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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

13th October 2011

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Dealer : East Vul : None | NORTH ♠ Void ♥ K J 9 6 3 2 ♦ 10 ♣ K J 10 9 6 3 | |
| WEST ♠ 10 ♥ 10 5 ♦ A K Q J 8 6 4 2 ♣ Q 7 | | EAST ♠ A K 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ 8 4 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ Void |
| | SOUTH ♠ Q J 9 7 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 5 ♣ A 8 5 4 2 | |

| South | West | North | East |
|--------|-----------|---------|----------|
| - | - | - | 1 Spade |
| 2 Club | 2 Diamond | 2 Spade | 4 Spade |
| Pass | Pass | 5 Club | 5 Spade |
| X | Pass | 6 Club | All Pass |
| | | | |

Opening lead: Ace of ♦

It is not unusual, on distributional hands, to find that both North-South and East-West can make a game. It is much rarer for a team to score up a slam in both directions! This deal is from a National Swiss Teams Championship.

At the table where this competitive auction occurred, there was little to the play. West led the ace of diamonds and that was the only trick for the defense.

This was the bidding at the other table:

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH

4♠ Pass 4NT Pass

6♦ Pass Pass Pass

The pre-emptive four-spade opening had more going for it, and here it kept the opponents out of the auction. West's four no trump was not designed to find out whether East-West could make slam. Since a pre-empt denies a holding that included two aces, West knew there was no slam. But it was likely that the hand belonged to the opponents, and West chose the bid to give the impression of strength, intending to pass the likely response of five diamonds. But East responded six diamonds, showing one ace and a void by partnership agreement, and that became the final contract.

Our choice of opening would have been the ace in the shorter suit – but that would have spoiled a great bridge yarn. South selected the ace of clubs, and the roof fell in! Declarer ruffed, crossed to the ace of diamonds, drawing both outstanding trumps, and ruffed dummy's remaining club. A heart was discarded on a high spade and declarer cheerfully conceded a heart to claim 12 tricks

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