

LET YOUR PARTNER DECIDE

You are sitting in the South with this hand:

S	South
♠	AK105
♥	J7642
♦	A
♣	J105

West opens pre-emptively with 3♦. Your partner doubles for takeout and East passes. What is your advance?

You have a powerful 4-card spade suit and a not so powerful heart suit. You want to pick one of them. But you could be picking the wrong one. Partner is promising tolerance for both majors by his double, but he doesn't necessarily have two equally good or long majors. The 3-level pre-empt has limited his descriptive ability and forced your side to make a delicate decision at a high level.

But you do know you have enough points for at least a game. In fact, with West holding a weak hand and East's passing his partner's opening, the chances are high that partner has a very good hand and slam may be possible. These are the uncertainties that a high level pre-emptive opening precipitate.

So, do you think you should bid one of the major suits at the 3 level? The 4 level? And, which major should you pick?

The best bid by you is 4♦! This is a cuebid. It certainly can't mean you want to play in West's seven card suit. This is a special use of the cue bid by the partner of the take out doubler. It promises BOTH majors and asks partner to make the selection based on his hand and what would be best for him. At the 3-level, this cue bid would be invitational strength or better. Here, at the 4-level, it is obviously game forcing.

Partner will rebid 4♥. Again, you don't know what kind of a hand partner has and you are too high to explore for slam, since you are missing controls in clubs as well as two aces. You should just pass and let your partner take as many tricks as he can.

This is the full deal:

♠ 8	N North	♠ 843	♠ 3+	X	P	4+
		♥ KQ105	P	4♥	P	P
		♦ 65	P			
		♣ AK83				
W West						
	♠ 972					
	♥					
	♦ KQ87432					
	♣ 976					
	E East					
	♠ QJ6					
	♥ A983					
	♦ J109					
	♣ Q42					
	S South					
	♠ AK105					
	♥ J7642					
	♦ A					
	♣ J105					
		4♥ N		NS: 0 EW: 0		

How would you plan the play if you were North, the declarer, after East leads the ♦J?

You have a certain heart loser and a possible loser in the spade and club suits. Making your contract shouldn't be too hard, but you should try for overtricks. You have two finesses available, one in spades and one in clubs. You have the knowledge that most of the outstanding points are in East, so you should use that planning the play.

You win the ♦A in the dummy and lead a trump. You find the hearts are breaking 4-0 so you must be careful not to lose control. East should hold up his ♥A so you will win the trick in your hand and lead a low spade toward the dummy's ♠10. If East plays low you would play the ♠10. But since he holds the ♠QJ, he should split his honor and insert the ♠J. You win the ♠K and go back to your hand with another trump and lead the spade again. East will probably play the ♠Q and you win the ♠A. Now, go to your hand for the last time with a heart and lead the last spade to your ♠10. The spades split evenly so your ♠5 is a winner.

Now for the club finesse. Lead the ♣J to your hand, hoping that West holds the queen. Unfortunately, the ♣Q is in East and he will get that trick and the ♥A. You've made an overtrick. Nicely done!

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

<http://tinyurl.com/gt6mnc> 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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