

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

The auction is simple. You open 1NT in the North seat and your partner jumps to 6NT. Your LHO leads the ♠J and you see this very nice dummy:

	North	
	♠85	
	♥AKJ	
	♦A1074	
	♣K1063	
West		East
		♠J
	South	
	♠AK	
	♥Q95	
	♦KQ32	
	♣AQ52	


West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

South's jump to 6NT without checking for aces is justified. He has 20 HCP and therefore, can only be off one ace, at most. This is a quantitative raise and is usually a pretty safe bet. In fact, there may even be enough tricks for a grand slam.

Let's see if we can make 6NT. In top tricks you have 2 spades, 3 hearts, 3 diamonds and 3 clubs. You need one more. If either minor breaks 3-2 you can get an extra trick in that suit. If they both break 3-2 you can take 13 tricks. However, after testing both minor suits you find that West started with only 1 diamond and 1 club. East has four of both minors. Should you give up or is there another way?

Whenever the usual means of making your contract fail, you should think of the endplay. This involves throwing one of the opponents in the lead which requires him to lead away from a holding that allows you to make your contract. There are many forms that endplays take. Here, you know that East holds two diamonds and two clubs. One card of each suit is higher than your cards. The endplay technique will be to play all your major suit cards so that everyone is down to 4 cards. East's four cards will presumably be two diamonds and two clubs. You will allow him to win one of the minors after first winning the 3rd trick in that minor. Now, with only 2 cards left in the other minor, he will have to give you a free finesse.

Here is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ 85 ♥ AKJ ♦ A1074 ♣ K1063	W N E S P 1NT P 6NT P P P
	W West ♠ Q632 ♥ 10876432 ♦ 6 ♣ 7	E East ♠ J10974 ♥ ♦ J985 ♣ J984
	S South ♠ AK ♥ Q95 ♦ KQ32 ♣ AQ52	6NT N NS: 0 EW: 0

If, while playing the three hearts, East decides to hold onto one of the spades and discard a minor suit card, you will notice that and play the four cards in that minor for your small slam.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mmzb8s9>, 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.