

THINK ABOUT THE ORDER OF PLAY

Your partner dealt and passed. Your RHO opens 1♠ and it's your call. This is certainly a distributional hand. How many times are you dealt a 7-4-1-1? Your opponents are vulnerable but you are not. Does that make a difference?

S	South
♠	Q
♥	KQ109842
♦	KJ86
♣	6

Well, with favorable vulnerability, you can be friskier than when you aren't. This hand calls for something dramatic. You could double and bid hearts over partner probable club advance. This shows 18+ points. But you have only 12 HCP and your length only adds 3 more.

This isn't a hand you'd term pre-emptive. It's a tad too strong. Yet, I would overcall 4♥. A 4-level preempt usually requires 8 cards, but these 7 hearts are so solid, that with a little help from partner, you might take 10 tricks.

West doubles for penalty and it is passed out.

West leads his partner suit, the ♠7. What is your plan?

N	North
♠	AJ94
♥	J76
♦	95
♣	KJ105

West leads ♠7

S	South
♠	Q
♥	KQ109842
♦	KJ86
♣	6

You have no spade losers and one definite heart and club loser. You must limit the diamonds to 1 loser.

The first decision you must make is what to play on the spade lead. If West is leading from a ♠K, then you have two good spades in the dummy on which to discard two losing diamonds. But if East holds the ♠K, then you will certainly be set because you weren't counting any spade losers. So, it is clear that you must go up with the ♠A. The next consideration is how to play the trump. Even if they break 3-0 (a distinct possibility given West's double) you can draw them and let them win their ♥A. When you get into the dummy with the high heart, you can finesse the ♦J or ♦K. But that leaves three low diamond losers.

That plan is no good. You will go down 1 or 2 tricks.

A safer plan is not to draw trump at all, but rather, use the two trump in the dummy to ruff 2 losing diamonds. This is the way the hand should be played:

Win the ♠A in the dummy and immediately lead a diamond to the ♦J. Use the knowledge that West double provides to place the ♦A in his hand. You hope he doesn't also have the ♦Q; he may, but he surely holds the ♦A. Luckily he wins the ♦A and returns a diamond. You win the ♦K and lead a low diamond to the dummy. West now is out of diamonds and ruffs with the ♥3 which you can overruff with the ♥4. Now lead the ♠K and this will lose to East's ♣A. He will probably return a club. This is fine with you. You will ruff and lead your last diamond. West will ruff and you again over ruff. Now you have no more diamond losers and you can just force the ♥A out and claim. 4♥ doubled and made scores +590.

This is the entire deal:

D 9	N North ♠ AJ94 ♥ J76 ♦ 95 ♣ KJ105	W N E S X P 1♠ 4♥ P P P P
W West ♠ 752 ♥ A53 ♦ A2 ♣ 98432		E East ♠ K10863 ♥ ♦ Q10743 ♣ AQ7
	S South ♠ Q ♥ KQ109842 ♦ KJ86 ♣ 6	4♥x S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/mt6f2lg>, 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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