

♠♥♦♣ WHO IS FOR THE FIVE LEVEL? ♠♥♦♣

Your partner deals and passes. East passes and you have a very unusual hand.

S	South
♠	KQ85432
♥	
♦	Q
♣	QJ1086

You have only 10 HCP, which might lead you to open pre-emptively with 3♠.

But your Loser Count is only 4. That is the requirement for an opening of 2♣! In other words, this hand is too good to play in only 3♠. With a 4 Losing Trick Count, you only need one "cover" card from partner to make a game. You could even make a slam. You open a normal 1♠.

West overcalls 2♥ and partner doubles. This is Negative Double, showing some points and tolerance for the minors. You plan to rebid your Spades. A good 7-card suit has got to be the trump suit, whatever partner can contribute.

East raises to 4♥. This is a pre-emptive raise. East was a passed hand and probably has 5 or more Hearts. You have an easy raise to 4♠. It is usually right to bid Spades over Hearts – even up to the game level.

Your bid is followed by 2 passes. East, however, has other ideas. He raises the ante to 5♥. It's back to you.

There is a bridge adage that goes: *The 5-level is for the opponents*. Meaning, don't chase your opponents to the 5-level. Even if you don't double for penalties, you will get a plus score vs going down 1 trick and getting a minus score.

This hand, though, might prove the exception. Since you are both vulnerable, by doubling, and letting them play in 5♥, you must set them by 3 tricks to get a score that exceeds what you get making 5♠. In 5♥, you don't expect to get more than 1 Spade trick. You are short in Diamonds but you have no ruffing ability. And finally, your opponents will be short in Clubs since you have 9 or 10 between you and your partner. Can you really take 5 tricks?

On the other hand, you have a Club fit with partner which will produce extra tricks once the trumps are drawn. You only have 1 loser in the two red suits. You have a pretty fair chance of making 5♠. Give North the ♠A and you might make 6♠.

If you bid 5♠ it will be passed out.

West leads the ♥A and you see this dummy. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	A10
♥	K7
♦	97542
♣	K942

West Leads: ♥A

S	South
♠	KQ85432
♥	
♦	Q
♣	QJ1086

The lead of the unsupported ♥A is normal at very high level contracts.

Your plan is to ruff the lead. Then lead to the ♠A and discard your losing ♦Q on dummy's ♥K. Draw the rest of the trump and force out the ♣A, making 6♠, for a score of 680.

In 5♥ Doubled, you only get the top 2 Spades and the ♥K, for 200 points.

This is the entire deal:

