

STOPPING IN GAME

Your RHO deals and passes. You are happy to see this hand:

| | |
|----------|--------|
| S | South |
| ♠ | A10 |
| ♥ | AKQ984 |
| ♦ | K42 |
| ♣ | K7 |

You have 19 HCP and with your high quality, 6-card heart suit, you effectively have about 21 points. But you have so many weaknesses in the minor suits, you should just open 1♥.

West doubles and your partner jumps to 3♥. His jump over interference shows 4 hearts and a relatively weak hand. Despite his apparent weakness, you should be mildly interested in slam. You need partner to have at least one of the minor suit aces as well as the ♠K or ♦Q. The problem is, if you ask him how many aces he holds, you might be left too high if he reports he holds no aces.

You can show your interest in slam by cue bidding 4♣ and reading partner's reply. He returns to 4♥, saying that from his viewpoint, you should stop in game. You settle for game in 4♥.

West leads the ♥3 and you see this dummy. Plan your play.

| | |
|----------|--------|
| N | North |
| ♠ | J2 |
| ♥ | J1072 |
| ♦ | 87 |
| ♣ | A10843 |

West leads ♥3

| | |
|----------|--------|
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You have a spade loser and 3 diamond losers. You can ruff one of the diamonds, so you should have no trouble taking 10 tricks. Since the difference between your score and others playing this hand will be in overtricks, you should look at the hand and try see where you can take extra tricks without risking your contract.

There is a good possibility for an overtrick if the opponents' clubs are divided no worse than 4-2.

Win the heart lead with the ♥A and pull the remaining trump with the ♥K. Now take the ♣K and ♣A and ruff a club high. Both opponents follow; so the suit has broken 3-3. Go back to the dummy with a heart and discard the losing spade on the 4th club. You can discard a diamond on the 5th club. Lead a diamond to your ♦K4, hoping that West holds the ♦A. Unfortunately, the ♦A is in West and you must lose two diamonds.

Making 5♥ is the best you can do with these cards and a non-diamond lead. But you may do better than others who rely on the diamond finesse and come up with only 10 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

| | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|----------|----------|---------|------|-------------|
| 14 | N North | | W N E S | | | |
| | ♠ J2 | ♥ J1072 | X | 3♥ | P | 1♥ |
| | ♦ 87 | ♣ A10843 | P | 4♥ | P | 4♣ |
| | | | P | | P | |
| W West | | E East | | | | |
| ♠ K973 | ♥ 3 | ♦ AQ1053 | ♣ Q96 | ♠ Q8654 | ♥ 65 | ♦ J96 |
| | | | | ♣ J52 | | |
| | | S South | | | | |
| | | ♠ A10 | ♥ AKQ984 | ♦ K42 | ♣ K7 | |
| | | | | 4♥ S | | NS: 0 EW: 0 |

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/y8hg3de4>, 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.