

In an ACBL daylong game on BBO I was dealt this hand:

♠KQ75 ♥AQ7 ♦QJ82 ♣AJ

After two passes, I open this 19-count 1♦ with the intention of rebidding 2NT at my next turn. However LHO and partner both pass and RHO balances 1♥. I now bid 1NT which ends the auction. When partner fails to respond the first time, a rebid of 1NT shows this 18-19 point range. (If the bot had made a takeout double, I would have redoubled to show the same point range). So the auction was:

Partner	RHO	Me	LHO
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
Pass	1♥	1NT	All Pass

LHO leads the ♥8 and here's what I see:

♠J83
♥JT2
♦T5
♣KT942

♠KQ75
♥AQ7
♦QJ82
♣AJ

It's time to assess the situation and make a plan. I'm grateful that partner is a maximum passed hand. The ♥8 is likely from 8x so I assume RHO has ♥K9xxx. I would love to set up the clubs in dummy, and I would happily play ace of clubs and overtake the jack with the king to force out the queen, but only if I know I have a sure entry over there, otherwise I am just giving the opponents the ♣Q for nothing. I can also set up spade or diamond tricks by knocking out the high cards there and note that the ♦9 is standing in the way of my ♦8.

I can play the ♥J now, and if RHO covers with the king I will have my entry. But of course, the bots are not your friend and are not there to help you. The bot ducks and you are on the board. Now what? There is no rush to take the heart finesse as you can always cross to the ♣K at the end of the hand if need be to accomplish this. What now?

♠J83
♥T2
♦T5
♣KT942

♠KQ75
♥AQ
♦QJ82
♣AJ

I decide to play a low spade from dummy to the king. Naturally that is ducked as well. Now I lead a low diamond to my ten. To my surprise LHO wins the king and fires back ace of spades and a third spade which I win with the jack in dummy. LHO also follows to the third spade leaving a good ♠Q in my hand. The reason this is surprising is that RHO has just made this hand a near opening book. What cards has RHO shown up with so far? ♠A ♥K ♦K. What cards are missing? Only ♦A ♣Q. If you use the information from the auction, you will see that RHO passed initially, so it is almost certain that both cards are with LHO. (I have seen bots occasionally pass junky 12 counts but not often) Now we plan the rest of the hand.

♠ -
♥T2
♦5
♣KT942

♠7
♥AQ
♦QJ8
♣AJ

Unless RHO has six hearts, we know that LHO started with two hearts and three spades, leaving eight minor cards including the ♦A and ♣Q. If that is the case, I can see a way to only lose one more trick – what's the plan?

I won the third spade in dummy in order to take the heart finesse which I do now. West coughs up his remaining heart and sheds a club. Having removed an important exit card, I can play the queen of spades as well, with clubs pitched from LHO and dummy.

♠ -
♥ -
♦ 5
♣ KT94

♠ -
♥ -
♦ QJ8
♣ AJ

Now I play ace of clubs and jack of clubs. Having started with five clubs, LHO declines to cover this card of course, but after the jack holds I can throw west in with the queen of diamonds. LHO's last hope now is to play back the remaining diamond but RHO's 9 is trapped between my J8 as I come to 10 tricks. +180 should be a fine score although it looks like the bot who is vulnerable can go for -200 taking only one spade, two diamonds, and two hearts. I don't expect many people with my hand to pass the 1♥ overcall. Here was the whole hand:

♠ J83
♥ JT2
♦ T5
♣ KT942

♠ 942
♥ 83
♦ A64
♣ Q8763

♠ AT6
♥ K9654
♦ K973
♣ 5

♠ KQ75
♥ AQ7
♦ QJ82
♣ AJ