

♠♥♦♣ DON'T PULL TRUMP JUST YET ♠♥♦♣

You deal yourself this hand:

S	undefined
♠	J32
♥	AK9852
♦	743
♣	8

You only have 8 HCP but you do have that good 6-card Heart suit. This is a classic weak-two hand. You have 2 of the top 3 honors and no outside values. You don't have another 4-card major and no voids. You have all the requirements for a 2♥ opening bid.

Your partner responds 2NT. This is an artificial forcing bid. It announces that he is interested in a game in Hearts. There are two main ways of responding to the 2NT bid. The first is Ogust. This is a convention where you rate your hand as to its overall strength and trump suit quality. South has weak hand but has a pretty good Heart suit. The Ogust rebid for South would be 3♦.

The other way that partners treat the 2NT game invitation is to report on whether your hand is a Maximum (9-10 HCP) or weak variety (6-7 HCP). If it is the strong hand, the bid is in the suit where there exists a feature – an Ace or King. This South hand is of the weak variety and South would rebid 3♥.

Regardless of what rebid you make, your partner raises you to 4♥.

West leads the ♠6 and partner lays down this dummy:

N	undefined
♠	K5
♥	Q3
♦	AKQ85
♣	K732

West's Lead: ♠6

S	undefined
♠	J32
♥	AK9852
♦	743
♣	8



You know that the ♠A is in East. Leading away from an Ace in a suit contract is the very worst lead. Since the lead is a low Spade, West must hold an honor and that must be the ♠Q. Therefore, you play low from dummy and East has to win his ♠A. He returns a Spade to dummy's ♠K.

If you now draw trump, starting with the ♥Q and leading a low trump to your hand, you will see East discard. That means West will eventually get a trump trick. If you now pull another round of trump and then play your Diamonds, West will ruff the 2nd Diamond and cash his ♠Q and ♣A to set the contract.

To guard against this bad trump break, you should lead a low Club to your hand after winning the 2nd trick with the ♠K. This is to establish an easy way to get back to your hand. If West wins and returns a trump (best play), you will win with dummy's ♥Q and gets to your hand with a Club ruff. Then you lead the ♠J and ruff that with the ♥3. Now you come back to your hand with another Club ruff and play the ♥AK. Leave the last trump outstanding and attack Diamonds. West can ruff in, but the contract is safe from any lead West may make.

Pulling Trump First is the correct thing to do in about 1/2 of the deals you declare. There are many times, like this one, where you have to tell your "Not Yet."

This is the entire deal:

	N undefined							
	♠K5 ♥Q3 ♦AKQ85 ♣K732							
	W undefined		W	N		E	S	E undefined
	♠Q876 ♥J1074 ♦6 ♣AQ65						2♥	♠A1094
		Pass 2NT Pass		Pass 3♥		♥6		
		Pass 4♥ Pass		Pass Pass		♦J1092		
		Pass				♣J1094		
		S undefined						
		♠J32 ♥AK9852 ♦743 ♣8						
						4♥		
						South		
						0		
						0		

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ulnxj2>, 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.