

VALUE YOUR HAND CORRECTLY

You pick up this hand as South:

South
 ♠KJ632
 ♥42
 ♦J532
 ♣K6

West opens:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dbl	Pass	??

Would would be your call in this situation?

I hope you wouldn't make the lazy response of 1♠. When you partner doubles in the direct seat he is saying he has at least opening values and tolerance for any of the three unbid suits. You have 8 HCP. It is your duty to accurately describe your hand. Since East has passed, you are forced to bid something. If you had zero points, you would bid 1♠. So how is your partner going to differentiate between your zero point hand and your 8 point beauty? He can't unless you jump to 2♠. So, with 0 to 7 points advance at the 1-level. With 8-10, jump a level. With 11-12 advance at the 3-level, and with 13 or more jump right to game.

The bidding continues and your partner passes your 2♠. That's his right. He has evaluated his chances for game based on you're holding 8-10 points and settles for the part score.

West leads the ♦A and you see this dummy:

	North	
	♠Q954	
	♥KJ86	
	♦Q9	
	♣AJ2	
West		East
♦A		
	South	
	♠KJ632	
	♥42	
	♦J532	
	♣K6	

Partner had a bare 13 point hand and therefore, knows that there are a maximum of 23 points.

After winning the ace, West continues with the $\heartsuit K$ and the $\heartsuit 6$. East plays the $\heartsuit 8$ and $\heartsuit 4$ to the first two tricks. What will you play from the dummy on the third diamond?

The order that East played the two diamonds – high, then low – indicates he started with a doubleton and he is invited to ruff (or over ruff) the third diamond. The situation demands that you ruff high. It really doesn't make too much difference whether you ruff with the $\spadesuit Q$ or the $\spadesuit 9$. West probably holds the $\heartsuit A$ for his bid and will lead another diamond later. You can't avoid losing 2 spades. But you should lose only 1 heart along with the two diamonds that you have already lost. That's a total of only 5 losers and so your contract can make.

You insert the $\spadesuit 9$ and East over ruffs with the $\spadesuit 10$. He sends back a heart, which is won by West's $\heartsuit A$. Just as you thought, West leads another diamond and you ruff with the $\spadesuit Q$. East again over ruffs with the $\spadesuit A$. That's 5 tricks to the opponents but you take all the rest.

This is the complete board:

D	8	N North	W N E S
		\spadesuit Q954 \heartsuit KJ86 \diamond Q9 \clubsuit AJ2	1 \diamond X P 2 \spadesuit P P P
W	West	E East	
	\spadesuit 8 \heartsuit AQ53 \diamond AK1076 \clubsuit 1087	\spadesuit A107 \heartsuit 1097 \diamond 84 \clubsuit Q9543	
	S South		
	\spadesuit KJ632 \heartsuit 42 \diamond J532 \clubsuit K6		2 \spadesuit S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/o3rjk58> . 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.