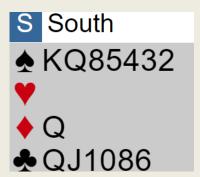
♦♥♦♦ WHO IS FOR THE FIVE LEVEL?♠♥♦♠

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



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 $2 \cdot 1$ In other words, this hand is too good to play in only $3 \cdot 1$. 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 $1 \cdot 1$.

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

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

There is a bridge adage the 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 $5 \checkmark$, you must set them by 3 tricks to get a score that exceeds what you get making $5 \checkmark$. In $5 \checkmark$, 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 $5 \clubsuit$. Give North the \clubsuit A and you might make $6 \clubsuit$.

If you bid $5 \spadesuit$ it will be passed out.

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



West Leads: ♥A

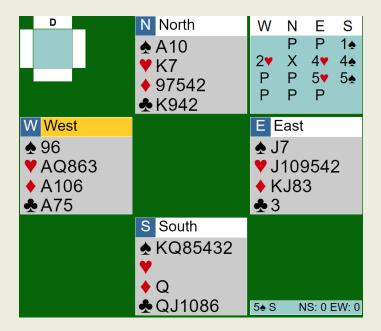


The lead of the unsupported •A is normal at very high level contracts.

Your plan is to ruff the lead. Then lead to the $\triangle A$ and discard your losing $\bigcirc Q$ on dummy's $\bigcirc K$. Draw the rest of the trump and force out the $\triangle A$, making $6 \triangle A$, 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:



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

https://tinyurl.com/2gltek6c , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

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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