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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

30th September 2011

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

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

Opening lead: Ten of ♥

You do not have to know the exact probability for all the myriad suit division that are available. But some are necessary. For instance, the key to this deal is that a 3-2 split of five missing cards is almost 68 percent compared to 50 percent for a straight finesse.

North showed a strong hand with a high reverse in the black suits. When South rebid hearts, surely confirming at least a six-card suit, North decided that a heart slam had to have play.

West led the ten of hearts, won in dummy with the queen, and East's diamond discard caused South to rethink the situation. Entries were at a premium and, since most of them were via ruffs, care was needed to make sure that control of the hand was not lost.

There were six trumps to be had and one diamond. If declarer could ruff a diamond conveniently, four club tricks would be enough to land the slam. That could be accomplished with any 3-2 division.

South gave a lesson in declarer play technique. After winning the first trick with the queen, a low club was led, East's ten winning. The spade return was ruffed in the closed hand and a diamond was trumped in dummy, After cashing the jack of hearts, declarer came to hand with another spade ruff to play the ace and king of trumps, drawing all the trumps in the process.

Declarer took care to cash the ace of diamonds for his eighth trick, discarding dummy's remaining spade, then cashed the ace and king of clubs. When that suit broke the two long clubs brought South's total to 12.

gorenbridge@aol.com