

♠♥♦♣ RELYING ON A GUESS ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and open 1♠ with this minimum hand.

S	South
♠	AQ654
♥	K105
♦	84
♣	K62

Your partner responds 2NT, showing 4+ card support and an opening strength hand. This is the Jacoby 2NT convention.

Under the convention, your rebid at the 3-level would show shortness – a singleton or void. With a balanced hand and 15-17 points, you would rebid 3NT. With no shortness and 18+ points, you would rebid 3♠. Since you have none of these features, your only rebid is 4♠. This says that you have a minimum balanced hand and suggests a final place to play unless partner has extras.

North passes and West leads the ♦K. Plan your play:

N	North
♠	KJ32
♥	AJ3
♦	965
♣	A73

West leads the ♦K

S	South
♠	AQ654
♥	K105
♦	84
♣	K62

You will lose the first two diamonds to the ♦KQ and ruff the ♦J. Now what?

You count your losers. You already have 2 diamond losers and you could also lose a heart and a club. The only loser you can eliminate is the heart loser. You have a two way finesse in hearts, but this requires finding the ♥Q.

You should ask yourself if the bidding or play, so far, has given you any clues to where the missing queen resides. You are missing 15 HCP. The opponents did not bid during the auction, so you assume the points are evenly divided. West showed the ♦KQJ on the first three tricks and East must hold the ♦A. That's 10 of the 15 outstanding HCP's. Either opponent could easily fit the ♥Q into their hand. This little analysis didn't produce the necessary clue.

I hope by now, you have noticed that you don't really need to know where the ♥Q is. Instead of finessing against the ♥Q yourself, you can let the opponents lead the hearts and find the ♥Q for you.

This deal is the perfect strip and end play. After drawing trump, you can play the ♣AK and the third club. Whomever wins that club will either have to lead a heart, where you will play "second hand low" and win in the opposite hand; or will lead another club or diamond, in which case, you will discard the losing heart from one hand and ruff in the other.

The End Play comes up a lot. It is characterized by a suit you don't want to play yourself; plenty of trump so you can pull all their trump and be able to trump in either hand; the ability to strip your hand of extraneous suits that would allow the opponents to put you back into your hand; and finally, an exit card that puts the opponents into the lead at the appropriate time.

This is the entire deal:

11 D	N North				4♠ Sout		
	♠KJ32						
	♥AJ3						
	♦965						
				♣A73			
W West		W	N	E	S	E East	
♠98					1♠	♠107	
♥Q97		Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠	♥8642	
♦KQJ3		Pass	Pass	Pass		♦A1072	
♣10854						♣QJ9	
				S South			
				♠AQ654			
				♥K105			
				♦84			
				♣K62			
				0		0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yefmp2fn>, 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.

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