 52
	S South	
	♠ 2 ♥ 10 ♦ J9642 ♣ KQJ643	5♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/nrzmp5d> , 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.