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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

27th September 2011

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

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	Pass	3 Heart	Pass
4 Heart	All Pass		

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

This deal is for those of our readers who love to finesse. How many finesses can South take at a contract of four hearts after the opening lead of the jack of spades?

North-South were playing old-fashioned forcing jump raises. The ruffing value in spades and the fact that the king of trumps should be upgraded one point in value just makes the North hand qualify for that action.

After the opening lead of the jack of spades, South has five finesses available! All should be taken but you have to handle with care to assure you are in the right hand at the right time. Although there is not much hope of it succeeding, take the spade finesse at the first trick. East wins and returns a spade. Win in dummy perforce and take your second finesse, a club to the ten. West wins with the queen and exits with a low trump, East contributing the eight as you win with the nine. Now you can continue with the queen of hearts to drive out the ace and force an entry to dummy. (If West fails to take the ace, you can endplay him with another trump.)

Win the heart return on the table and take your third finesse by leading the queen of diamonds and, if East fails to cover, unblock the jack from hand – that allows you to remain in dummy to repeat the finesse should East fail to cover (if East covers, you win and can return to dummy with a diamond). Continue with the ten and again run it. Now abandon diamonds to take a second club finesse and, when that wins, you have 10 tricks. Your unblock of the jack of diamonds allows you to get back to dummy in diamonds for another club finesse should East cover.

gorenbridge@aol.com