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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

8th June 2011

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

South	West	North	East
2 Club	Pass	2 Diamond	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♥

West found a clever maneuver to lead South to his destruction on this deal from a major pair tournament some years ago. It would never have succeeded at rubber bridge but a duplicate pairs event is a different kettle of fish!

South's bidding described a balanced hand of 23-34 points. North's hand was borderline for a raise to game, since there rated to be little play for game unless declarer held three diamonds. In that event, however, even two no trump might be too high.

West led a low heart and declarer was delighted with his dummy. There were five fast tricks available outside the diamond suit, and five more could be developed there if the suit broke no worse than 3-1. All declarer needed to do was start by cashing the ace and, if the queen did not drop, continue with the jack and run it.

After winning the first trick with the queen of hearts, South duly played the ace of diamonds, noting West's nine, and continued with the jack — and West followed with the ten! With the only missing card being the queen, declarer reasoned that West would have covered if he held her majesty as well, to assure a trick in the suit and possibly kill the dummy. With the suit apparently coming in, declarer rose with the king and dropped the contract! That was a wonderful development for the defense and they eventually held declarer to seven tricks.

At rubber bridge there would be no excuse for declarer's play. At duplicate, where overtricks matter a great deal, we are not sure what we would have done at the table. (06/08/11

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