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Bridge column by Frank Stewart

31st March 2011

Dealer : North Vul : None	NORTH ♠ A K 10 6 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ K 6 4 ♣ Q 9	
WEST ♠ Q 8 ♥ J 5 3 ♦ Q J 10 8 5 ♣ J 8 5		EAST ♠ J 9 7 3 ♥ Void ♦ 2 ♣ A K 10 7 6 4 3 2
	SOUTH ♠ 5 4 ♥ 10 9 8 7 6 4 2 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♣ Void	

South	West	North	East
--	--	1 Spade	4 Club
4 Heart	Pass	5 Heart	Pass
6 Heart	All Pass		

lead: Queen of ♦

Opening

Distribution can wreak havoc with a contract. A 2-1 trump split would have made South's heart slam lay down. The 3-0 division forced declarer to find a different line to bring home the bacon.

North's raise over game asked about control of the enemy suit. Merely bidding six hearts with the South hand could be considered an underbid by some — a cue-bid of six clubs is more to their liking. But even 12 tricks were not easy to come by after declarer won the opening diamond lead in hand and led a trump to the queen, East discarding a club.

To get home, declarer needed to set up a long spade in dummy. But there was a danger that West could overruff the third round of spades and, if declarer drew all three of West's trumps an even spade split, against the odds, would be needed. Declarer's solution to the problem was most elegant. At trick three South led the queen of clubs and, when East covered, discarded a spade from hand! As the cards lay, the defense had no recourse.

East returned a low spade, declarer capturing West's queen with the king. A spade was ruffed in the closed hand, trumps were drawn and another spade was ruffed to set up dummy's two remaining spades. The king of diamonds served as the entry for declarer to pitch diamonds on the ace of spades and the long card in the suit, and declarer's trumps took the last two tricks.

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