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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

23rd April 2011

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

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

Opening lead: King of ♥

If a finesse is available at trick two, it can probably still be taken later in the play. Use the time to try to improve your chances.

North-South reached an excellent six diamonds on a reasonable auction tarnished only by North's jump with only weak three-card support rather than four cards. Note that, since diamonds is the agreed trump suit, both four hearts and four spades were cue-bids. After North's spade cue-bid, wild horses could not have kept South out of slam.

West led the king of hearts. Declarer won in dummy with the ace, discarding a spade from hand. Now South made the good play of ruffing a heart before leading the ace and king of diamonds, learning there was a trump loser on the hand.

The simple line for 12 tricks is to take the spade finesse, but no player worth an ounce of salt likes to rely on a 50 percent chance to land a contract. Instead, declarer elected to go for a partial elimination.

The three top clubs were cashed and the jack of clubs was ruffed in dummy. Another heart was trumped in the closed hand and declarer then threw East on lead with a trump.

Declarer's foresight in maneuvering two heart ruffs now paid a handsome dividend. Down to nothing but spades, East was forced to lead that suit into dummy's major tenace, and the slam came marching in.

What if East still had a heart to return? South would have been no worse off. The heart would be ruffed and the slam would still depend on the spade finesse.

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