

HELP YOUR PARTNER TO GAME

You are sitting in the South with this hand: You have dealt and you are non-vulnerability – your opponents are vulnerable.

S	South
♠	K753
♥	1086532
♦	K
♣	AQ

You count 12 HCP and a 6-card heart suit which adds 2 points. You should subtract a point for the singleton ♦K and the honorless heart suit. But on balance, with favorable vulnerability, you should open this hand 1♥. It is really too good for a 2♥ opening. Your spades could catch partner with a fit.

The opponents are silent (for a change) and partner responds 1♠. You will raise to 2♠. Over this minimum raise he rebids 3♣. What does this mean? Since he knows there is a spade fit, he must be making a game try. He is asking if you have help in the club suit. If you don't, you would rebid 3♠ and he would respect that and pass. If you don't have club help but have diamond help, you would bid 3♦. This is called a counter suit help. If you do have club help, you show that by jumping right to game.

Take a look at this hand. It was very weak when you picked it up. But now, it has gotten much stronger. You only have two clubs but they are two of the top three honors. Also, you have ruffing ability in diamonds which could help partner out if he has diamond losers. Another way to look at the hand is using losing trick count and cover cards. A hand that makes a game try usually has 6 losers. That means, partner will look to you for 3 cover cards to bring the losing trick count down to 3. You have two covers in clubs, 1 in spades and 1 in diamonds by virtue of the ruff. This hand certainly wants to encourage and should rebid 4♠.

East leads the ♣7. Take over the North hand and plan the play:

N	North
♠	AQ1084
♥	
♦	984
♣	K9854

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You have no spade losers as long as they break no worse than 3-1, 3 diamond losers and 2 club losers. You can ruff two of the diamonds in the dummy and you may be able to make one or two of the small clubs good through length promotion.

You put up the ♣A and West plays the ♣J. This is an ominous sign. You can afford to pull two trump, but you would like to have two trump in the dummy for ruffing the two diamonds. You should play the ♠K and a low trump. Trumps do break 3-1 but after you win the ♠A lead a diamond to your ♦K, leaving one trump outstanding. East will put up the ♦A and lead another club. You play the ♣Q and are surprised to see West put the ♣10 on it. Now you know that all the clubs in your hand are good and since you lack entries to your hand, you can afford to overtake with the ♣K,. Now you can ruff a diamond and get back to your hand with a heart ruff to get another diamond ruff in the dummy. Lead another heart to a spade in your hand and you still have a high spade to draw the last trump. You can now take the rest of your clubs to score 12 tricks – all on a combined 21 HCP.

This is the entire deal:

3 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ AQ1084	P 1♠ P 2♣
	♥ 984	P 3♣ P 4♣
	♣ K9854	P P
W West		E East
♠ 962		♠ J
♥ KQ4		♥ AJ97
♦ QJ1075		♦ A632
♣ J10		♣ 7632
	S South	
	♠ K753	
	♥ 1086532	
	♦ K	
	♣ AQ	
		4♠ N NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/gofh3sx>, 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. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.