Dummy
♠Q98
♥K5
♦K1087
♣AQJ9

Declarer
♠A106
♥A103
♦AQ
♣K10762

You find yourself in 6NT. Although the result is not certain, you like your chances. The opening lead is a club. Plan the play to maximize the probability of your making the contract.

Send your answers to me:

The Answer

You have 11 top tricks – 1 spade, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds, and 5 clubs. Your best chance is to hope that your right hand opponent (RHO) has either the K or J or spades, because then you can get a second spade trick. There is also a small but reasonable possibility that the J of diamonds will come down in 3 rounds, setting up your 10. Finally, there is a very small possibility that the QJ of hearts will come down in 2 rounds.

So, the question is, what is the best way to cater to all of these possibilities?

The first thing to do is win the club in dummy and play the Q of spades (a low spade will work also, but the Q makes handling the entries slightly less complicated). If RHO has the K, you have 12 tricks. If he covers, you can force out the J, and if he does not cover, the Q is your twelfth trick.

Assume your left hand opponent wins the spade. Win his return (in your hand if it is a red suit), and run your clubs, pitching a spade from dummy. Then cash the AQ of diamonds, and the A of hearts, leaving this position:

<u>Dummy</u>
♠9
♥K
♦K10
♣

<u>Declarer</u>
♠A10
♥103
♦
♣

Lead a heart to the K. Cash the K of diamonds. If the QJ of hearts have not yet appeared, throw your 10 of hearts; otherwise your 10 of hearts is your twelfth trick. If the J of diamonds comes down, the 10 of diamonds is your twelfth trick. Otherwise, lead the 9 of spades, intending to finesse RHO for the J.

The main point of this hand is to make sure you carefully plan the play, including managing your entries. Give yourself as many chances as possible to make the hand, including catering to some unlikely distributions, if you can do so without jeopardizing your best chances.