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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

21<sup>st</sup> June 2011

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Dealer :North<br>Vul : None                                | <b>NORTH</b><br>♠ Q J<br>♥ 7 6 2<br>♦ A J 8 5 3 2<br>♣ 10 5  |   |
| <b>WEST</b><br>♠ 8 6 4 2<br>♥ Q J 9 5<br>♦ Q 10 7 4<br>♣ 3 |  | <b>EAST</b><br>♠ 9 7 5 3<br>♥ K 4<br>♦ K 9<br>♣ J 8 6 4 2 |
|  | <b>SOUTH</b><br>♠ A K 10<br>♥ A 10 8 3<br>♦ 6<br>♣ A K Q 9 7 |   |

| South | West     | North     | East |
|-------|----------|-----------|------|
| --    | --       | 3 Diamond | Pass |
| 3 NT  | All Pass |           |      |
|       |          |           |      |

Opening lead: Five of ♥

Rubber bridge and duplicate pairs are more like two different games than minor variations of the same game. Rubber bridge places the emphasis on fulfilling or defeating a contract whereas duplicate pays a premium for collecting overtricks and limiting undertricks. All of which serves merely to pose this simple question: How would you play three no trump at each form of the game after the lead of a low heart?

The only explanation for North's opening pre-empt is that North had to be under the illusion that not vulnerable and invulnerable were synonymous. The suit quality is too poor for a weak two-diamond pre-empt, but that does not mean that you should, therefore, up the ante! To cap it all, three diamonds was the last thing that South wanted to hear. Despite the 20 high-card points and good five-card minor, there was no guarantee that there were nine tricks available.

At rubber bridge the play is simple. You capture East's king of hearts at trick one and, since the hand is cold if you can score four club tricks, you cash a high club in case there is a singleton knave lurking, then cross to dummy with the ten of spades to run the ten of clubs. Whatever happens you will take at least nine tricks.

Duplicate pairs is another matter. You can make an overtrick by dropping the jack of clubs if it is guarded no more than twice and are assured of the contract if clubs are no worse than 4-2 even if the knave does not come down. Correct technique, therefore, is to cash the high clubs and, as the cards lie, go down in your excellent contract.

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