

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You are South with this hand:

South
 ♠ A2
 ♥ A642
 ♦ AJ98
 ♣ AK6

You open in 3rd seat with a 2NT bid, showing 20 to a bad 22 points. Your partner checks for a 4-card major by responding 3♣. After you rebid 3♥ he puts you in 3NT, which you pass.

West leads the ♥7 and North puts down this dummy:

	North ♠ KJ107 ♥ Q83 ♦ 1073 ♣ Q87		
West		East	
♥7	South ♠ A2 ♥ A642 ♦ AJ98 ♣ AK6		
West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

You have 7 top tricks. You need 2 more and both the spade and diamond suits look promising. But first, what are you going to play from the dummy on that first heart? What does the lead tell you? How does that help you decide whether to rise with the ♥Q or play low?

You should first ask East what kind of leads they are using. If the answer is "standard leads", then the ♥7 is either 4th down from the longest suit; or the "top of nothing." You can test this lead by applying the Rule of 11. If the lead is "standard", then you subtract the value of the card led from 11. The difference equals the number of cards higher than 7 in the North, East and South hands combined. If you can see more than, in this case, four;

then the lead is the top of nothing. In this hand you see three cards higher than the seven in the North and South hands. Therefore, East holds one card above the seven and the lead is 4th down from a four or five card suit.

Is it likely that East's high card is the ♥K? If so, then West would have started with ♥J109x(x). If so then the lead of the ♥J would be the standard lead. So, assuming that East must hold the ♥J or ♥10, put up dummy's ♥Q.

East plays the ♥10 under dummy's ♥Q. Whew! Now you need only 1 more trick and that can easily come from spades – no matter who holds the ♠Q. But you would like to take overtricks. You can afford to perform a repeated finesse against the ♦KQ. Lead a low diamond to the ♦8 in your hand. West wins the ♦Q and leads another heart, clearing the suit. East discards a spade. You can afford to take a finesse of the ♠10 because even if it loses to East, East will not have another heart to lead. You should lead the ♠A and another spade, inserting the ♠10. This holds the trick and when you play the ♠K West drops the ♠Q. Now your ♠J takes the 4th spade trick.

At this point you play off the 3 good clubs, ending in the dummy. On the third club, West discards a small diamond. This makes it evident that East holds the missing diamond honor. Lead the ♦10 and play low from your hand. This wins and you lead the last diamond to your ♦J. You play the ♦A and East contributes the ♦K.

You have taken 12 tricks, losing only the ♦Q.

This is the entire hand:

D 1	N North	W N E S
	♠ KJ107 ♥ Q83 ♦ 1073 ♣ Q87	P P 2NT P 3♣ P 3♥ P 3NT P P P
W West	E East	
♠ Q95 ♥ KJ975 ♦ Q6 ♣ 1093	♠ 8643 ♥ 10 ♦ K542 ♣ J542	
	S South	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0
	♠ A2 ♥ A642 ♦ AJ98 ♣ AK6	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kephm5v>, 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.