

AN INVERTED CONTRACT

North dealt and passed. East also passed and it's your turn:

S	South
♠	K4
♥	Q7
♦	AJ32
♣	A10942

Normally, you would open your longest minor, clubs. However, what would you do for your second bid if partner makes the expected 1♥ or 1♠ response? You aren't strong enough to reverse into 2♦. That shows a 16+ point hand and you have only 14 HCP. Rebidding clubs promises 6 clubs and you don't have a hand that wants to declare notrump without knowing that partner has controls in both majors. Many players will open this hand 1♦. Then your second bid will be a natural 2♣. Partner will think your clubs are equal to or longer than your diamonds, but that is a minor fib compared to the alternates if you open 1♣.

The opponents remain silent, but partner raises you to 2♦. You are playing "inverted raises," where a single raise shows a strong hand with support for the minor and no four card majors. Since it promises at least 10 points, your partnership should have a minimum of 23 points, and thus it is forcing to 2NT. That is, partner is not allowed to pass up to 2NT but can pass after that. The objective should be to look for a game in notrump first; a minor suit game second; and a minor suit part score third.

This is how the bidding progresses:

South	North
1♦	2♦
3♣	3♠
4♦	Pass

After you show your second suit, partner shows a control in spades. Since he skipped over hearts and you have no heart controls, you know that notrump is out. Your only hope for a game is in diamonds. Partner is allowed to pass 4♦, which means he has only a minimum hand for his original inverted raise.

East leads the ♣J. Plan the play:

N	North
♠	A93
♥	953
♦	KQ965
♣	Q5

West leads 8♠

S	South
♠	K4
♥	Q7
♦	AJ32
♣	A10942

You have two heart losers and can afford a total of three. That means you must bring in the club suit with only 1 loser. Since you are missing the ♣K and ♣J you must find a lucky lie of the cards. Finding the ♣K in West, you can lead a low card up to the ♣Q. Then, if ♣J is in a hand that started with no more than 3 clubs, you're ♣A or ♣Q will capture it. However, if the ♣K is in East, you can still survive if East also holds the ♣J and you finesse the ♠10 once you regain the lead.

Looking at the deal, below, you can see that the finesse against the ♠K is successful. West rises with the ♠K on the initial low lead to the ♠Q. He takes his two hearts, but when you regain the lead, you unblock the ♠Q, draw trump, ending in your hand and run the rest of the clubs.

This is the entire deal:

D 5	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ A93 ♥ 953 ♦ KQ965 ♣ Q5	P	P	P	1♦
W West	♠ 876 ♥ AJ108 ♦ 1084 ♣ KJ7	P	2♦	P	3♣
		P	3♠	P	4♦
		P	P	P	
	S South	E East			
	♠ K4 ♥ Q7 ♦ AJ32 ♣ A10942	♠ QJ1052 ♥ K642 ♦ 7 ♣ 863			
			4+S NS: 0 EW: 0		

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

<http://tinyurl.com/yd4r8xgt> , 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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