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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

28th May 2011

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

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

Opening lead: King of ♣

Had South been a figure skater, he would have earned a 5.9 for presentation but only 4.9 for technique. The plan was good, but the execution lacking.

North's jump to three spades was invitational but South, with a hand rich in primary controls, needed no more to contract for slam.

Before playing to the first trick, declarer took some time to study the position. With only four fast tricks available outside the trump suit, a crossruff was the logical way to bring the trick total to 12. The opening lead was taken in hand with the ace and the ace and king of diamonds were cashed — when embarking on a crossruff, it is essential to cash your side suit winners immediately to guard against them getting ruffed later in the play.

A club was trumped in dummy and the ace of hearts was cleared, a heart ruff in hand was followed by two more club ruffs sandwiched around two heart ruffs. With three tricks to be played, declarer was in hand with one trump and two diamonds, while dummy was down to a trump and one card in each red suit. There was now no way to score the trumps separately. Declarer led a diamond, but the defender who won returned a trump and declarer was stranded.

A crossruff was the winning technique. Correct, however, was to win the ace of clubs at trick one and then cash the ace-king of diamonds and ace of hearts, then follow by ruffing hearts in hand followed by clubs in dummy. That will permit declarer to take four heart ruffs in hand and three club ruffs in dummy and still remain with a high trump on the table for the fulfilling trick.

gorenbridge@aol.com