

May 2, 2019

## Bridge with Richard Ward

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	<b>NORTH</b>		<b>E/ EW VUL</b>
	♠ A J 9		
	♥ A K 9		
	♦ Q		
	♣ 8 7 6 4 3 2		
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>	
♠ 8 6 5 3		♠ Q 10 7 4	
♥ 8 3 2		♥ Q J 6	
♦ A K 6 4 3		♦ J 10 9 5	
♣ 9		♣ J 10	
	<b>SOUTH</b>		
	♠ K 2		
	♥ 10 7 5 4		
	♦ 8 7 2		
	♣ A K Q 5		

This hand comes from a Bridge Base Online Trans-Tasman teams match and features Australian star, Michael Courtney sitting South playing the ambitious contract of six clubs on the tricky lead of the heart two. We mortals would count our tricks: two spades, a spade ruff, two hearts and six clubs = 11, and quietly concede down one.

Courtney decided to make something out of nothing as he cashed all six clubs without ruffing a spade and pitched two hearts from his hand. East threw three diamonds and a spade while West pitched two hearts and three diamonds. The 6-card ending looked like this:

	♠ A J 9		
	♥ K 9		
	♦ Q		
	♣ -		
♠ 8 6 5 3		♠ Q 10 7	
♥ -		♥ Q J	
♦ A K		♦ 10	
♣ -		♣	
	♠ K 2		
	♥ 10		
	♦ 8 7 2		
	♣ -		

Next came the heart K – J – 10 and West paused to think. Because declarer had not ruffed a spade, West convinced himself that declarer started with four spades in which case he needed to keep all of his spades and throw his king of diamonds. Now the queen of diamonds brought down the ten and ace together so both the diamonds 8 and 7 were winners. He made two spades, two hearts, two diamonds (!) and six clubs = 12. If there is a lesson here it is that, when you need a miracle, cashing out a long suit just might create discarding problems for the defence.

Note that the bidding, play and defence could only happen amongst experts. You and I would have led a diamond initially and later would never think to hang on to the spades.

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