

♠♥♦♣ COUNTING HELPS ♠♥♦♣

West deals and opens the bidding with 1♦. Your partner overcalls 1♥ and East passes. What do you do with this hand?

S	South
♠	AQ6
♥	10
♦	AQJ865
♣	Q94

You have Diamonds well stopped. Partner has your Hearts stopped (hopefully) and you have stoppers in the two other suits. Plus, you have 15 HCP's. There is nothing to do but bid notrump. Some would advance with 2NT. I would assume partner has about 9 or 10 points and just jump to 3NT.

By the way, if you advance with 2♦, partner will read that as support for her Hearts and 10 or more points. 2♦ is not natural in this context.

The auction ends at 3NT and West led the ♦2. You see this dummy:

N	North
♠	95
♥	KJ865
♦	K9
♣	A632

Lead: ♦2

S	South
♠	AQ6
♥	10
♦	AQJ865
♣	Q94


As long as Diamonds spit no worse than 4-1, you have 6 Diamond tricks, and the 2 Aces in the black suits. You need one more.

Whenever your opponents have made bids, it's usually helpful to count out the hand, using the auction as a guide to where the points lie. You and the dummy have a total of 26 HCP. West opened, so you can assign him 12 HCP. That only leaves 2 points for East. Where are the missing Kings? West must have them. Rather than take losing finesses, you can easily end play West and force him to lead away from one or more of the Kings.

The first thing you must do is determine if you are facing a 5-0 Diamond split. You need to play the ♦ 9 to the first trick. If East follows, you know that West must have no more than four Diamonds and your 6 Diamond tricks will run.

East does follow with the ♦ 4 so you take your 6 Diamonds. Now, all you have to do is arrange for West to take the lead. He must give you a trick with whatever he leads. The simplest way to do this is to run the ♥ 10. West will either win the ♥ A, making your ♥ K good; or duck, in which case your ♥ 10 serves as your 9th trick. As the card lie, you will actually take 11 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ 95 ♥ KJ865 ♦ K9 ♣ A632	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♦	1♥	P	3NT	P	P	P	
	W	N	E	S										
1♦	1♥	P	3NT											
P	P	P												
W West ♠ K10 ♥ AQ4 ♦ 10732 ♣ KJ85		E East ♠ J87432 ♥ 9732 ♦ 4 ♣ 107												
	S South ♠ AQ6 ♥ 10 ♦ AQJ865 ♣ Q94	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0												

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

<https://tinyurl.com/2n5saxok> 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.