

♠♥♦♣ SURVIVING THE BAD BREAK ♠♥♦♣

When was the last time you saw a hand like this?

S	South
♠	AQ
♥	AKJ109
♦	AKQ
♣	AK4

You are the dealer and you open 2♣. Partner responds 2♦, a waiting bid. You bid your 5-card suit – 2♥ and partner jumps to 4♥. What do you do now?

North has heart support and can't have too many points. You've got 30 HCP. There isn't much room for an awful lot of points in his hand. Though you have all 4 aces, you do have 3 potential losers. Just the same, you should bid what you think you can make – 6♥.

West leads the ♣J. Plan your play.

N	North
♠	J62
♥	Q854
♦	854
♣	862

West leads ♣J

S	South
♠	AQ
♥	AKJ109
♦	AKQ
♣	AK4

Partner has covered one of your potential losers, the ♥Q, but you still have a definite club loser and the losing ♠Q if the finesse misses. The finesse is 50%, but you don't like to rely on finesses if you can help it. Is there a better way?

You could take the ♠A and give up the ♠Q to the ♠K. They go to the dummy in hearts and discard your losing club on the ♠J. This is dangerous. If West started with 6 spades, then East will have had 2 spades and can ruff the ♠J. You can overruff, but you are still left with the club loser.

But, if you pull trump first, then East can't ruff the ♠J. Okay – that's a plan.

You lay down the ♥A and West shows out. Oops!. That means you have to use all of dummy's hearts to exhaust East of trump. Then you will have no way to get to the dummy to play the ♠J. Can you think of a solution?

You can pull one or two rounds of trump, but then lead the ♠Q. They will have to take their ♠K on this trick, or else you have got your 12th trick up front. Say West wins the ♠K and returns another high club., You win in your hand and unblock the ♠A. Now, finish drawing trump, ending with the ♥Q in the dummy. You can then play the ♠J and discard the ♣4. You have lost only the ♠K and through careful play, have made your small slam.

Look at the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> 11 D </div>	N North ♠ J62 ♥ Q854 ♦ 854 ♣ 862	<table border="1" style="font-size: 8pt;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>2♦</td><td>P</td><td>2♥</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>4♥</td><td>P</td><td>6♥</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	2♦	P	2♥	P	4♥	P	6♥	P	P	P	
	W	N	E	S														
	P	2♦	P	2♥														
	P	4♥	P	6♥														
P	P	P																
W West ♠ K98543 ♥ 1096 ♦ J1095 ♣	E East ♠ 107 ♥ 7632 ♦ J732 ♣ Q73																	
S South ♠ AQ ♥ AKJ109 ♦ AKQ ♣ AK4		6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0																

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

<https://tinyurl.com/rc3n3td> , 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.