

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

You are sitting in the South position and hold:

♠ 952 ♥ A4 ♦ 73 ♣ AKQ762

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1NT	2♥	??

What would be your rebid?

Your partner's response shows 6 to a bad 10 points and no 4-card major suit. You have a maximum of 23 points between you. But, as important as points are, tricks are more important. In a notrump contract you have a possible 7 tricks in your own hand. You only need two more from your partner. I would rebid 3NT and hope for the best.

Your partner is in 3NT and East leads the ♥K – the top of a broken sequence. Now take the North seat and see if you can make the contract.

	North ♠ A7 ♥ 762 ♦ A864 ♣ 10985	
West	East	
	♥K	
	South ♠ 952 ♥ A4 ♦ 73 ♣ AKQ762	

As usual, when you are in a notrump contract you start by counting top ticks; those you can take without giving up the lead. You have 1 spade, 1 heart, 1 diamond and a definite 6 clubs. Even if the outstanding clubs break 3-0, you can capture them all.

Since you don't need any additional tricks and you can't see where you could get any, even if you did, you consider how you are going to take them. Will you duck the first heart?

The only reason to duck is to break communications between your two opponents. There is no reason to here. You don't intend to let them in until you've secured your nine tricks. By the way, declarers often duck when they shouldn't. Many a contract is lost because the leader switches to a suit that is more damaging than the original suit.

You're going to win the ♥A and play the 9 winners. Ok. But if that is where your thinking stops you will go down!

Did you notice that there is a potential blockage in the club suit? If you play the clubs normally, you will win the 5th club in your hand with no way to get back to the dummy for the 6th club trick.

You must consciously unblock your clubs by playing them from the top on each of the ♣ AKQ. Then your dummy's ♣7 will capture your ♣5 and you will be in the dummy hand to play the ♣2!

When things look too good, always ask yourself "What could go wrong?" It always pays to look before you leap.

This is the full hand:

11		N North		W N E S	
D		♠ A8		P 1NT 2♥ 3NT	
		♥ 762		P P P	
		♦ A854			
		♣ 10985			
W West		E East			
♠ Q1043		♠ KJ76			
♥ J93		♥ KQ1085			
♦ Q102		♦ KJ96			
♣ J43		♣			
S South				3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0	
♠ 952					
♥ A4					
♦ 73					
♣ AKQ762					

If you would like to see how I played this hand, click on this link <http://tinyurl.com/lpqb7xw> or copy and paste the link into your web browser. You click on the Next button at the bottom of the screen to advance through each trick. If you would like to play the hand yourself, click on Play. You can then play all four hands.