

SPADES VERSUS HEARTS

West deals and passes. So does North, but East opens with 1♥. What would you do with this hand?

S	South
♠	KQJ1076
♥	A
♦	10942
♣	J9

You have a good 6-card spade suit and 10 HCP. You could make a jump overcall of 2, but this hand is a bit too strong for that action. Bidding 1♠ is stronger. If partner can support your spades, your hand is worth about 15 total points. The extras consist of an almost solid 6-card trump suit, a stiff ♥A, a side 4-card suit and a doubleton. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♥.	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	??

Partner's cue bid of 3♥ is a bid that shows spade support and invitational values. He is a passed hand but probably has a good 10-12 HCP with a least 3 spades. That is certainly worth a raise to 4♠. But what should you do over East's push to 5♥? Your choices are pass, double or bid 5♠. Your only sure defensive tricks are the ♥A and possibly, the ♠A if partner holds it. Since they probably can make 5♥, passing or doubling doesn't seem to make sense. Even if 5♥ goes down a trick, it doesn't nearly equate to the score you can make in your spade contract. The favorite is to bid 5♠. This becomes the final contract.

West leads the 2♥ and you see this dummy:

N North	
♠ A952	
♥ Q10	
♦ KQJ7	
♣ 874	
S South	
♠ KQJ1076	
♥ A	
♦ 10942	
♣ J9	

You have no losers in the majors. You have 1 diamond loser and 2 club losers. That is one too many. The key to making this hand occurs in this initial trick. You know you're going to win the heart in your hand, per force. You must put up the ♥10 and not the ♥Q. You are missing the ♥K and ♥J. If they are both in East, it doesn't matter what you do. You can discard a loser on the ♥ Q if the honors are split and the ♥K is in East and must put it up to capture the ♥10.

As it turns out, East does put up the ♥K and your ♥Q allows you to discard one of the losing clubs.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">8</div>	N North	♠ A952	W	N	E	S
	♥ Q10	♦ KQJ7	♣ 874	P	P	1♥ 1♠
	♣ 874			2♥ 3♥	4♥	4♠
				P	P	5♥ 5♠
			P	P	P	
W West	E East					
♠ 83	♠ 4					
♥ J982	♥ K76543					
♦ A863	♦ 5					
♣ 1053	♣ AKQ62					
	S South					
	♠ KQJ1076					
	♥ A					
	♦ 10942					
	♣ J9					
			5♠ S	NS: 0	EW: 0	

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

<http://tinyurl.com/ju3pgy9> , 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. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.

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