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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

23rd June 2011

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

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

Opening lead: Six of ♦

The great Terence Reese wrote: "There is no such thing as a blind opening lead; just deaf opening leaders." West's choice on this deal lends credence to that theory.

The auction was routine. South gave full weight to the queen in partner's suit in electing to go on to game.

West led a low diamond, and the hand was soon over. East won with the ace but, since there was no entry back to the West hand for a heart lead through North's king, declarer could not be prevented from winning six club tricks and five spades. Indeed, if East does not take his ace of hearts right now, declarer will score an overtrick.

No one can fault West for leading a diamond rather than a heart. However, West should have realized that, with five-card support for the suit in which East had overcalled at the two level and no side entry, he would never be on lead again after the first trick. Under the circumstances, it would have been wiser to make the king of diamonds his opening salvo to get a second bite at the apple.

That would have worked wonderfully. East would cooperate by signaling with the queen of diamonds to ask for a heart shift (just in case West was dozing), and the contract would be down one before South had a chance to get going.

gorenbridge@aol.com