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Bridge column by Frank Stewart

7<sup>th</sup> April 2011

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

South	West	North	East
1 Diamond	2 Diamond	4 Diamond	Pass
Pass	X	All Pass	

Opening lead: King of ♥

Students of the game know that, when holding a combined 11-card suit, odds on an even 1-1 break are 52 percent against 48 percent for the 2-0 division. But here, declarer knew that by playing for the latter he could guarantee his contract.

West tried hard to get a squeak out of partner, to no avail. Note that East-West would have been severely punished had East elected to bid over four diamonds doubled.

Declarer elected to let West's king of hearts win the first trick, and the defender was already in trouble. He shifted to the king of clubs, pinning dummy's queen. Declarer won in hand, finessed the jack of hearts and cashed the ace for a club discard. A heart was ruffed in the closed hand and a club ruffed on the table eliminated that suit from the North-South hands. Now declarer led a trump and, when East followed with the four, finessed the queen. When that held, declarer was happy to cash the ace and surrender two spade tricks to West to land the doubled contract.

Why did declarer choose to go against the odds? Because if the diamond finesse lost to the king, West would be endplayed. A spade return would be up to South's king, and a club would permit declarer to ruff in hand while discarding a spade from the board. Either way, the defense would score only one spade trick to go with the heart and trump already in the bank. (04/07/11)

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