

♠♥♦♣ **CONTRACT OF CHOICE** ♠♥♦♣

You pick up this 4-3-3-3 hand and plan to open 1♣. However, your partner dealt and he opened 1♠. What now?

S	Olinsh
♠	KJ10
♥	KQ6
♦	QJ9
♣	Q1094

There is a bid that the experts use to describe this exact hand. It is 3NT. It is called "The Choice of Games" bid. It says I have 3-card support for your Major and four cards in one of the other suits. It also says I have 13-15 HCP, no shortness and no length. Partner, you are in charge of placing this contract. Here, partner chooses to pass. West leads the

N	Robot
♠	A9753
♥	95
♦	A65
♣	A75

West's Lead: ♥4

S	Olinsh
♠	KJ10
♥	KQ6
♦	QJ9
♣	Q1094

You can see why North chose 3NT. His hand was balanced and his Spades were weak. His low Spades were not going to be useful for ruffing because of the flatness in both hands; neither would they be good for drawing trump because they were so weak. Of course, he didn't know all three of your Spades were honors.

In 3NT, you count top tricks. You have 2 Spades, 1 Diamond and 1 Club. You need 5 more tricks. You can get 1 more Spade, even if the finesse loses; 1 more Heart and 1 more Diamond through promotion; and some number of Clubs. You need at least 2 more Clubs.

You play low to the opening Heart lead and East puts up the ♥10. You must duck this. The Rule of 7 says you must duck twice. East sends back another heart and your ♥Q is captured by West's ♥A. He plays the ♥J and you win. Now, East is out of Hearts and you can take your Spade finesse though the danger hand into the safe,

East hand. East wins his ♠Q and leads a Club. You insert the ♣9 and West goes up with the ♣K. You must win your ♣A. Now you can finesse the ♣10 on the way back.

An extra trick can be taken by running all your Spades, forcing East to discard either his Diamond guard or Club guard. Both could have been winners. Played correctly, you can take 10 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

D		N Robot	W	N	E	S
1		♠ A9753	1♣ P 3NT			
		♥ 95				
		♦ A65				
		♣ A75				
W Robot			E Robot			
♠ 8			♠ Q642			
♥ AJ7432			♥ 108			
♦ 108742			♦ K3			
♣ K			♣ J8632			
		S Olinsh				
		♠ KJ10				
		♥ KQ6				
		♦ QJ9				
		♣ Q1094				

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y8a7fc5t>, 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.