

♠ J 9 2

♥ A 10 8 7 6 2

♦ 8 5 3

♣ 2

South

♠ A K Q 6 4

♥ K 3

♦ A

♣ A K 9 6 3

Lead: ♦ Q

Bidding:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2♣
3♣	3♥	5♦	5♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South got shoved around a bit in the bidding and arrived at a good slam in spite of it. How can he overcome the known terrible split in his side suit?

Good players no longer sit still when their opponents open with a strong two club bid.

South ended up in six spades on a sequence which had very little to do with science. South opened two clubs, West overcalled three clubs, North overbid a little with three hearts, and East went the limit with five diamonds. South still hadn't shown his spades so did so at the five level. North's raise to six spades was an educated guess.

South won the diamond lead and appreciating that ruffing clubs would not work given West's club overcall, decided to set up dummy's hearts. South played the king and ace of hearts and ruffed the third heart (East having three to the jack) with the ace of trumps.

What now?

If spades were 3-2, declarer could now win the rest of the tricks by drawing trump and running hearts.

But what if trumps were 4-1? East seemed to have a huge number of diamonds and he has shown up with three hearts. A singleton spade was possible.

Barring East's having four spades, virtually impossible, six spades is cold. How can South arrange that?

There is a way. I encourage you to look for it.

Dealer: S Vul: N-S	North ♠ J 9 2 ♥ A 10 8 7 6 2 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ 2		
West ♠ 10 8 5 3 ♥ Q 5 ♦ Q ♣ Q J 8 7 5 4		East ♠ 7 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ K J 10 9 7 6 4 2 ♣ 10	
	South ♠ A K Q 6 4 ♥ K 3 ♦ A ♣ A K 9 6 3		

South decided to give up on an overtrick. Instead, he played the king of spades and led a low spade to the nine. Look at the consequences of that play.

IF EAST WINS WITH THE TEN OF SPADES

South takes any return (he would ruff a diamond with the queen of spades) and draws trump ending in dummy to run the hearts.

IF EAST SHOWS OUT ON THE SECOND ROUND OF SPADES

If East shows out of spades, as happens on the actual hand, South continues hearts until West ruffs. South wins the club return and gets to dummy with the jack of spades, and claimed.

South would lose an unnecessary trick if East had the ten of spades, but the cost is bearable because it gave South a certain slam.

IN THE BIDDING

Even though the East-West bidding did not do them any good on this hand, it is a good policy to get into the auction when your opponent opens with two clubs. The two club bid is not so powerful a tool that it is immune to competition. You would be amazed how often a modest overcall hinders their bidding.

On this hand, if East-West were silent, South would bid two clubs and would rebid two spades. He would have time to show all of his features AND North would have time to show any little tidbit that he might have.

West overcalled three clubs which means that North must bid at the three level. South in turn must bid at the three level if the bidding leaves him room to do so. The extra round of bidding that is lost because of the three club overcall will be sadly missed by North-South on many hands.

Of course, if you overcall and get caught, the price will be horrible. You have to have a decent suit to come in over two clubs. But when you do, you should make sure the vulnerability is favourable for you and then come right on in. You will have exciting moments.

By Mike Lawrence