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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

20<sup>th</sup> April 2011

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

South	West	North	East
2 NT	Pass	3 Club	Pass
3 Spade	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

How skilled is your declarer play? You reach six no trump after you open with two no trump, showing a balanced 20-22 points and, after checking for a spade fit, North bounces into the small slam. All that remains is to bring home 12 tricks after West starts matters off with the queen of spades.

If you played low from dummy, it is already too late. East discards a club and you have to look for a 12th trick. You cash nine tricks in the other three suits, but nothing good happens. You exit with a low spade, West wins and is forced to return a spade away from his remaining honor. But you have either to win the trick in dummy and then surrender a red-suit trick to East, or else overtake the spade and give up a spade for the setting trick.

It does not require any spectacular coup to land your slam. All you have to do is spend a high spade from the board on the first trick. Now cash your side-suit winners and lead a low spade and jettison the remaining high spade under West's honor. West must lead away from his remaining honor and his tenace, so three spade tricks with your other winners brings your total to 12.

There are some hopes for a squeeze. However, the defense against a squeeze is to hold on to the same length in the suit(s) known to be to your right, so no competent defender should go wrong on what to let go on the spades.

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