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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

16th April 2011

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

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

Opening lead: Jack of ♥

It might seem that the extra chance available to declarer on this deal is so remote it is not worth trying. However, you never know when a long shot will come romping home. South had a difficult rebid. One possibility was to simply raise to three no trump.

However, a spade contract might be better, so South elected to jump shift into his three-card club fragment. When that elicited a spade preference from North – eminently correct, in our opinion – South chose the spade game.

West led the jack of hearts, and declarer was delighted with the contract. With just one loser in each suit except trumps, any 3-2 spade break would guarantee the contract. It might seem that a 4-1 break would doom the contract, but that is not necessarily the case. Should East hold a singleton nine of trumps, declarer can still scrape home.

Declarer won the opening lead in hand and tabled the ten of spades. As the cards lie, the contract can no longer be defeated. If West covers, dummy's ace wins and the spots are such that declarer cannot lose more than one spade, to the other missing honor.

If West follows low, declarer ducks in dummy and again holds his trump losers to one. That is not as remote as it appears. Since there are five combinations that feature a singleton in the East hand, there is a 20 percent chance that it will be the nine. If East has any other singleton, declarer must lose two trump tricks, and leading the ten does not cost if West holds the singleton queen, jack or nine. South simply rises with the ace and runs the seven of trumps at trick three

gorenbridge@aol.com