

## ♠♥♦♣ MAKING YOUR CARD PLAY WORK ♠♥♦♣

You are sitting South. West, on your left deals and passes; followed by two more passes. This is your hand, in 4<sup>th</sup> seat:

S	euvid
♠	AK6
♥	KQ
♦	AJ98
♣	8632

You have 17 balanced high card points. A perfect 1NT opening. After your partner uses Stayman to try to uncover any 8-card fit, he rebids 2NT. You have denied a 4-card major and partner has shown 8-9 HCP. He is inviting you to game, and you are certainly going to accept.

Against 3NT, West leads the ♥2 and the dummy descends:

N	euvid
♠	872
♥	943
♦	K65
♣	AQ94

West's Lead: ♥2

S	euvid
♠	AK6
♥	KQ
♦	AJ98
♣	8632

You start by counting top tricks. These are tricks you can take, without giving up the lead. You have 2 Spades, 1 Heart, 2 Diamonds and 1 Club. You need 3 more tricks. And you must get them before the opponents get 5.

It's interesting that your total count is 26 points and you can only scrape up 6 top tricks.

There is no hope for extra tricks in the Spade or Heart suits. If you win the first Heart, the ♥A must be in West and you will lose the 2<sup>nd</sup> Heart. You will have to rely on the Diamond and Club suit to produce the needed tricks.

Since the lead of the ♥2 indicates that Hearts are breaking 4-4 and you will obviously lose 3 Heart tricks.

You have total of 7 Diamonds, which means you could get 1 extra trick if they break 3-3, a 36% probability. You have 8 Clubs and you can get 3 extra tricks if they break 3-2 (68%) and two of the missing honors are in West and can be finessed (25%). All of which makes this game almost impossible.

However, when faced with these odds, you can't give up hope. You have to place the missing cards exactly the way you want them. Then pray!

Win the first trick and start with Clubs, where you can get your needed 3 tricks. Mentally, place the ♣K in East and the ♣J10 in West. You'll lead a Club up to the ♣9. Bingo, East wins the ♣K and clears the Heart suit. You discard a Spade and Club, and after taking their 3<sup>rd</sup> Heart, they will probably switch to a Spade. You win this in hand and cash the ♣Q and ♣A. After seeing the Clubs break 3-2, you take your ♣4. The opponents both must discard and will probably hold to their Diamonds, discarding Spades.

Now lead a Spade to your hand and you are left with only Diamonds. Lead the ♦J and play for the ♦Q to be in West and the ♦10 in East. If West covers, win the ♦K in dummy and finesse the ♦9 on the way back.

As improbable as it seemed, you've now taken 9 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

D 8					N euvid 6	
		♠872				
		♥943				
		♦K65				
		♣AQ94				
W euvid 6	W	N	E	S	E euvid 6	
♠Q103	Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT	♠J954	
♥A852	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	♥J1076	
♦Q74	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	♦1032	
♣J105	Pass	Pass	Pass		♣K7	
					S euvid 6	
		♠AK6				
		♥KQ				
		♦AJ98				
		♣8632				
					3NT South	
					0	0

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yqh95j4r>, 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.