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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

17th September 2011

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

South	West	North	East
--	--	--	1 Heart
3 Club	4 Heart	5 Club	5 Heart
Pass	Pass	6 Club	X
All Pass			

Opening lead: Two of ♣

It is all very well to have a holding rich in high cards. However, beware of the shoals of distribution lurking just below the surface, eager to sink aces and kings.

South's jump to three clubs was pre-emptive. Since at this vulnerability it had to be based on a reasonably good suit, North was prepared to compete all the way to six clubs, doubled, of course, by East. That in a sense was correct, since East-West are off two aces. The only problem was that there was no way to defeat six clubs!

When the opponents bid to a high level with little in the way of high cards, they are usually looking to score a large number of tricks by way of a crossruff. Thus, while a singleton trump is rarely a good lead, it was clearly indicated here. Without a trump lead declarer can come to 12 tricks on a crossruff! The lead put paid to that, but there was an alternative line available.

Declarer won the opening in dummy and immediately led a low diamond, East's nine winning. East tried to kill dummy by returning a heart, forcing the table to ruff, but declarer was in command. The ace of diamonds and a diamond ruff, followed by a heart ruff on the board as an entry for another diamond ruff, set up a long diamond in dummy. Declarer's third heart loser was ruffed and the fourth disappeared on the good diamond. As a result, the doubled slam rolled home despite North-South holding only 17 high-card points against the opponents' 23!

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