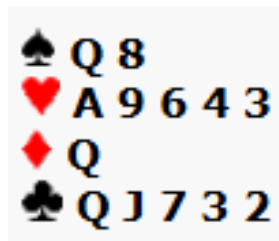


June 2026 Hand of the Week 99: More on the power of 2

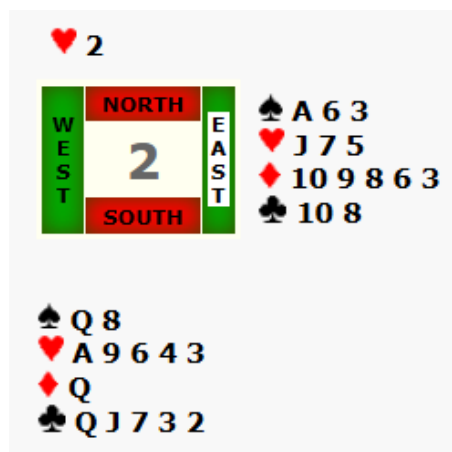


Sitting South vulnerable vs non-vulnerable you open 1♥ and partner responds 2♣

You rebid 3♣, then West unexpectedly bids 3♠ which partner doubles- Should you bid on?

You have opened slightly light with a singleton Q. The vulnerability is not in your favour as if 4♣ is on you will need to take 3♠ 2 off doubled to get a good score. On the other hand West did not bid on the first round which suggests their overcall is a bit weak and it possible partner holds some spades in which case Q♠ might be useful.

On the night South passed and North lead 2♥



East has a better spade suit than expected. Partner is likely to have a least 5 clubs and declarer therefore has a singleton or void.

There is a possibility of a diamond ruff but only if partner holds A♦, if declarer gets in they will likely clear the trump suit- we can see the A♠ & Q♠ and it seems unlikely they would come in at the 3 level without holding a least K♠. The most likely trump holding for declarer is K 9 x x x and 12-14 points, which might explain why they did not overcall on the first round.

What can we make of the lead of 2♥?

Partner would lead high-low from a doubleton and middle-up-down from a tripleton. The only time to lead 2♥ be 4th highest or 3rd highest from an honour. As they did not support hearts it seems likely that this is therefore a singleton.

So should we lead back a heart ruff (if so which heart?) or try Q♦ and hope partner reads it as a singleton?

The full hand:

The diagram displays a bridge hand with the following components:

- Top Left:** Dlr: East, Vul: N/S
- Top Right:** Optimum EW 5Dx +100
- North's Hand:** ♠ J 7 5, ♥ 2, ♦ A 4 2, ♣ A K 9 6 5 4
- South's Hand:** ♠ K 10 9 4 2, ♥ K Q 10 8, ♦ K J 7 5, ♣ -
- Trick Count:** A central box shows '2' with 'NORTH' above and 'SOUTH' below.
- Bottom Left:** A box containing a trick count: 12, 12, 5, 11.
- Bottom Center:** South's hand cards: ♠ Q 8, ♥ A 9 6 4 3, ♦ Q, ♣ Q J 7 3 2.
- Bottom Right:** A card layout grid:

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	11	3	6	3	8
S	11	3	6	3	8
E	2	10	6	7	5
W	2	10	6	7	5

The preferred return is a heart ruff, and ask partner for a diamond return.

The risk of switching to diamonds first, as discussed previously, is that if declarer hold the A♦ and then draw the trumps and take away partners ruff. So better to get the ruff in first and then hope partner continues the defence correctly.

When leading a ruff we can lead a high card asking for the higher of the remaining suits to be returned, and a low card asking for the lower of the remaining suits.

In this case return the 9♥ which partner ruffs. Hopefully they will now cash A♦ and play a second diamond for you to ruff. The defence has now set up a cross ruff and should win the first 6 tricks for +300

As it happens 5♣ can make and the optimal sacrifice is in diamonds as this prevents the cross ruff!

West should double the opening 1♥ but would then need partner to come in with 2♦ over North's 2♣ bid. With only 5 points and a weak suit in practice this would be difficult to find.

As in last month's hand, watch out for the play of a 2 as this can give a lot of information about partners holding in the suit.