

Get the Best out of this Hand

Monday Afternoon 18/08/25 Hand No. 20

Dlr: West

Vul: Game all

Bidding

W	N	E	S
1S	2S*	3S	4H
4S	6H	P	P
P			

How to Play

My thanks go to Steve Potter for pointing out this very exciting hand from Monday afternoon. You pick up the boring East hand and little do you know what is about to unfold. The most successful N/S pair on the afternoon were Alan and Judy Richards who bid as I have detailed above. The two spade bid was a Michaels Cue bid which showed at least 5/5 in hearts and a minor. East supported partner and then south was happy to bid the four heart game. When west persisted with four spades north had a choice of how many hearts to bid, but took the optimistic view that partner might be short in spades and also have good hearts. The six heart bid was well judged. Back around to west who is looking at two aces. How well should they trust their opponents? It is not easy to take the sacrifice in six spades.

At Steve's table he overcalled two clubs with the north hand then over two spades from east his partner Tony made the bold bid of three hearts which found their heart fit. They were the only other pair to play the hand N/S.

At the other seven tables east west played the hand in spades with six tables playing in five spades. When you see all four hands you can see that north can cash a club, give partner a club ruff and then get a diamond ruff to beat the contract. It looks impossible to do this, however... When north leads a big club south should give a distribution signal to indicate their length in the suit. Most players play that hi/lo shows an even number. So, after the ace of clubs, partner plays the five and declarer the four. Where is the nine of clubs? Partner would have played the nine of clubs on the first round to show a doubleton, therefore they don't have that card. So declarer has it and partner has no clubs left. North can now lead the two of clubs for partner to ruff. South will now be thinking why am I on lead? Partner led the two of clubs for me to ruff, that must be a suit preference signal. So trust partner and play back the lower of the other two suits and presto! Can declarer do anything about this? What if they play the nine of clubs on the first trick. Now north will not know where the four is. A piece of advice for declarer's here. If the defence play hi/lo to show an even number then follow suit and do that yourself, it works well.

So tip of the day – most tournament players play a two no trump overcall of a suit to show 5/5 in the lowest two unbid suits (known as the unusual two notrumps) and a cue bid to show 5/5 in both majors if the opponents have opened a minor or 5/5 in the other major plus a minor if opponents have opened a major (known as Michaels). If you are one for conventions look it up on the internet and give it a go. It certainly worked for Alan and Judy on this hand.

