

THINK BEFORE YOU PULL

You are South with this hand:

South
 ♠ AKQ76
 ♥ 865
 ♦ K85
 ♣ 73

Your partner is dealer and opens 1♦. RHO passes and you respond 1♠. Your partner raises to 2♠ after your LHO passes. What would you do with this hand?

You have 12 HCP and your partner's support of your lovely spades improves your hand. The doubleton club adds a point and the fact that your HCPs are mostly all in your trump suit is another plus. That means your partner's points are in the other suits where they can take the other 5 tricks needed that are in addition to the 5 that you certainly have in spades. Over your partner's minimum raise you should jump to 4♠.

This becomes the final contract and West leads the ♣10. Partner tables this hand:

	North ♠ J1054 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ 432 ♣ AJ		
West		East	
♣10			
	South ♠ AKQ76 ♥ 865 ♦ K85 ♣ 73		
West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

A comment on North's opening bid. He had to open a minor and diamonds was his longest. Some partnerships promise a minimum of 4 diamonds when opening 1♦. For those players, North would open 1♣ - his two card club suit. In that case, South would have to announce that the club suit

could be short if they were playing in a duplicate game. This is because 1♣ normally promises at least 3 clubs.

It's time to plan how you will take 10 tricks. You see three diamond losers and a club loser. Also, the ♥K may be off side and you could lose a heart trick as well. You certainly plan to finesse the heart suit; but what will you do with trump? Assuming the ♥K is favorably placed in the West hand, the most probable trump break for 4 outstanding trump is 3-1. Notice that if you pull trump 3 times you will not have the necessary entries to your hand to repeat the finesse. You need to get to your hand 3 times, and it is only through the trump suit that would can do this. If you successfully finesse against the trump king and simultaneously pull the outstanding trump you have a fourth heart on which to discard the losing club. You have magically eliminated two of the possible 5 losers.

This is the entire hand:

D		N North		W N E S	
1		♠ J1054		1♦	P 1♠
		♥ AQJ10		P 2♠	P 4♠
		♦ 432		P P P	
		♣ AJ			
W West				E East	
♠ 3				♠ 982	
♥ K742				♥ 93	
♦ A76				♦ QJ109	
♣ 109865				♣ KQ42	
		S South			
		♠ AKQ76			
		♥ 865			
		♦ K85			
		♣ 73			
				4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nf3l6ld>, 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.