

Before looking at the play, consider your bid with these cards as North.

		♠ 10 9 6 3		
		♥ —		
		♦ K Q J 10 4 2		
		♣ A K Q		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		2 ♥	2 ♠	
4 ♥	?			

East has bid a weak two, showing 6 hearts and 6-10 HCP. South bid 2♠ showing an opening bid and a spade suit. West has increased the pre-empt by jumping to 4♥. What do you, North bid?

You have 15 HCP and your hand is exceptional. You have good spade support, a void in hearts (most likely North has no wasted high cards in hearts) and lots of tricks in the minor suits (after you knock out the A♦). If your partner has 6 spades including the AK and A♦, thirteen tricks are likely. You don't have the bidding space to find out. Blackwood, asking for aces, won't tell you anything useful. Your choice seems to be to bid the safe 4♠ or the less pessimistic 6♠, hoping you didn't have a spade and diamond loser. Having 2 losers is unlikely if North has his bid, especially if he doesn't have wasted values in hearts. So suppose you bid 6♠. It is now up to South to make it. These are the North South hands:

		East Deals	♠ 10 9 6 3	
		None Vul	♥ —	
			♦ K Q J 10 4 2	
			♣ A K Q	
			N W E S	
			♠ A K Q 4 2	
			♥ 9 5	
			♦ 8 3	
			♣ J 7 4 2	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		2 ♥	2 ♠	
4 ♥	6 ♠	All pass		

Lead: ♥ A

South didn't quite have an opening hand, but the slam looks easy anyway. You trump in dummy and lead a spade to draw trumps. Fortunately, both follow; you would have no chance if spades were 4-0. Now you play the K♠ and East discards a heart. Right so far?

No. You are likely to go down. You can blame North for the optimistic bidding, but you should have made the slam. You just weren't concentrating at the right time (like at trick 1). Let's see how the play goes. If you draw trumps, dummy will have no trumps left when you knock out the A♦. The opponents will take a heart trick and you will be one down. So, after playing the A and K of spades, you must trump your heart loser with dummy's last trump. Now you are stuck in North's hand with no clear way back to your hand. You can try to trump the third diamond, but, unless West has 3 or more diamonds, you can't stop him from scoring his J♠.

What you had to do was come to your hand with the A♠ at trick 2 and trump the losing heart immediately, while you had a trump in dummy to lead back to the K and Q in your hand your hand to draw trumps. Now you knock out the A♦ and take your 12 tricks and congratulate your partner on his bidding.