

♠♥♦♣ TAKING INFERENCES ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and open 1♠.

| S | South |
|---|--------|
| ♠ | AK7432 |
| ♥ | 6 |
| ♦ | Q4 |
| ♣ | AQ96 |

This is a shapely 6-4-2-1 with 15 HCP. This hand has a lot of potential.

West has the nerve to overcall 2♦ and your partner offers a bid of 2♥. East passes and it's back to you.

Your partner's Heart suit doesn't do much for your hand. You have a total of 17 points and enough to almost jump to 3♠. A jump rebid in Spades indicates you have at least 6 cards in the suit and it will be the trump suit, even if partner has a singleton Spade. It really should have another honor in the suit to be self-sufficient, though.

The alternative is rebidding 2♠. But you have a 5 Losing Trick Count which can make a game opposite most 6-9-point hands, and you would hate to have partner pass 2♠.

You make the jump and North raises you to 4♠.

West leads the ♥ 4 and you see this dummy.

| N | North |
|---|--------|
| ♠ | Q6 |
| ♥ | A10932 |
| ♦ | 85 |
| ♣ | J543 |

West Leads: ♥4

| S | South |
|---|--------|
| ♠ | AK7432 |
| ♥ | 6 |
| ♦ | Q4 |
| ♣ | AQ96 |

You win the ♥A in the Dummy and East follows with the ♥5.

You have no losers in the Major suit. You can't do much about the 2 Diamond losers, but you must bring the Clubs in for no more than 1 loser.

You could finesse the ♣Q hoping the ♣K is on side in East and the Club suit breaks 3-2. That's about a 30% probability. Can you do better than that?

When the opponents have bid, you get additional information that leads to certain inferences about the distribution of the suits around the table. This is like playing detective. You search for clues that increase the probability of success. Let's see if we can deduce a more probable line of play. We will focus on the West hand because we know more about that hand than his partner's, who was silent.

What do we know about the Spades? Nobody doubled the contract so the 5 outstanding Spades are probably breaking normally, 3-2.

In Hearts, we can assume the lead of the ♥4 is not a singleton, since that would give East 6 Hearts, including the ♥KQJ, and would be enough for her to bid on the first round. The ♥4 is probably low from a 3 or 4 card suit.

West overcalled 2♦ so he is holding 6 Diamonds and since he didn't lead them, he doesn't have the ♦AK. The split is 6-3 with East holding one of the high honors.

We have accounted for 12 cards; 2 or 3 Spades, 3 or 4 Hearts and 6 Diamonds. That only leaves 1 card in West's Club suit. If that is true, why didn't he lead it so he could get a ruff later? Only because it was an honor. And, since you hold the ♣AQJ, that honor must be the ♣K.

Now we have enough inferences to change our line of play after we draw the trump in 3 rounds, from trying the Club finesse to laying down the ♣A and squashing West's ♣K. Then you can give up a Club to the ♣J and lose only 2 Diamonds and 1 Club trick.

This is the entire deal:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 11 D | N North | | E East | |
| | ♠Q6 ♥A10932 ♦85 ♣J543 | | ♠1098 ♥QJ85 ♦K6 ♣10872 | |
| W West | W | N | E | S |
| ♠J5 ♥K74 ♦AJ109732 ♣K | 2♦ | 2♥ | Pass | 3♠ |
| | Pass | 4♠ | Pass | Pass |
| | Pass | | | |
| | S South | | 4♠ South | |
| | ♠AK7432 ♥6 ♦Q4 ♣AQ96 | | 0 | 0 |

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

<https://tinyurl.com/ykwlvky4>, 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.