

♠♥♦♣ **PUSHING TO A SLAM** ♠♥♦♣

East dealt and opened 1♠. What do you do with this barn burner?

S	South
♠	
♥	AKQ853
♦	AK975
♣	A10

This is a 20 HCP, 2 losing-trick-count hand. Much too strong for an overcall. You double, planning to bid hearts after whatever partner advances.

West responds 3♠, which in modern bidding promises 4 spades but less than 6 points. With 6-9 points he would have bid 2♠; with 10 or more points, he would have redoubled. Partner passes, as does East. It's back to you.

You must do something very strong. The strongest action you can take is to cuebid 4♠! That will force partner to do something. In fact, he bids 5♣ and you just bid the slam you expect to make - 6♥. You don't expect much from your partner, but he must have 1 trick for you, don't you think?

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Dbl
3♠	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

West leads the ♠3 and you see this uninspiring dummy:

N	North
♠	K92
♥	742
♦	Q43
♣	Q752

West lead ♠3

S	South
♠	
♥	AKQ853
♦	AK975
♣	A10

All you need is for diamonds to break 3-2 and you have 12 tricks off the top. Whenever, the contract looks too easy, plan for the worst. If diamonds are 4-1 you will have a big problem. You will be 1 tricks short.

You might think about this for a while. East's 3♠ bid during the auction indicates he holds 4 spades. If he also is the hand that holds 4 diamonds, you can engineer what is called a squeeze and end play. You win the spade lead in your hand with a ruff and start trump. After the first heart, West shows out. Now you assume he started with 4 spades, 1 heart, 4 diamonds and 4 clubs. Play the 4 top hearts, forcing West to make 4 discards. If he discards all his spades, you play your top 3 diamonds and another diamond, throwing West in with his 4th diamond. All he will have left is clubs. You place the ♣K with East for his opening bid. If East leads a low club, play a low club from the dummy and win East's ♣K. Now you take the 5th diamond and lead the ♣10 up to dummy's good ♣Q. If East leads the ♣J, cover with the ♣Q and win East's ♣K. Now your ♣10 is high.

If West, instead of discarding spades, discards clubs, keeping 2 spades, you change your plan. You play your ♦AK and then then the squeeze card, the ♥8. If West discards another club, holding onto his spades, you play the ♣A and ♣10. East will win the ♣K and lead the ♠A. You ruff and get to the dummy with your ♦Q and the ♣7 and ♣5 are high clubs and offer a parking spot for your two diamonds.

This is the full deal:

14	N North		W	N	E	S
	♠ K92		3♠	P	P	1♠ X
	♥ 742		P	5♣	P	4♣
	♦ Q43		P	P	P	6♥
	♣ Q752					
W West			E East			
♠ 10863			♠ AQJ754			
♥ 6			♥ J109			
♦ J1082			♦ 6			
♣ J984			♣ K63			
		S South				
		♠ AKQ853				
		♥ AK975				
		♦ A10				
		♣ A10				
			6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0			

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

<https://tinyurl.com/yc8b69sm> , 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.

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