

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

East is the dealer. He passes to you. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	AQJ9543
♥	
♦	KJ987
♣	7

You almost have game in your own hand. This beautiful 2-suiter has a 4 losing trick count. One cover card (a card that can eliminate one of the losers) is all you need to reduce the hand to only 3 losers. Resist the temptation to open this hand 4♠. Even though you are pretty sure you will make it, it is much too strong for a 4-level bid. This hand could easily go to slam and opening 4♠ will provoke partner to pass. He will be expecting an 8-card spade suit and little else. This hand should be opened 1♠.

Over your 1♠ opening, partner responds 2♥. This promises 10 or more points and a 5-card heart suit. This doesn't interest you very much. You'd much prefer he supported spades or bid diamonds. You want to show your second suit anyway. You can bid 3♦ and see what partner says. He returns to his hearts: 3♥.

It's your turn to bid. You know he has long hearts and poor support for spades. But your spade suit is self sufficient. It has a suit quality (SQ) of 10. That is, the number of honors plus the number of cards equals 10. When you have a SQ of 10, you can play in the suit even against a void in partner's hand. Tell him this by jumping to 4♠.

Your partner is encourage by your unsupported jump and he bids 4NT. He is interested in slam and wants to know how many aces you have. You have a void which acts like an ace, but he probably has the ace in hearts so don't count it in your report. You will rebid 5♦ to show one ace. This evoks a bid of 6♠ from partner.

West leads the ♥8 and partner lays down his hand.

N	North
♠	10
♥	AKJ932
♦	Q
♣	AK832

West leads ♥8

S	South
♠	AQJ9543
♥	
♦	KJ987
♣	7

This will not be a easy slam to make. You have a definite diamond loser and a possible trump loser. You plan to lay off three low diamonds in your hand on the heart and club winners in the dummy. Actually, the slam will depend on the spade finesse against the ♠K.

The heart lead looks suspicious. Why would West lead a suit that was bid twice by North? It must be from shortness. You had better start pulling trump before you play any other of dummy's winners. Win the ♥A and lead the ♠10. If this holds, you will come to your hand by trumping a heart high and laying down the ♠A, hoping the ♠K is doubleton. That is your only chance.

Surprisingly, East comes up with the ♠K on the first spade lead. Now you can pull the rest of the trump, give up the ♦A and claim.

This is the entire deal:

10 ^d	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 10 ♥ AKJ932 ♦ Q ♣ AK832	P 2♥ P 3♥ P 4NT P 6♣	P	P 1♠ P 3♦ P 4♣ P 5♦ P	
W West		E East			
♠ 862 ♥ 85 ♦ A10532 ♣ Q94		♠ K7 ♥ Q10764 ♦ 64 ♣ J1065			
	S South				
	♠ AQJ9543 ♥ ♦ KJ987 ♣ 7				
		6♠ S		NS: 0 EW: 0	

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

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