

♠♥♦♣ WHICH SUIT TO TRY ♠♥♦♣

East deals and passes. You hold this meaty hand:

S	South
♠	K74
♥	A6
♦	AK5
♣	KQJ102

Some might open this 2♣ and rebid 3♣ after partner's response. This South decided to open 2NT. North responded 3♣, asking for a 4-card major. When South denied a major suit with 3♦, North jumped to 4NT. This bid is not Blackwood. A suit was not agreed upon. Actually, a suit was never mentioned, since 3♣ and 3♦ were both artificial bids. North is asking her partner to bid a slam in notrump if she has a maximum for his opening bid. You certainly do have a maximum. The final contract is 6NT.

West leads the ♣9 and here is your dummy. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	A865
♥	K872
♦	J102
♣	A5

West leads ♥J

S	South
♠	K74
♥	A6
♦	AK5
♣	KQJ102

You want to first count your top tricks. You have 2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, and 5 clubs. You need 1 more. Your thoughts?

There are 2 possibilities. The diamond suit offers a finesse, with a 50% chance of success. The spade suit offers an extra trick if the outstanding spades break 3-3, a 36%

probability. You can combine these two approaches and increase your chances of success to about 68%. But which line will you take first?

When you have two different plays, you want to use the one that guarantees you will lose a trick, first. That line is the test of the spade suit. You must duck the first spade trick. When you regain the lead, you play the ♠AK. If you take the ♠AK first, and then lead another spade, you could lose 2 spade tricks.

If the spade suit doesn't split evenly, then you can try the diamond finesse. You can run the ♦J, and even if South covers with her ♦Q, your ♦10 sets up as the 12th trick.

The way the hands fall, the spade suit brings in the extra trick. The mark of a good bridge player is not knowing HOW to finesse, but in knowing when NOT to finesse. Looking for the extra chance in the spade suit increased the probability of success from 50% to 68%.

This is the full deal:

14 ^D	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ A865 ♥ K872 ♦ J102 ♣ A5	P	3♣	P	2NT
W West		P	4NT	P	3♦
♠ 932 ♥ 1093 ♦ Q98 ♣ 9876		P	P	P	6NT
	E East				
	♠ K74 ♥ A6 ♦ AK5 ♣ KQJ102				
					6NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<https://tinyurl.com/y4792dve> , 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.