

MAKE THE DEFENDER GUESS

You are the dealer, non-vulnerable and you open 1♠. You have only 11 HCP, but your six card spade suit adds two points. The void in diamonds is frosting on the cake.

S	South
♠	KQ8654
♥	Q1065
♦	
♣	A75

West doubles and partner raises you to 3♠. What do you do now? North's jump is weaker than the limit raise it would promise if West hadn't doubled. West is showing at least an opening hand and your partner is being competitive. Since he only expects 5 spades from you, his jump to the 3-level promises 4 spades. Now you know you have 10 spades between you and you can safely compete to the 4-level. You should rebid 4♠, which will end the auction.

West leads the ♦A and the dummy comes down:

N	North
♠	J1032
♥	J8432
♦	5
♣	KJ8

♦A


S	South
♠	KQ8654
♥	Q1065
♦	
♣	A75

You will ruff the opening lead in your hand and lead trump to drive out the ♠A and eliminate the defender's 3 trump. West wins the second trump trick and leads the ♣3. What do you play on this trick from the dummy?

You must lose the top two hearts and one top spade trick. You can't afford any more losers. You are missing the ♣Q and ♣10 and you don't know which or any of them are in the East hand. By the same token, East doesn't know which clubs you hold in your hand. If you play the ♣J to take a finesse, you will be set. East will insert the ♣Q and you will have to win the ♣A. When West later wins the ♥K, he will lead another club which will knock your ♣K out. You will eventually have to lead a second heart and West will win the ♥A and take the last club trick.

You better your chances if you play low from the dummy. East actually holds the ♣Q9 and he doesn't know if you hold the ♣10. If you do and he inserts his ♣9, he loses the trick. So he will probably play high – the normal play – and put the ♣Q on the trick. You can win this and your ♣KJ in the dummy are now good. Yes, if he played the ♣9, you would have had to use your ♣A, allowing his ♣Q to win a trick later. But he didn't know that. Your only chance was to put East to the guess. This is a common tactic in declarer and defender play. Keep it handy!

This is the entire deal:

	N North ♠ J1032 ♥ J8432 ♦ 5 ♣ KJ8	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	X	3♠	P	1♠	P	P	P	4♣								
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You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/huuelat>, 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.