

♠♥♦♣ DISCOVER THE KEY ♠♥♦♣

Your partner deals and passes. East passes and it's your bid in 3rd seat.

S	undefined
♠	AJ4
♥	QJ
♦	KQJ83
♣	Q94

You have a balanced hand with 16 HCP. Naturally, you open 1NT. Your partner asks about any 4-card Major you might have with a Stayman 2♣. After your negative rebid, he invites with 2NT.

Although you have 16 HCP, your hand is actually more like 18 points. You have a 5-card suit with 3 honors. Your partner has one or two 4-card Majors to help you out. You accept the invitation and rebid 3NT.

West leads the ♣3.

N	undefined
♠	K1087
♥	753
♦	A1052
♣	J5

West Leads: ♣3

S	undefined
♠	AJ4
♥	QJ
♦	KQJ83
♣	Q94

Planning in a Notrump contract consist of counting your winners – top tricks you will take without giving up the lead, once you get in. Then you must assess the various techniques for getting the required additional tricks to make your contract. If you are playing in a matchpoint duplicate game, you next look at how you can make extra tricks.

Here, you have 2 Spade and 5 Diamond tricks in the bag. You need 2 more to make your contract. Spades offer the only source. You are going to lose the first 2 Clubs. When West wins the second Club with his ♣K, he continues with the ♣10. Looking at all the hands, it's obvious that one of the opponents should have shifted to Hearts. But you will take any gifts given.

Now your ♣Q takes the trick and you only have to find the ♠Q to win the finesses and score your 9 tricks.

When faced with a 2-way finesse, its always a good idea to delay the decision as long as possible. Clues can emerge during the play. For example, if one of the opponents opened the bidding, you can count the honors he and his partner plays to try to determine where your ♠Q might lie. Here, there was on opposition bidding. But if you first play all of your Diamonds, the defenders will be forced to make discards. These discards often tell a story.

You start by leading up to the ♦A and finishing all 5 Diamonds in your hand. On the last Diamond, West discards the ♠6. Now you've discovered the key to the location of the ♠Q. A defender guarding the Queen can very seldom afford to discard from that suit. East must hold Her Majesty. You lead a small spade up to the ♠K and finesse the ♠J on the way back. Success!!

If you look at the full deal, West must hold on to his good Clubs as well as guarding the ♥K in order to use them. Although he has 3 Diamonds and can discard the ♥4, he is forced to discard a Spade on the 5th Diamond lead.

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠K 10 8 7 ♥7 5 3 ♦A 10 5 2 ♣J 5			
	W West ♠9 6 ♥K 6 4 ♦9 7 6 ♣K 10 6 3 2	W N E S Pass Pass 1NT Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass Pass Pass	E East ♠Q 5 3 2 ♥A 10 9 8 2 ♦4 ♣A 8 7	
	S South ♠A J 4 ♥Q J ♦K Q J 8 3 ♣Q 9 4			

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

<https://tinyurl.com/236rma9p> , 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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