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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

27th April 2011

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

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

Opening lead: Eight of ♣

Every card played is revealing. The late world champion Paul Soloway put the information given by the opening lead to good use on this deal from a major team championship.

Opening with a weak two-bid on a shabby suit has become the thing to do these days. North's four-spade cue-bid was a two-suited takeout, but South is barred from bidding hearts in case North has a two-suited minor holding. Five clubs became the final contract.

As the cards lie, three no trump would have presented no problem as long as declarer sets up a diamond trick before taking the club finesse. With a major-suit lead declarer has options in the play but could have gone down at five clubs, but West selected, the eight of trumps. Since West was surely not leading away from the king of trumps, declarer spurned the finesse in favor of maneuvering for an endplay.

After winning the ace of trumps declarer cashed the ace and king of spades, discarding a diamond from dummy, then ruffed a spade. Next came the ace and king of hearts, followed by a heart ruff. With the major suits stripped, declarer exited with a trump and was delighted when both defenders followed.

East was faced with a Hobson's choice. A diamond return would solve declarer's problem in that suit, and a major suit return would allow declarer to discard a diamond from hand while ruffing on the board. Either way, the ace of diamonds was the second and last trick for the defense.

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