

MAKE A PLAN & TEST IT

You are the dealer with this hand. You are both vulnerable. Would you open?

South
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ J865
 ♦ A104
 ♣ Q1052

You have 12 HCP and no distributional points. You almost have enough to open but the vulnerability is against you and you pass. Your partner opens 1♣ and the bid comes back to you. You respond 1♥ and partner rebids 1♠. You see there is no fit, but you have enough points to make a game in notrump. You jump to 3NT and everyone passes out.

West leads the ♦5. What is your plan?

North
 ♠ 10432
 ♥ K9
 ♦ K2
 ♣ AKJ86

West
 ♦5

South
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ J865
 ♦ A104
 ♣ Q1052

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The first item on the agenda, is to count top tricks. One spade, 2 diamonds and 5 clubs. You need one more trick. There are two possibilities. One is obviously, the heart finesse. That has a 50% probability of success. The other option is to get an extra trick from the spades.

The heart finesse is easy to take. The spade suit requires more planning. You are missing two spade honors. You need either the a missing honor to be singleton and fall under the ♠A; or the ♠KQ to be doubleton. True, this is a long shot, but it is worth a try before you resort to the heart finesse. You can test the spade by playing the ♠A and seeing if an honor falls. If it doesn't, then lead to the ♥K.

Fortunately, West drops the ♠Q under the ♠A. Now it was just a case of forcing out the ♠K with the ♠J and using the ♠10 for the 9th trick.

Here is the entire hand:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">15</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	N North ♠ 10432 ♥ K9 ♦ K2 ♣ AKJ86	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</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				P	P	1♣	P	1♥	P	1♠	P	3NT	P	P	P	
	W	N	E	S																		
			P																			
P	1♣	P	1♥																			
P	1♠	P	3NT																			
P	P	P																				
W West ♠ KQ ♥ Q1072 ♦ J9653 ♣ 73		E East ♠ 98765 ♥ A43 ♦ Q87 ♣ 94																				
	S South ♠ AJ ♥ J865 ♦ A104 ♣ Q1052	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0																				

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

<http://tinyurl.com/qycelhu> 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.