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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012

Dealer : South Vul : N-S	<b>NORTH</b> ♠ A 4 ♥ 6 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 4 2 ♣ K J 9	
<b>WEST</b> ♠ J 9 8 6 3 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ 7 5 ♣ Q 8 2		<b>EAST</b> ♠ K 10 7 ♥ Q J 10 7 ♦ J 10 9 3 ♣ 7 3
	<b>SOUTH</b> ♠ Q 5 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ A 10 6 5 4	

South	West	North	East
1 Club	Pass	1 Diamond	Pass
1 Nt	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠

There are two ways to tackle this deal. One is to take every finesse in sight and pray that you do not misguess in the critical situation. The other is to invest an overtrick or two to guarantee a vulnerable game. Which would you choose?

Once South described a minimum, balanced hand with no four-card major, North knew exactly where to place the contract. The no-trump game was reached without further ado.

West led a low spade, and declarer paused to consider the situation. With five sure tricks in the other suits, four in clubs was all that was needed to bring home the bacon. The only danger to the contract was that the opponents would establish tricks in hearts before the clubs were good. There was a simple way to prevent this.

To play low from dummy on the opening lead risked losing the first trick to the king of spades and East would then shift to a heart. To prevent that and keep East off lead, declarer rose with the ace of spades and then took the avoidance play of cashing the king of clubs and then running the jack.

West won with queen but could not revert to spades profitably, since that would give declarer a second trick in the suit. After any other return, declarer had the time to take the tricks needed to complete the game without giving the defense any chance.

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