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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

16<sup>th</sup> September 2011

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

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

Opening lead: Seven of ♠

The interesting point in the auction is North's bid of four clubs. Since North-South had already settled in game at three no trump, four clubs was a slam try. The key to South's acceptance was possession of the king of hearts.

West led the top-of-nothing seven of spades, and declarer's problem was sidestepping possible losers in spades and diamonds. Declarer's first thought was to try both the spade and heart finesses; if either succeeded, 12 tricks were there. Second thought produced a better option — setting up a long heart if the suit broke no worse than 4-2. That would require two side entries to dummy, so it was vital to protect both the ace of spades and king of diamonds from being removed prematurely.

Taking the spade finesse immediately would be futile should the finesse lose — a spade continuation would remove the ace prematurely. The way to keep all options open was to play the eight from dummy removing the threat of a spade return from East. In with the ten of spades, East did well to start to attack the king of diamonds. East shifted to a low diamond. Declarer rose with the ace, drew trumps in three rounds, discarding a diamond from the table, then cashed the ace and king of hearts. When both defenders followed, the slam was home. Declarer ruffed a heart, crossed to the king of diamonds as the entry to ruff another heart and then used the carefully preserved ace of spades as the entry to the board to cash the long heart for a diamond discard. Note that, had hearts been 5-1, declarer still would have been able to fall back on the spade finesse for the contract.

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