

♠♥♦♣ KEEP A PLUS SCORE ♠♥♦♣

Your partner is the dealer and passes. Righty opens 1♦ and it's your call:

S	South
♠	AJ32
♥	K64
♦	AQ9
♣	QJ9

You have 17 HCP. This hand would have opened 1NT, but it is ideal for a 1NT overcall. The range for a 1NT overcall should be a little higher – 16 to 18, since there are so many points in the opener's hand. It should also have a stopper in the opponent's suit, since that will be the probable lead if you end up declaring a notrump contract.

Over your 1NT overcall, West responds 2♣. What does this bid mean?

The 2♣ bid promises at least 5 Clubs and less than 10 HCP. If West had 10 or more, he would have doubled for penalty. Does that make sense? Yes. If he had 10 points, there would be at least 23 points between East and West. West knows you have about 16 HCP, leaving 1 point for North. That means you will never get to the dummy and will have to play all your high cards from your hand, vulnerable to higher cards held by either defender.

If West had less than 6 HCP, he would have passed your overcall, so you can place him with about 8 HCP – half way between a pass and a double. Your partner is still pretty weak, but the probability of taking 8 tricks in 2NT is extremely low. It will be much easier to take 6 tricks against a 2♣ contract. That way you will score a small plus score, rather than a minus score if you declare.

Your partner leads the ♥Q and you see the dummy:

E	East
♠	KQ10
♥	10873
♦	KJ1063
♣	A

<b>S</b>	South
♠	AJ32
♥	K64
♦	AQ9
♣	QJ9

Whether you are a declarer or a defender, you should always try to analyze the opening lead. Here, your partner's ♥Q promises the ♥J and those 3 points are probably the extent of your partner's strength.

You can envision 1 or 2 Spade tricks, 2 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 1 Club. Unless the Declarer has some wild distribution, you are cold for at least a one trick set.

The only thing you must guard against, is being end played toward the end of the hand, and having to lead away from your Diamond suit. To do this, always keep an exit card to put the Declarer back in the lead. You want either he or your partner to lead the Diamonds.

If Declarer wins the initial Heart lead, you should lead a Heart to your partner when you get in, and he should recognize the need for a Diamond lead through Dummy's ♦KJ.

This is the entire deal:

1		N North		E East	
		♠8754		♠KQ10	
		♥QJ2		♥10873	
		♦875		♦KJ1063	
		♣853		♣A	
W West		W	N	E	S
♠96		Pass	1♦	1NT	
♥A95		2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
♦42					
♣K107642					
		S South			
		♠AJ32			
		♥K64			
		♦AQ9			
		♣QJ9			
				2♣	
				Wes	
				0 0	

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

<https://tinyurl.com/zgbaeu6v> , 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.