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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

8th November 2011

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

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	Pass	2 Heart	Pass
4 Heart	All Pass		

Opening lead: King of ♠

Four hearts is an easy contract to reach via an auction such as the above. After the lead of the king of spades, it is not a simple contract to make.

Declarer allows the opening lead of the king of spades to win, then captures the continuation of the queen with the ace. Two rounds of trumps are drawn with the ace and king and the 3-1 split places the contract in jeopardy — there is now a trump loser to go with two spades and a diamond.

Since the play to the first two tricks marks West with the jack of spades, declarer could arrange an endplay were he able to ruff out the clubs and put West on lead with a major-suit card. That will not work for two reasons — first, he is short of entries to dummy and, secondly, if he ruffs clubs twice he would not have a trump in each hand after conceding a trump to West.

However, declarer can fall back on a partial elimination. It needs West to hold no more than three clubs. Declarer cashes the king and ace of clubs, then ruffs a club. Now he leads a spade. West can win this and draw one round of trumps. Then, however, he must lead a diamond away from the king into declarer's combined ace-queen tenace. Well played

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