

# ♠♥♦♣ MAXIMIZE YOUR NOTRUMP RESULT ♠♥♦♣

East dealt and passed. What do you open with this hand:

S	South
♠	A2
♥	QJ1053
♦	AK4
♣	AK9

If you open your 5-card major, what do you do for your second bid – assuming your 1♥ isn't passed out? You only need 4 points from partner to make a game in either hearts or notrump. How are you going to show your strength? It's much easier to open 2NT. Your hand is balanced and partner will try his best to put you into the best game. There is even a chance for slam if partner has a strong hand. Opening 2NT tells him almost exactly how strong you are.

After a Stayman sequence, you land in 3NT.

West leads the ♣4 and you see this dummy - plan the play:

N	North
♠	KJ73
♥	2
♦	Q1065
♣	10762

West leads ♣4

S	South
♠	A2
♥	QJ1053
♦	AK4
♣	AK9

You have 7 top tricks. If diamonds break 3-2, you have 1 more trick in that suit. You have a possible extra trick if the ♠Q is on side. That's a possible 9 tricks.

But maybe you can do better. Look at the heart suit. If hearts break 4-3, and you can get East to play one of his top honors before you play yours, you can take 3 heart tricks as well. Of course you have to lose to the ♥AK, but you can perhaps take 11 tricks in total.

When you play dummy's ♣3 to the club lead, you are surprised that your ♣9 wins. Before you do anything else, go to the dummy in diamonds or spades, and lead the ♥2. You hope that East will rise with an honor – and she does. Win whatever she returns and lead the ♥Q. This will force out the other top honor. If the suit breaks normally (as evenly as possible), you can clear the heart suit.

You can take the rest of the tricks without relying either on the the spade finesse or the diamond break. Here the diamonds do not break for you, but you have beaten those who try the diamonds first and then lose to the ♦J, when East gets in with the ♥A or ♥K.

Look at the entire deal:

10 <sup>D</sup>	N North	W N E S
	♠ KJ73 ♥ 2 ♦ Q1065 ♣ 10762	P P 2NT P 3♣ P 3♥ P 3NT P P P
W West		E East
♠ Q9 ♥ 9764 ♦ 97 ♣ QJ843		♠ 108654 ♥ AK8 ♦ J832 ♣ 5
	S South	
	♠ A2 ♥ QJ1053 ♦ AK4 ♣ AK9	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/y3hb8wz8>, 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.