

When one hand is very strong and the other is very weak, it really does pay to declare in the trump suit of the weak hand — otherwise that hand may be completely useless. Take this deal from Wetherby Bridge Club, kindly sent to me by Mark Hatfield.

Dealer South N-S Vul

<p>♠ Q J 7 5 4 3 ♥ 9 6 4 ♦ 10 7 ♣ J 8</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ 9 8 6 2 ♥ Q 10 5 3 ♦ 5 ♣ Q 9 7 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 ♥ K J 8 7 2 ♦ Q 8 6 ♣ K 10 6 4</p> <p>♠ A K ♥ A ♦ A K J 9 4 3 2 ♣ A 5 3</p>
N						
W E						
S						

Table One

S	W	N	E
6♦(1) end			

(1) Not as vulgar as it may appear, because opening 2♣ will be sure to attract the 2♦ negative/waiting response, and now South will be dummy (in a diamond contract).

West led his singleton spade (although the lead of any one of his cards — even a trump — would have defeated the slam). Declarer won and, needing to ruff a club in dummy, led a low club at trick two. West was not prepared to gamble that his partner held the queen (he didn't particularly want a ruff in any event). Rising with the king, he exited with a second club to the jack, queen and ace.

Declarer cashed the ace of diamonds, ruffed his third club, crossed to the ace of hearts and cashed the king of diamonds.

When the queen failed to drop, that was one down.

Yes, declarer was unlucky that the queen of diamonds hadn't dropped in two rounds. But 6♦ has basically no play on a trump lead, almost regardless of how diamonds are splitting.

Table Two

S	W	N	E
2♣(1)	Pass	2♦(2)	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
6♠(3)	end		

(1) 23+ points or an upgrade for shape.

(2) Negative/waiting.

(3) Cleverly realises the hand will play much better in a spade contract, partner's hand coming alive.

Although a club or heart lead would have made life insuperably awkward for declarer, the singleton diamond lead was very tempting for East and duly hit the deck. Declarer won dummy's ace, cashed the ace-king of spades (West discarding) and tried the king of diamonds.

East ruffed and switched to a club but declarer won dummy's ace and ruffed a third diamond with the jack of spades. He could then cash the queen of spades, drawing East's last spade, and cross to the ace of hearts to enjoy the long diamonds. Twelve tricks and slam made.

In this extreme construction to make the point, 4♠ should make, while 4♥ has no chance.

<p>♠ - ♥ A K 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ A K 5 ♣ A 6 3</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 9 8 7 6 ♥ - ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ 8 4 2</p>
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