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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

29th Dec 2010 Neither vulnerable. West deals

	NORTH ♠Void ♥A 8 6 ♦A K Q J 10 6 ♣Q J 10 6	
WEST ♠A K J 10 7 4 ♥Q 9 ♦8 3 ♣8 7 3		EAST ♠8 6 3 ♥4 2 ♦9 7 5 4 2 ♣9 5 4
	SOUTH ♠Q 9 5 2 ♥K J 10 7 5 3 ♦Void ♣A K 2	

North	East	South	West
--	--	--	1 Spade
X	Pass	2 Spade	Pass
3 Diamond	Pass	4 Heart	Pass
5 Spade	Pass	6 Diamond	Pass
6 Heart	All Pass		

Opening lead: King of ♠

Taking the heart suit in isolation, the percentage play in the trump suit, by a slender margin, is to cash the ace and king, playing to drop the queen. Yet in the final of an Olympic team event between Brazil and China, both declarers ignored the odds – for different reasons!

At the table where the bidding was as shown, North's five spades was Exclusion Roman Key-Card Blackwood, where the king of trumps counted as a fifth ace and the responder is asked to ignore any key card in spades. Six diamonds showed two key cards but denied the queen of trumps, so North settled in the small slam.

West led a top spade, ruffed in dummy. As a safety play, declarer led the eight of trumps to the ten, guaranteeing the contract against almost any division, and declarer could claim his contract, losing only the trump trick.

At the other table West opened with a weak two-bid in spades. North doubled, East raised preemptively and South leaped to six hearts. West boldly sacrificed in six spades and North's seven hearts ended the auction.

Again the opening lead was a top spade, ruffed. Since West was known to have six spades, declarer decided to play him for a singleton heart, cashed the ace of trumps and finessed. Down two.

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