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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

21<sup>st</sup> May 2011

Dealer : West Vul : None	NORTH ♠ Void ♥ Q 9 8 5 2 ♦ A Q J 6 5 ♣ K 7 3	
WEST ♠ A 9 8 5 2 ♥ A K J ♦ 2 ♣ A Q J 4		EAST ♠ K Q 10 4 ♥ 10 6 4 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ 10 9 5
	SOUTH ♠ J 7 6 3 ♥ 7 ♦ K 10 9 7 3 ♣ 8 6 2	

West	North	East	South
1 Spade	X	2 Spade	3 Diamond
4 Spade	5 Diamond	Pass	Pass
X	All Pass		

Opening lead: King of ♥

On the face of it, West's lead of the king of hearts would be the people's choice. But does it stand up to analysis?

Once East's raise to two spades failed to keep South out of the auction, there was no way North, with such a distributional holding, was going to allow the opponents to buy the hand at four spades. No one can fault West's decision to double five diamonds.

After the king of hearts won the first trick, West shifted to the ace of clubs and continued with the queen. But that was locking the stable door after the horse was gone. Declarer won the trick in dummy with the king, came to hand with a heart ruff then reentered dummy with the jack of diamonds. Another heart ruff felled the ace and, after drawing the remaining enemy fang, declarer was able to discard the club loser on the queen of hearts. A club ruff left dummy high and the doubled contract was made.

A careful examination of the auction would suggest that West made the wrong lead. North's takeout double of one spade promised length in hearts. In view of West's 19 high-card points and East's spade raise, North surely held the king of clubs. Therefore, it might be vital to set up a second club trick before the mice could get at it.

That would suggest that an opening salvo of the ace of clubs followed by the queen was the way to attack the contract. That would have allowed the defenders to collect two club tricks and the ace of hearts for a one-trick set.

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