

## PLAN YOUR ENTRIES EARLY

You are sitting in the West seat and are the dealer. How would you bid these two hands to reach 6♠?

West	East
♠KQJ654	♠A3
♥A96	♥1085
♦43	♦AQ72
♣AK	♣QJ53

You open 1♠ with 17 HCP and a semi self-sufficient spade suit. A self-sufficient suit is one where the suit quality is 10, and is a suit that can serve as a trump suit even without partner's help. Suit quality is determined by adding the number of cards in the suit to the number of honors. West has a suit quality of 9. This is termed semi self-sufficient and can also serve as an independent trump suit.

Your partner, having about 13 HCP makes a two over one response of 2♦. Your most descriptive rebid is 3♠. This promises 6 spades and between 17 and 20 points. Your partner knows you are now in the slam zone and starts control bidding the side suits up the line, starting with 4♦, the lowest suit in which he has a first or second round stopper. That is all you need to know. You have controls in all the other suits so you check on aces by bidding 4NT. East rebids 5♥, showing 2 aces and you bid 6♠.

Your LHO leads the ♦6. How do intend to make your contract. What will you play from dummy on the first trick, and why?

You count the losers in your hand and estimate no spade losers, 2 heart losers, 1 diamond loser, and no club losers.

You can see that the four clubs in the dummy give you the option of discarding the two heart losers. But first you must pull the outstanding trump and unblock the two clubs in your hand. Unfortunately, your dummy entries are limited.

Your holding in diamonds is a common pattern. The diamond lead is usually NOT away from the king so you feel if you insert the ♦Q it will probably lose to the ♦K. This may be okay unless South can switch to a worse suit, such as a suit where you hold an unprotected king in your own hand; or where North has led a singleton and South can win the ♦K and return a diamond for a ruff. In those cases, it is usually safer to play the ♦A and take out the opponents trump. Fortunately, none of these conditions exist.

But here, there is another consideration. If you safely win the ♦A on the first trick, pull trump and then unblock the ♣AK, you will have no entry to get back to the dummy to play the ♣QJ and

discard the two losing hearts. You would have to rely on only pulling two rounds of trump; ending in the dummy and playing the ♣QJ, hoping that the defender holding the outstanding trump also holds four clubs.

It is safer to play low on the first trick, but high enough to force South to win. You must cover the ♦6 with the ♦7. South will win and if he returns a diamond you will have an extra diamond winner on which to discard a heart. If he switches to any other suit, you can win, draw trump, unblock clubs and return safely to dummy in diamonds to play the two clubs for the heart discards.

This is the full hand:

8		N North				
		♠ 87	W 1♠ P	N P	E 2♦ P	S P
		♥ KJ42	3♣ P	5NT P	6♥ P	6♠ P
		♦ 1086	6♣ P			
		♣ 10864				
W West		E East				
♠ KQJ654		♠ A3				
♥ A96		♥ 1085				
♦ 43		♦ AQ72				
♣ AK		♣ QJ53				
S South						
	♠ 1092					
	♥ Q73					
	♦ KJ95					
	♣ 972					
		6♠ W NS: 0 EW: 0				

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mfxy7ej> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick.

You can try playing the hand by taking the first ♦A and see how 6♠ goes down.