

♠♥♦♣ LET LTC HELP YOU ♠♥♦♣

As Dealer, you pick up this hand:

S	South
♠	
♥	AKQ86
♦	K4
♣	AJ10876

This should excite you. It is a 6-5-2-0. This distribution is pretty rare. There is a saying in bridge: "Six-Five, Come Alive." What it means is that this isn't a hum-drum collection of cards. Game is almost a certainty and slam is definitely in the cards.

You usually open your longest suit, but when the difference is only 1 card and there are five cards in the major, opening 1♥ is a better choice. You want to play in a major, not the minor. So let partner in on that decision so he can show support if he has it.

Your LHO passes, and so does your partner! That is really too bad. He doesn't even have 6 points. He might have even shown support if he had 5 points and 3 Hearts. As expected your RHO Doubles. He must have a good hand and the opponents surely have a Spade fit.

You know now, that slam is out the question. But what about game? What is your Losing Trick Count? How many losers do you have in the first 3 positions of each suit? None in Spades or Hearts; 1 in Diamonds and 2 in Clubs. You have a LTC of 3. This means, theoretically, that you have a game in your own hand, if the outstanding 8 Hearts break relatively evenly around the table.

Your real problem is Righty's Takeout Double. Once they find their Spade fit, they can always out bid you. That should suggest a rebid of 4♥! That is as high as you are willing to go and if you go there immediately, it will make it difficult for Lefty to start his Advance at the 4-level.

Your 4♥ ends the auction and West leads his partner's obvious Spade holding. He leads the ♠3.

N	North
♠	9764
♥	J9
♦	A7532
♣	42

West's Lead: ♠3

S	South
♠	
♥	AKQ86
♦	K4
♣	AJ10876

Your partner's hand is better than you thought. He has only two Hearts, but does hold the ♥ J. His ♦ A is golden and the only losers you see are two Clubs.

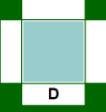
The problem is that the opponents have started a forcing defense. That is, they realize they have all the Spades and if they lead them at every opportunity, you will have to reduce your trump holding to as many or fewer than the defenders have. There are 6 Hearts outstanding and they will probably break 4-2 (48%). You will win the first trick with the ♥ 6 and if you draw all the trump, you will be left with none. They will certainly get the lead once more when you start the Clubs.

This calls for a different approach. Try counting winners. You have 2 Diamonds a 1 Club. If you can take all 7 Hearts separately, you will have 10 total tricks. This is a cross ruff hand.

Whenever you plan to cross ruff, you must always take your sure winners in the side suits, first. That is so the defenders don't void themselves during the cross ruff and ruff your sure winners. Therefore, take your two top Diamonds and the ♣ A. Now give up a Club and win the Spade return with the ♥ 8. Win the first Club ruff with the Dummy's ♥ 9. This requires a little luck. You don't want North to be void in Clubs and hold the ♥ 10.

This wins and now all your Hearts are high. You can complete the cross ruff and rack up your 10 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ 9764 ♥ J9 ♦ A7532 ♣ 42	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>X</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	P	X	1♥	P	P	P	4♥
	W	N	E	S										
P	P	X	1♥											
P	P	P	4♥											
W West ♠ J8532 ♥ 10432 ♦ 106 ♣ Q9	E East ♠ AKQ10 ♥ 75 ♦ QJ98 ♣ K53													
	S South ♠ AKQ86 ♥ K4 ♦ AJ10876	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0												

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8x2wgy>, 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.