

♠♥♦♣ PLANNING FOR AN EXTRA TRICK ♠♥♦♣

Your opponents are vulnerable and partner opens 1♠. You are looking at this very nice hand:

S	South
♠	63
♥	AKQ10954
♦	J6
♣	KQ

Your opponents are quite and it's up to you. You have 15 HCP but with the quality 7-card heart suit, you are worth more like 17 total points. You start with a forcing 2♥ and wait to hear partner's reaction.

He rebids 3♥, promising 3 hearts since your bid promised 5 cards. Now you can add another 3 points and, together with your partner's 13 points is enough for slam – 33 in all. However, you cannot launch into Blackwood until you find out if partner has a first or second round stopper for the diamonds. You start control bidding with a bid of the next suit where you have a 1st or 2nd round stopper. This is 4♣. You are waiting to hear 4♦ across the table. You do and you rebid 4NT. Partner shows 2 controls, which is enough for 6♥.

West leads the ♦4. Plan the play.

N	North
♠	AK852
♥	J86
♦	A2
♣	J43

West leads ♦4

S	South
♠	63
♥	AKQ10954
♦	J6
♣	KQ

With any other lead, you could simply force out the ♣A and discard your losing diamond on the ♣J. But now you are forced to use your only diamond stopper on the first trick. When they take their ♣A they will get their second diamond. Can you think of a way to take 12 tricks?

Whenever things look bleak, look for a 5-card side suit you can set up for a loser discard. In this case it is the dummy's spade suit. To accomplish this you must get to the dummy several times. You can use the spades for one entry, but you need two more. They must come from the trump suit. Therefore, you cannot afford to pull all the trump until the spades are ready to set up.

Win the ♦A and pull 1 round of trump by playing the ♥2 to the ♥A. Play the ♠AK, after which you ruff the 3rd spade. Go back to the dummy by leading the ♥5 to the ♥8. Ruff another spade. They break 4-2 and your last spade is good. You can get there by leading up to the ♥J and discarding the ♦J on dummy's ♠2 – making 6 ♥.

Look at the entire deal:

D		N North		W N E S			
9		♠ AK852		1♠	P	2♥	
		♥ J86		P	3♥	P	4♣
		♦ A2		P	4♦	P	4NT
		♣ J43		P	5♥	P	6♥
				P	P	P	P
W West				E East			
♠ J7				♠ Q1094			
♥ 72				♥ 3			
♦ K1084				♦ Q9753			
♣ 108752				♣ A96			
		S South					
		♠ 63					
		♥ AKQ10954					
		♦ J6					
		♣ KQ					
				6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0			

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

<http://tinyurl.com/y5qrbbqz>, 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.