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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

29th June 2011

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

South	West	North	East
1 Club	1 Spade	2 Spade	Pass
3 Club	Pass	3 Heart	Pass
6 Club	All Pass		

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

Cover the East and West hands and decide how you would plan the play. At both tables, West overcalled one spade and both Norths decided that a penalty double, at this vulnerability, might not compensate for a missed game. A cue-bid those days simply showed game-going values and did not imply any specific distribution. Both Souths reached the small slam in clubs and, at both tables, West led the ace of spades and switched to a trump. What now?

Both declarers cashed the king of spades, discarding a heart from hand, then ruffed a spade. Next came four rounds of trumps. After following to two of these, what should West discard?

At one table the choice was a spade and a heart, so declarer spurned the heart finesse in favor of cashing the king and ace, dropping the queen and landing the contract. At the other table, the defender saw what was coming and elected to discard a spade and a diamond instead. Here South took the heart finesse and went down a trick when he took the diamond finesse on East's forced return.

West's decision to bare the king of diamonds was imaginative defense, but it gave the declarer an additional chance, which was overlooked. Before committing to the heart finesse, declarer should cash the ace of diamonds. When that fetches the king, 12 tricks are there. If the king does not appear declarer can shift his attention to hearts and decide how to tackle the suit.

How should the slam be played if West discards two spades, setting up dummy's jack? You choose.

Read more: http://www.stltoday.com/entertainment/article_7fbf3ea3-56b8-540f-882d-0384e16aae2e.html#ixzz1QfLb0U48

gorenbridge@aol.com