

♠♥♦♣ PLACING THE POINTS ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer with this hand:

S	South
♠	8
♥	K976
♦	AJ92
♣	AK52

You have a 4x1, and 14 HCP. You make the normal 1♦ opening and Lefty overcalls 1♠. Your partner makes a negative double and Righty raises to 2♠. It's back to you.

The negative double shows exactly 4 Hearts. If he had 5 or more Hearts, he would have just bid them. The negative double is the only way to show only four Hearts. He may also have other suits, but over 1♠, he promises four Hearts.

His hand is unlimited, but can be as weak as only 8 points. You must make the minimum Heart bid and wait to see what he does. You rebid 3♥. With an opening hand himself, Partner can raise to game. With less, he can pass. Unfortunately, there is no 3½♥ bid. 3♥ becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♠Q and you see this dummy.

N	North
♠	AK75
♥	Q854
♦	84
♣	J93

West Leads: ♠Q

S	South
♠	8
♥	K976
♦	AJ92
♣	AK52

You have lots of apparent losers in your hand: Two or three in hearts; three in Diamonds, and two in Clubs. It looks like you have to eliminate 4 of 8 possible losers. You can discard one of the minor-suit losers on the good Spade in the Dummy, and you can ruff two Diamonds in the Dummy. That leaves one more loser to eliminate.

Let's look at the outstanding points. You have a total of 25 HCP. West overcalled and East raised. So, the outstanding 15 are split roughly evenly. Maybe 8 for West and 7 for East. We have already seen 3 HCP from West's lead of the ♠Q. If we find that West holds the ♥A, we can place the remaining points in East, and they must be in the minor suits, and the Diamonds may be finessable.

You win the Spade lead and lead a Club to get to your hand. You should preliminarily assume West holds the ♥A, and lead up to the ♥Q. It holds, as expected. Now you must stop playing any more trump. You must save the trump for ruffing and regaining the lead on some of your necessary losers.

Knowing that the missing Diamond honors are in East, lead a Diamond to your hand, hoping East plays "2nd hand low". East correctly splits his honors and play the ♦Q. You win the ♦A. You can't get back to the Dummy for a second finesse, so you just give up a Diamond and prepare for the ruffs.

East wins, as expected, and leads another Spade. You win in the Dummy and lead another Club to your high honor. Now you lead a Diamond to ruff, but West ruffs ahead of you with the ♥10. Anticipating that you are planning on using your Hearts to cross ruff, he leads the ♥A and ♥J to your ♥K, drawing four of your Hearts, but none from his Partner. The trump were split 4-1.

Fortunately, you've taken 7 tricks to this point and you have 2 Hearts left, which you can use to ruff a Club and a Spade for 9 total tricks.

This is the entire deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ AK75 ♥ Q854 ♦ 84 ♣ J93	1♠ X 2♠ 1♦ P P P 3♥
W West	E East	
♠ QJ1092 ♥ AJ103 ♦ 73 ♣ 64	♠ 643 ♥ 2 ♦ KQ1065 ♣ Q1087	
	S South	
	♠ 8 ♥ K976 ♦ AJ92 ♣ AK52	3♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<https://tinyurl.com/zp8r48s> , 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. <https://tinyurl.com/2p3hmb44>

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