

TAKING 12 TRICKS WITH 4 HCP

I was playing on my new favorite bridge app, iBridgePlus. I was dealt:

South
 ♠
 ♥ J8543
 ♦ K8732
 ♣ 1082

Having been dealt only 4 high card points, I didn't think I would have much to do on this deal. My partner doubled West's 1♥ opening. I thought I was off the hook when East responded 1♠. Then I thought that was too wimpy. I had a 5-card suit and a distributional hand. The two level was safe with a known 8 diamonds between us.

This was the entire bidding sequence;

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1 ♥	Dbl	1	2♦
2 ♥	3 ♥	Dbl	Pass
Pass	5♦	Dbl	All Pass

West rebid his hearts and partner came alive with a cue bid. This showed a big hand and a probable void in hearts. When East doubled, I decided to pass. I really had nothing more to say so I passed the double and let partner make the decision. He jumped to 5♦, which East doubled.

Partner was too strong to make a simple spade overcall. When he heard his LHO bid his suit - spades, he had no desire to play there. He didn't know how many points I held, but he counted only 3 losers. Counting me for at least one cover card, he bid what he felt he could make.

West led the ♥A and I got a look at my dummy:

	North ♠ KQJ987 ♥ ♦ AQ654 ♣ A4	
West ♥ A	East	
	South ♠ ♥ J8543 ♦ K8732 ♣ 1082	

I could ruff West ♥A in my dummy. I held only 2 losers - the ♠A and a club. But I had a try for 12 tricks if I used a ruffing finesse of the spade loser. It usually requires East to hold the ace, but

even if West holds it, he cannot hold more than two spades, given the bidding. I could afford to ruff two spades.

I pulled trump, ending in the dummy. I led the top spade, planning to ruff high if East didn't produce the ♠A. Then I would go back to the dummy and try it again. Actually, East popped up on the first spade lead, hoping that I had at least 1 spade. Now I could run my spades, trumping East's ♠10 and returning to the dummy to take the last spade.

North had only 16 HCP but after we found the diamond fit, his distribution added about 7 additional points. My void and long suits added up to about 10 points. Although neither of us would have suspected, we did have enough total points to bid a small slam.

Here is the entire deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ KQJ987 ♥ ♦ AQ654 ♣ A4	1♥ X 1♠ 2♦ 2♥ 3♥ X P P 5♦ X P P P
W West		E East
♠ 63 ♥ AK10972 ♦ 9 ♣ K763		♠ A10542 ♥ Q6 ♦ J10 ♣ QJ95
	S South	
	♠ ♥ J8543 ♦ K8732 ♣ 1082	
		5♦ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/jxrbar5> , 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.