

♠♥♦♣ TWO PLANS ARE BETTER THAN ONE ♠♥♦♣

North is the dealer and opens 1♦. East passes and you respond 1♥ with this hand:

S	South
♠	J5
♥	KQJ873
♦	K
♣	Q643

Your partner rebids 1NT, and it's back to you. You could rebid 3♥ which would be invitational showing 6 hearts and a self sufficient suit, but with a 6 loser hand, you take the bull by the horns and rebid 4♥.

West leads the ♥5. What is your plan:

N	North
♠	A73
♥	A92
♦	AJ973
♣	52

West Leads ♥5

S	South
♠	J5
♥	KQJ873
♦	K
♣	Q643

You first count your losers. You have 1 spade loser, no heart or diamond losers and 4 club losers. The easiest solution is to trump 2 of the losing clubs in the North hand, once the dummy's two clubs are out of the way.

However, West's initial lead of a trump look ominous. If he and his partner keep leading trump every time they get in with the clubs, there won't be any trump left in the dummy to ruff with. We need a backup plan.

Try counting winners. You have 1 spade, 6 hearts and 2 diamonds. You only need one more trick.

You should notice the 5-card diamond suit in the dummy. Perhaps the 5th diamond can serve as way of discarding a club and give you the extra trick. Setting up a suit means you need a favorable break – here it must be 4-3. You also need enough entries. Here you need two entries to ruff the two losers and a third entry to enjoy that 5th diamond.

You start by winning the heart lead in your hand and unblocking the ♦K. This is the key play. Then lead a club to start the club ruffing line of play. If the opponent who wins doesn't play a heart, you'll win whatever he does lead and play another club; ridding North of clubs and able to ruff 1 or 2 low clubs.

In fact, West does win the first club and leads another trump. Now you know that your ruffing plan won't work. Time for Plan B.

Win West's heart return and Play the $\heartsuit A$ and another diamond, ruffing high in your hand. Go back to the dummy's $\heartsuit 9$, taking out the last trump. Now ruff your 4th diamond and use dummy's $\spadesuit A$ to access the good diamond for your 10th trick.

This was a board that provided two lines of play. You adopted the easier line until it showed that it wouldn't work. You prepared yourself (by unblocking the $\heartsuit K$) to switch plans if this happened, and the diamonds came though. The 4-3 split carries a 62% probability.

This is the entire deal:

1		N North		E East			
W West		S South		4♥ South			
♠A73		♠A73		♠Q984			
♥A92		♥A92		♥4			
♦AJ973		♦AJ973		♦Q1086			
♣52		♣52		♣K1087			
♠K1062		♠J5					
♥1065		♥KQJ873					
♦542		♦K					
♣AJ9		♣Q643					
W		N		E		S	
1♦		Pass		1♥		Pass	
Pass		1NT		Pass		4♥	
Pass		Pass		Pass		Pass	
Pass		Pass		Pass		Pass	
0		0		0		0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yz6975bk>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.