

345. Fatuous Double

Playing in a match-point game against normally tough opponents, I hold:

♠ A 8 2 ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ K 6 5

With no one vulnerable, I deal and open **one notrump**. West, on my left, passes, and partner bids **two diamonds**, a transfer to hearts. East passes, and I accept the transfer by bidding **two hearts**. Partner now jumps to **three spades**, an apparent splinter. All of a sudden, I have extras—a fourth trump and no wasted spades. I try **four clubs**, showing a top control. Partner now bids **four notrump**. I respond **five spades**, and partner bids **six hearts**. When the bidding reverts to West, he **doubles** firmly. The complete auction:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass

West leads the king of spades and the appearance of dummy leaves me breathlessly staring at our meager combined holdings:

♠ 6
♥ 10 9 7 6 5 4
♦ A 4
♣ A J 4 3

♠K led

♠ A 8 2
♥ A Q 3 2
♦ Q 9 6
♣ K 6 5

We hardly have the values for game but strangely our slam contract is not hopeless, assuming that West has most of the outstanding points. I win the ace of spades and ruff a spade in dummy. I don't fancy the chances of the trump finesse so I lead a heart to the ace, everyone following. Now I ruff another spade in dummy.

My elimination is almost complete. I cross to the king of clubs and the queen of clubs appears from West on the second round. I win the ace of

clubs and play the jack, West pitching a diamond. I ruff a club in hand as West throws another diamond.

It is time to put West to the test. A heart is played to his king. He exits with the jack of diamonds, which I ride to my queen, giving me twelve tricks. I am adding up to +1210 when I hear West declare to his partner that he couldn't let us play a slam when he knew we only had 25 points between us.

The full deal:

<p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ 6 ♥ 10 9 7 6 5 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ A J 4 3</p> <p>♠ K Q 9 4 ♥ K J ♦ K J 10 8 3 ♣ Q 8</p>	<p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ J 10 7 5 3 ♥ 8 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ 10 9 7 2</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ A 8 2 ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ K 6 5</p>
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The irony here is that the contract had no chance without the double, but the double did not figure to increase East-West's match-point score. The double therefore represented the worst of both worlds: all risk and no reward.