

Thanks to STL.com and Goren bridge

Read original

Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Dealer : South Vul : Both	NORTH ♠ 9 6 4 ♥ 10 9 ♦ 8 6 5 3 ♣ A 5 4 3	
WEST ♠ Q 10 ♥ Q 6 3 2 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ K Q 8 2		EAST ♠ 8 3 2 ♥ A J 7 5 4 ♦ 10 2 ♣ J 9 7
	SOUTH ♠ A K J 7 5 ♥ K 8 ♦ A K Q J ♣ 10 6	

South	West	North	East
1 Spade	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 Diamond	Pass	3 Spade	Pass
4 Spade	All Pass		

Opening lead: King of ♣

All finesses were created equal – every simple finesse stands a 50 percent chance of success. In the overall concept of the play of the hand, however, there is no denying that some finesses are more equal than others!

North-South were playing five-card majors with forcing no trump responses. North barely had enough to keep the bidding open, but very few experts like to pass when holding an ace and three-card support for partner's suit. With a ruffing value to boot, North's action cannot be criticized. South jump-shifted to show power, and went on to game over partner's simple preference.

West led the king of clubs, and the moment of decision was immediately at hand. Declarer faced the possibility of losing one trick in each black suit (if trumps were 4-1, the game was unlikely to make) and two hearts. The spade loser could be avoided by successfully finessing for the queen and finding trumps 3-2. Alternatively, a heart loser would vanish if East held the ace. East holding either the queen of spades or the ace of hearts was a 50-50 proposition. Which should declarer play for?

There are two sound reasons why, after winning the ace of clubs, declarer should lead a heart toward the closed hand. First, if the king of hearts lost to the ace, defeat was not certain – declarer could still try to drop a doubleton queen of spades for the contract. Also, if the spade finesse won, declarer would still have to lose a trump trick if the suit broke badly. All in all, hoping to find the ace of hearts onside was a far better proposition.

gorenbridge@aol.com