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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

6th October 2011

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

South	West	North	East
			1 Club
1 Heart	Pass	2 Diamond	Pass
3 Heart	Pass	4 Heart	All Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣

The thrust and parry of defenders and declarer battling for ascendancy can be fascinating. This deal is a fine example.

Brushing aside East's opening bid, North-South reached the excellent contract of four hearts. The opening bid was the only clue South needed to land the game after the opening lead, despite superb defense.

West led the jack of clubs, East rose with the ace and found the sterling defense of shifting to the jack of spades, the table's queen winning. Since the opening bid marked East with all three missing aces, the only entry to dummy's diamond suit was now removed before it could be put to use, and declarer was in danger of losing two spades and the two minor-suit aces.

To land the contract, declarer needed an endplay, and for that to succeed declarer had to find East with a very favorable distribution, in order to remove all the defender's safe exit cards. Trumps were drawn in three rounds, declarer carefully discarding a diamond from the table, and the remaining club honor was cashed. A diamond to the jack forced East to hold up the ace to prevent declarer from setting up discards in the suit, and declarer took advantage of being in dummy to ruff a club. Luckily, that removed East's remaining card in the suit.

A diamond to the queen was the last nail in East's coffin. After winning the ace, the defender had to resuscitate the table with either a spade or a diamond as the fulfilling trick. Four hearts, just making

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