

SHAPE IS EVERYTHING

Your partner deals and passes. East passes and it's your bid. No one is vulnerable.

What is your bid?.



Have you ever heard the expression, “six five come alive?” It relates to the magic that happens when you have a very shapely hand like this. You must bid, bid, bid your hand. Thirteen high card points don't take many tricks in a balanced hand. But look what those 13 HCP can do when they are stuffed in just two suits. This is a 4-loser hand. It is almost good enough to open 2♣. But under these conditions it is safe to open 1♦. There will be enough points around the table so that you don't have to worry about being passed out.

West overcalls 1♠ and your partner makes a negative double, showing tolerance for the unbid suits. East passes and you show your second suit; a suit that partner presumably holds as well. Your 2♣ re-bid is followed by West's jump to 3♠. This shows a 6-card spade suit and lots of points. Partner passes and East raises to 4♠. Now what is your action? The bidding so far:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
3♠	Pass	4♠	??

Think about your partner's negative double. He doesn't have spades so the opponents have a solid trump. He is also short in diamonds. Therefore, he must have at least 4 clubs. That probably reduces your losers to only 3. If North has 1 more cover card, you can make 5♣. Even if you are set 1 trick, doubled, that is less than they will make in a game contract. With this very special hand, you should definitely push to 5♣.

West leads the ♠A, and this dummy comes down:

N North
♠ Q532
♥ 8432
♦ Q
♣ KJ95

S South
♠ 6
♥ 5
♦ AK954
♣ AQ8643

West wins the ♠A and follows with the ♠K. You start to pull trump and West shows out on the first club. What is your plan?

You must play three rounds of trump before you touch the diamonds. If your hand is so distributional, it is safe to think East may have a void in diamonds. After pulling the 3 outstanding clubs, you will have one club left in the dummy to ruff a diamond loser. You will not be able to avoid losing the other low diamond unless they break 4-3, which is very doubtful. Since you have already lost a spade, you can't afford the heart loser. Luckily, West didn't switch to hearts at trick 2. This gives you time to discard your heart on the good ♠Q. After you pull trump, end in the dummy and unblock the ♦Q and play the ♠Q to discard the ♥5. You will eventually lose a diamond but you will make your 5♣ contract.

This is the full deal:

♠	1	N North	W West	N North	E East	S South
		♠ Q532	♠ AKJ1098	♠ 74	♠ 74	♠ 6
♥	8432	♥ AQ1076	♥ KJ9	♥ KJ9	♥ KJ9	♥ 5
♦	Q	♦ 62	♦ J10873	♦ J10873	♦ J10873	♦ AK954
♣	KJ95	♣	♣ 1072	♣ 1072	♣ 1072	♣ AQ8643
		S South				
		♠ 6				
		♥ 5				
		♦ AK954				
		♣ AQ8643				
				5♣ S	NS: 0 EW: 0	

Note that West can make 4♠. He must lose two diamonds and the ♠Q, but the rest of the tricks is his.

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

<http://tinyurl.com/j34qkro> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own

© David Germaine 2016