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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

7th May 2011

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

South	West	North	East
1 Diamond	1 Spade	X	2 Spade
4 Club	Pass	4 Diamond	Pass
5 Club	Pass	5 Diamond	All Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

Follow the bidding and play of this deal then decide: Who, if anyone, erred?

North's double of one spade was "negative," for takeout, not penalties. South showed a good distributional hand with his jump in clubs, then offered partner a choice of minor-suit games.

The opening lead was the king of spades, and East encouraged with the eight. West shifted to a trump, won by dummy's queen. A spade was ruffed in the closed hand, the ace of clubs was cashed, on which East started an echo with the seven. Declarer crossed to the table with a diamond to the ace to ruff the jack of spades. Next came the king and jack of clubs. West won but was endplayed — he either had to yield a ruff-sluff or else lead a heart away from the king, permitting dummy's queen to win. Making five-odd.

Declarer judged the play extremely well, aided by East's high-low in clubs. But East's defense must be faulted. At trick one East should have overtaken the king of spades with the ace and shifted to a heart. After that, there would have been no way to stop the defense from collecting a trick in both hearts and clubs to go with the spade already in the bank. Given the initial miscue, East could have recovered by ruffing partner's club winner to switch to a heart. That, too, would have brought declarer to his knees.

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